

INDIA 77th Independence Day



Special Supplement 2023

Tuesday, August 15, 2023

India's G-20 Presidency – A moment of national pride and global solidarity

Ambassador's Message on the occasion of 77th Independence Day of India



H.E. Amit Narang
Ambassador of India
to the Sultanate of Oman

On the joyous occasion of 77th Independence Day of India, I am proud to convey my greetings and best wishes to all Indian nationals in the Sultanate of Oman.

As India marks the culmination of *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, commemorating 75 years of independence of our beloved nation, it is fitting that it is leading the global effort towards peace, sustainability and progress under its Presidency of the G-20. A millennia old civilization and a proud young nation is today at the global crossroads, helping craft a

global consensus on the defining issues of our time.

The vision of India's G20 Presidency of "*One Earth, One Family, One Future*" exemplifies its ideals of the essential unity of humankind, its age-old testament to the protection and preservation of nature and the innate belief of its people towards global peace and amity.

As Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has noted "*Housing one-sixth of humanity, and with its immense diversity of languages, religions, customs and beliefs, India is a*

microcosm of the world". Today as the G-20 President, India is acting as an 'agent of change' purposefully helping craft consensus to address critical developmental issues such as climate financing, debt vulnerabilities, ensuring progress on sustainable development goals and evolving a framework for digital public infrastructure.

The agenda of India's Presidency of the G-20 is inclusive, ambitious, action-oriented, and decisive and we are determined to make ours a Presidency of healing, harmony and hope, fostering with

our friends and partners from all over the world, a new paradigm of human-centric globalization.

Friends,

On this joyous occasion, it is also fitting to recall the remarkable progress India has achieved since its independence. Over the past over seven decades, India has transformed itself into the fastest-growing major economy in the world, an IT and digital inclusion powerhouse, a global food basket, the pharmacy of the world and a major space power. India's journey

Cont'd
on
P5

Congratulations to the
Government & People of India
on the occasion of the
Indian Independence Day

Happy Independence Day



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“India’s Technological Revolution: A Journey Towards Global Leadership”

India's technology and innovation have already impressed the world. But the future will be much bigger than our present. Because India has: Innovative youth and increasing tech access.

The power of India's youth is known across the world. They have ensured tech globalisation and talent globalisation. Healthcare, management, finance – you will find young Indians leading many domains. We are using our talent for global good. Even in India, their impact is being seen. India jumped to the 40th rank in the Global Innovation Index this year. In 2015, we were ranked 81! The number of unicorn start-ups in India has doubled since 2021! We are now the 3rd largest start-up hub in the world. We have over 81,000 recognised startups. There are hundreds of international companies that have R&D centres in India. This is due to India's talent pool.

Indian youth are being empowered by increasing tech access. A mobile and data revolution is happening in the country. In



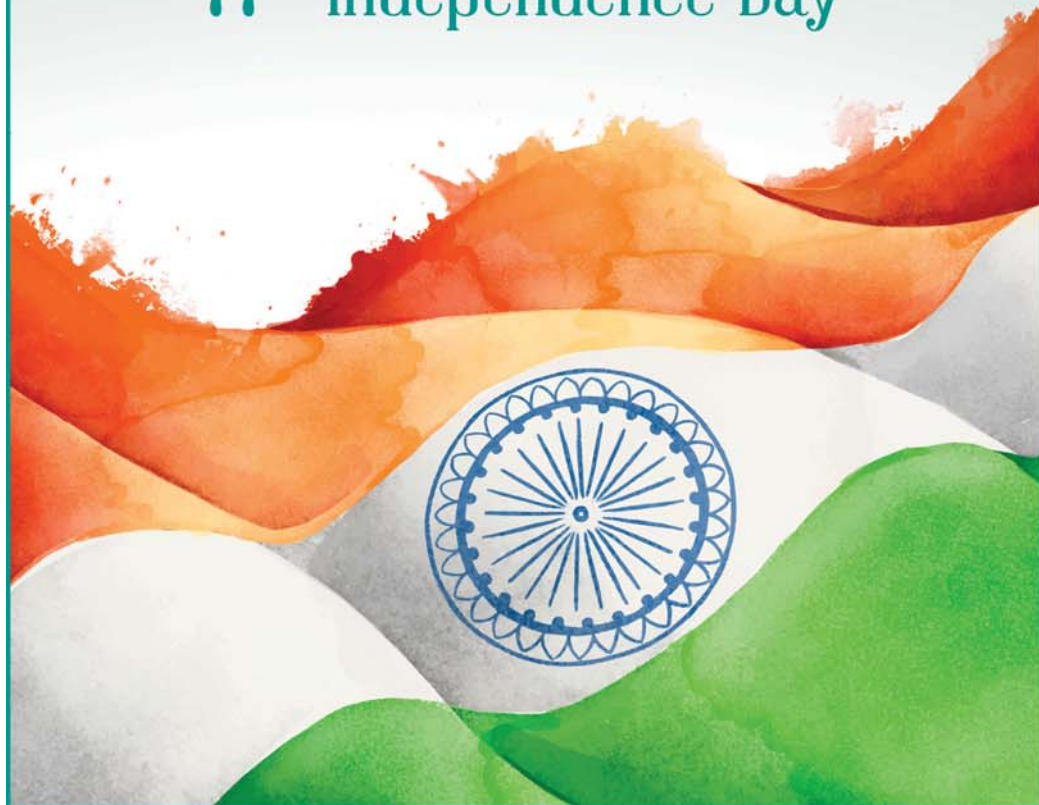
the last 8 years, Broadband connections rose from 60 million to 810 million, Smartphone users went from 150 million to 750 million. The growth of the internet is faster in rural areas than in urban areas. A new demographic is being connected to the information superhighway.

For a long time, technology was seen as an exclusive domain. It was said to be only for the high and mighty. But India has shown how to democratise technology. India has also shown how to give tech a human touch. In India, technology is a force of equality and empowerment. The world's largest health insurance scheme Ayushman Bharat provides a safety net for nearly 200 million families. It means, about 600 million people! This programme is run based on a tech platform. India ran the world's largest COVID-19 vaccine drive. It was run through a tech-based platform called COWIN. Let us go from the health sector to education.

India has one of the largest online repositories of open courses.

Cont'd
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P7

Greetings to the Government and
People of India on the occasion of
77th Independence Day



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9 Years, 1 Big Footprint

- By **Dr. S. Jaishankar**, External Affairs Minister

The Foreign Minister, writing on Modi govt's 9th anniversary, argues not only is India's diplomacy far more influential, its handling of a volatile world is also much more sophisticated:

As the Modi government completes nine years in office, foreign policy would certainly be among the domains where it has made an impact. This is increasingly recognised by the world and in India itself. It is visible in its new approaches like Neighbourhood First and SAGAR, mechanisms like Quad and I2U2 and initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance. India is perceived as a responsible development partner, a First Responder, and a voice of the Global South. Each of these aspects reflects a quest towards becoming

a leading power.

India's rise takes place in a volatile and uncertain world. The turbulence of our era will not only have to be managed, but where possible even leveraged. Ongoing conflicts and big power competition determine the larger landscape. Indian diplomacy has responded through optimal positioning vis à vis the major power centres, less by hedging and more through active pursuit of interests and values. Our independence of policy and action has been a defining characteristic. In these



nine years, many key partners have also witnessed radically different administrations. Yet India has ensured the trajectory of partnerships that remains consistently positive. The Covid pandemic is the transformational event of our times. It highlighted the economic concentration and its ensuing vulnerabilities that characterise globalisation. Forging reliable and resilient supply chains is

therefore a key to de-risking. India seeks to participate in that endeavour through Make in India, PLI schemes and Gati Shakti. PM Modi's foreign policy focuses on exploring global opportunities, building deep strengths, absorbing technology and best practices, and expanding employment. Our growing digital existence has brought to the fore concerns of trust and transparency. Critical and emerging technologies are

gaining salience by the day. This is particularly so in regard to communication, mobility, energy and health. New domains of competition are also visible, enabled by radical breakthroughs in diverse fields. As the knowledge economy encounters demographic constraints, Indian talent is a powerful card. Fostering trusted collaboration and making technology choices are consequently of utmost importance. Envisaging a global workplace, the Modi government has concluded numerous mobility agreements, ensured fair-play for our professionals and students abroad, while securing them in times of distress. The Vande Bharat Mission and Operations Ganga and Kaveri are recent reminders. India is today the most populous nation; the fifth largest economy and growing. But its greater influence comes from the power of ideas and initiatives. Whether it is climate action or counter-terrorism, connectivity or maritime security, financial inclusion or food security, India has actively shaped discussions and outcomes.

Cont'd on
P8

Independence Day Greetings to the People and the Government of India

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On the occasion of India's 77th Independence Day,
Larsen & Toubro extends its best wishes for a brighter future.





Powering Amrit Kaal

- By **Hardeep S Puri**
Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Housing & Urban Affairs

An integrated approach that focuses on renewable energy along with exploration of traditional fuels is the key to energy security in the next 25 years.

As the world's fastest-growing major economy with rising energy needs, India will account for approximately 25 per cent of the global energy demand growth between 2020-2040, as per BP energy outlook and IEA estimates. Ensuring energy access, availability and affordability for our large population is imperative. This makes our case sui generis and has driven our energy strategy, now acknowledged the world over as being pragmatic and balanced.

How has India managed to do this?

When petrol and diesel prices went up by 35-40 per cent in the US, Canada, Spain and the UK,

and despite importing over 85 per cent of its crude oil requirements and 55 per cent of its natural gas requirements, prices of diesel in India have actually gone down in the last 1 year. When several countries in our neighbourhood have had dry outs and power cuts to manage demand, there has been no shortage of fuel anywhere in India, even during floods and natural calamity situations.

This was made possible due to the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ensuring energy justice. The Centre and many BJP-ruled states announced massive cuts in excise duty and VAT rates, twice. Oil PSUs, being good corporate

citizens, absorbed huge losses to ensure that the massive hikes in the prices of crude oil and natural gas in the international market were not passed on to Indian consumers. Subsidised APM gas for the city gas distribution sector was drastically increased even at the cost of cutting down the captive use of domestic gas by our own PSUs. We even imposed an export cess on petrol, diesel and ATF, and a windfall tax on domestically produced petroleum products to prevent refiners and producers from profiteering at the cost of domestic consumers.

Over the years, India has expanded its network of crude oil suppliers from 27 nations to 39 nations. India has also further strengthened ties with countries like the US (energy trade has gone up 13 times in the last four years) and Russia to ensure a reliable supply of crude oil. This strategic market card, as the world's third-largest importer, not only ensured affordable energy for Indian consumers but also had a calming effect on global petroleum markets.



What is inescapable is that India's purchase of petroleum products from certain nations has actually kept the global demand and supply of around 98-100 million barrels/day balanced, thereby keeping oil prices in check for the global value chain. Had this not been done, global prices would have shot up to \$300/barrel.

We are working on both traditional fuel exploration as well as energy transition. Our reforms in making India an attractive energy and power destination are reflected

in the consulting firm Wood Mackenzie noting that India could be the licencing wildcard of 2023. By 2025, India wants to boost its net geographic area under exploration from 8 per cent (0.25 million sq km) to 15 per cent (0.5 million sq km). It has reduced the prohibited/no-go areas in our exclusive economic zone (EEZ) by 99 per cent, releasing nearly 1 million sq km for exploration.

However, as demonstrated by PM Modi at Glasgow, we remain steadfast in our climate change commitments – becoming net-zero in emissions by 2070 and cutting down emissions by 1 billion tonnes by the end of 2030.

We are also rapidly expanding our petrochemical production, in line with the massive increase in living standards and rapid urbanization. India is a global exporter of petroleum products and its refining capacity is the fourth-largest in the world after the US, China, and Russia. Efforts are underway to further enhance this capacity to 450 MMT by 2040. The refining capacity expansion was also one of the major factors in ensuring fuel price stability during the international oil price volatilities of last year.

Greetings to the government and people of India

Happy Independence Day

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India is also accelerating its efforts to move towards a gas-based economy by increasing the share of gas from the current 6.3 per cent to 15 per cent by 2030. India has connected more than 90.5 million families with clean cooking fuel in the past nine years. PNG connections have increased from 2.28 million in 2014 to over 10 million in 2023. The number of CNG stations in India has gone up from 938 in 2014 to 4,900 in 2023. Since 2014, India has increased the length of its gas pipeline network from 14,700 km to 22,000 km in 2023.

At the recently-concluded India Energy Week 2023, India took a giant stride in its biofuel revolution by launching E20 – 20 per cent ethanol-blended gasoline, which will be rolled out in 15 cities across the country in the next two years. India's ethanol blending gasoline has grown from just 1.53 per cent in 2013-14 to 10.17 per cent in 2023, and now India is also setting up five second-generation ethanol plants that can convert agricultural waste into biofuel, further reducing pollution due to stubble burning, and generating income for farmers.

The National Green Hydrogen Mission has been launched with

an outlay of Rs 19,74.4 million to develop the country's green hydrogen ecosystem in the country and accelerate India's efforts towards 4 MT of annual green hydrogen production. It will save Rs one trillion in cumulative fossil fuel import savings by 2030. India is poised to realise its full potential to create a green hydrogen ecosystem by 2030.

Just like our energy strategy, we are also taking an integrated path for transitioning India's future mobility pathways. Therefore, along with green hydrogen and biofuels, India is also supporting electric vehicles through a production-linked incentive scheme to make advanced fuel cells of 50 gigawatt hours. Customs duty exemptions have also been announced for the sector. We are targeting the installation of alternative fuel stations (EV charging/ CNG/ LPG/ LNG/ CBG) at 22,000 retail outlets by May 2024.

As we implement our Amrit Kaal plan to become a \$ 26 trillion economy by 2047, ensuring energy security and achieving energy independence remains our key goal.

Ambassador's Message

From P1 from a developing nation to a global player is a testament to the resilience, innovation, and determination of our people.

As we celebrate this historic occasion, I am delighted to reflect upon the strong and enduring relationship between India and Oman. India and Oman have forged a robust partnership, built on the foundation of mutual respect, trust, and shared aspirations. Our bilateral relations encompass a wide array of sectors, including trade and investment, defense and security, energy, education, tourism, space and cultural exchanges. These multifaceted ties have flourished, contributing to the prosperity and progress of our peoples.

Trade between our nations has more than doubled in 2 years, reaching a record US\$ 12.4 billion in fiscal year 2022-2023. Investment ties between India and Oman have

also witnessed substantial growth. There are more than 6000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman with estimated investment of over US\$ 7.5 billion with new sectors of green hydrogen, mining and green steel as the pathways to the future. These impressive trade and investment figures highlight the strength and potential of our economic engagement, fostering win-win collaborations and creating new avenues for growth.

Education has also played a vital role in fostering strong people-to-people ties between our nations. Indian educational institutions and universities have attracted Omani students seeking quality education and specialized skills. These educational exchanges enhance our understanding of each other's cultures, strengthen the ties between our youth, and create a bridge of knowledge and friendship.

As we celebrate the Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, it is imperative to recognize the contribution of the Indian diaspora in Oman. They have played a vital role in promoting goodwill, fostering cultural understanding, and

strengthening the bonds between our nations. With an estimated population of nearly 700,000 Indian nationals in Oman, they continue to be an integral part of Oman's social fabric, contributing to its development and progress.

Let me conclude by remembering the sacrifices of our freedom fighters, whose indomitable courage and determination paved the way for our independence. Today, we stand united as proud Indians, cherishing the values of democracy, diversity, and inclusivity that define our great nation.

Let us reaffirm our commitment to further strengthen the bonds between India and Oman, to deepen our cooperation, and to work together towards shared progress and prosperity.

I also take this opportunity to wish, on behalf of the Government and people of India, greetings and best wishes to His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, the Government and the kind people of Oman for continued peace, progress and prosperity.

Jai Hind!

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Through Mann Ki Baat@100, the tale of New India



The airing of the 100th episode of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unique monthly radio outreach**, Mann Ki Baat, is a milestone. 'Mann Ki Baat' is central to the PM's deep connection with the masses, who regard him as a caring, compassionate and decisive leader

who is transforming the country to improve their lives. Since the first episode of Mann Ki Baat on October 3, 2014, the PM has struck a rare chord with our countrymen, who have responded enthusiastically and reached out to him month

after month to share their accomplishments, joys, concerns and their valuable suggestions for New India.

This regular outreach to countrymen has no parallel in terms of reach and popularity – a fact that has been globally applauded. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni recently described PM

Piyush Goyal writes:

PM Modi has sought to educate, guide, mentor and motivate fellow Indians to work for social change and national development beginning with their communities

Mann Ki Baat captures the pulse of the nation in its progress towards becoming a developed country, in Amrit Kaal. Mann Ki Baat has attracted and inspired crores of Indians. The number of listeners has risen with each episode. PM Modi has sought to educate, guide, mentor and motivate fellow Indians to work for social change and national development beginning with their communities. Importantly, as Union Home Minister Amit Shah pointed out, Mann Ki Baat has been completely apolitical in nature.

The PM's Modi regular communication evokes a powerful sense of pride in the motherland. He has highlighted local art and artisans, giving them much-needed recognition and brand value to help them reach out to buyers in India and abroad. It has also promoted khadi, which boosts the rural economy. The impact of the programme can be comprehended from the fact that since Modiji's mention of domestic toy-making and support for the local toy industry in Mann Ki Baat, the import of toys fell sharply by 70 per cent from \$371 million in 2018-19 to \$110 million in 2021. Exports grew to \$326 million from \$202 million.

During the Covid-19 pandemic which disrupted lives and economies across the world, the monthly address lifted the spirit of the nation and infused a sense of positivity and cheer. PM Modi reached out to truck drivers and pilots through this programme and boosted their morale. He also had a word of appreciation for all Covid warriors.

Modi as the world's "most loved" leader, while the US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo observed that the Indian Prime Minister was an "unbelievable visionary" and the world's most popular leader with the commitment to move India forward as a global power.



Happy 77th Independence Day

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THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PEOPLE OF INDIA
ON THE OCCASION OF THE
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Best wishes to the People of India on the occasion of their 77th Independence Day.

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Another important dimension of Mann Ki Baat is that it gave a huge impetus to several flagship initiatives of the government and transformed them into mass movements. These include Swachh Bharat (Clean India) and Beti Bachao and Beti Padhao (Save & Educate the girl child). Another eloquent example is the resounding success of “Selfie with Daughter”. Domestic tourism has got a huge boost. Apart from widespread social awareness of cleanliness thanks to the Swachhta Abhiyaan, the message of water conservation was disseminated nationally with a sense of urgency. Similarly, the protection of the environment has now evolved into a movement.

Mann Ki Baat acknowledges the strength and power of 1.4 billion people and motivates them to give their best in the mission of nation-building. It is now being broadcast in 23 Indian and 11 foreign languages recording the nation’s developmental journey under the PM’s extraordinary leadership. In these 100 broadcasts, he has covered and highlighted a wide array of topics, including weather, environment, cleanliness, social issues, indigenous crafts, examinations, clean India, fit India, saving and educating the girl child, water conservation, being vocal for local products, self-reliant India and celebrating the cultural diversity of our great nation.

Mann Ki Baat episodes feature inspirational stories about unsung heroes, grassroots champions and changemakers across India.

While drawing our attention to a host of burning topics, changemakers and grass roots heroes, the PM’s monthly dialogue also outlines the roadmap for the future. The spirit of Jan Bhagidari (People’s Participation) with which this journey of development is suffused, harnesses the creative energies of the entire nation, notably its youth.

To mark 75 years of Independence, PM Modi hoisted the national flag for the ninth time from the ramparts of the Red Fort and spelt out his vision for the future, predicated on “Panch Pran”. In line with this futuristic view, he took a pledge along with 1.4 billion fellow countrymen to rid the country of the colonial mindset in Amrit Kaal. As he observed with great clarity, “Today, our pathways are our own, our symbols are our own.”

In the course of these 100 episodes, PM Modi touched upon several patriotic, social and cultural causes which people have embraced wholeheartedly and adopted. This includes the call for the celebration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, commemorating 75 years of independence and his popular campaign to hoist the national flag in every home — Har Ghar Tiranga.

Mann Ki Baat is an authentic record of the extraordinary development journey of Bharat over the last nine years under PM Modi’s leadership. His monthly interface with the nation reinforces his image of a down-to-earth, sensitive, visionary, and powerful mass leader.

India’s Technological Revolution:

From P2 There are thousands of courses available across different subjects. Over 10 million successful certification have happened. This is all done online and free. Our data tariffs are among the lowest in the world. During COVID-19, low data costs helped poor students to attend online classes. Without this, two precious years would have been lost for them.

India is using technology as a weapon in the war against poverty. Under Svamitva scheme, we are using drones to map lands in rural areas. Then, property cards are given to the people. This reduces land disputes. It also helps the poor to access financial services and credit. During COVID-19, many countries were struggling with a problem. They knew people needed help. They knew benefit transfers would help. But they did not have the infrastructure to take benefits to people. But India showed how technology could be a force for the good. Our Jan Dhan Aadhar Mobile Trinity gave us the power to directly transfer benefits. Benefits went directly to authenticated and verified beneficiaries. Billions of

rupees reached the bank accounts of the poor. During COVID-19, everyone was worried about small businesses. We helped them but we went one step further. We helped street vendors access working capital to restart businesses. Those who start using digital payments are given incentives. This is making digital transactions a way of life for them.

Have you heard of a government running a successful e-commerce platform? It has happened in India. We have the Government e-Marketplace, also called GeM. It is a platform where small traders and businesses fulfil the government’s needs. Technology has helped small businesses find a big customer. At the same time, this has reduced the scope for corruption. Similarly, technology has helped with online tendering. This has accelerated projects and boosted transparency. It has also hit a procurement value of Rs One trillion last year.

Innovation is important. But when backed by integration, it becomes a force. Technology is being used to end silos, enable synergy and ensure service. On a shared platform, there are no silos. Take, for example, the PM Gati Shakti National Masterplan. India is investing over Rs 100 trillion in infrastructure over the next few years. The number of stakeholders in any infra project is huge. Traditionally, in India, big projects were often delayed. Exceeding

expenses, and extending timelines used to be common. But now, we have the Gati Shakti shared platform. The central government, state governments, district administrations, different departments can coordinate. Each of these knows what the other is doing. Information relating to projects, land use and institutions are available at a single place. So, each stakeholder sees the same data. This improves coordination and solves problems even before they occur. It is accelerating approvals and clearances.

India is no more a place known for red tape. It is known for red carpet for investors. Whether it is FDI reforms, or liberalization of drone rules, Or steps in the semiconductor sector, Or the production incentive schemes in various sectors, Or the rise of ease of doing business,

India has many excellent factors coming together. I invite you all to work with us as we lead the world in solving its problems.



Greetings to the Government & People of India on the occasion of 77th Independence Day





9 Years, 1 Big Footprint

- By **Dr. S. Jaishankar**,
External Affairs Minister

From P3 The Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure, International Year of Millets and Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) are notable expressions. Much of how India influences the world is through its own policies and delivery. When we ensure digital public goods and plug leakages, promote renewables and encourage energy efficiency or produce vaccines on scale and create a massive safety net, these are examples for others.

A willingness to share has also gained deep global appreciation. Vaccine Maitri, which made us the source for almost 100 nations, created abiding goodwill. On a more recurring basis, 600 development projects spanning 78 nations testify to our internationalism. And not least, India's emergence as a First Responder in disaster situations like Turkiye recently

underlines its capabilities. India's expanding diplomatic footprint reflects its growing interests. Vital partners need to be engaged continuously and intensively, but others too deserve attention. The frequency and expanse of high-level interactions has been widely welcomed by our partners. This is as true of immediate neighbours like Sri Lanka and Nepal as in the Gulf, or indeed in Africa, Europe or Latin America. Creating collective formats such as with the Pacific Islands, Caribbean community, Nordic nations or Africa has imparted a sustainable efficiency to the process.

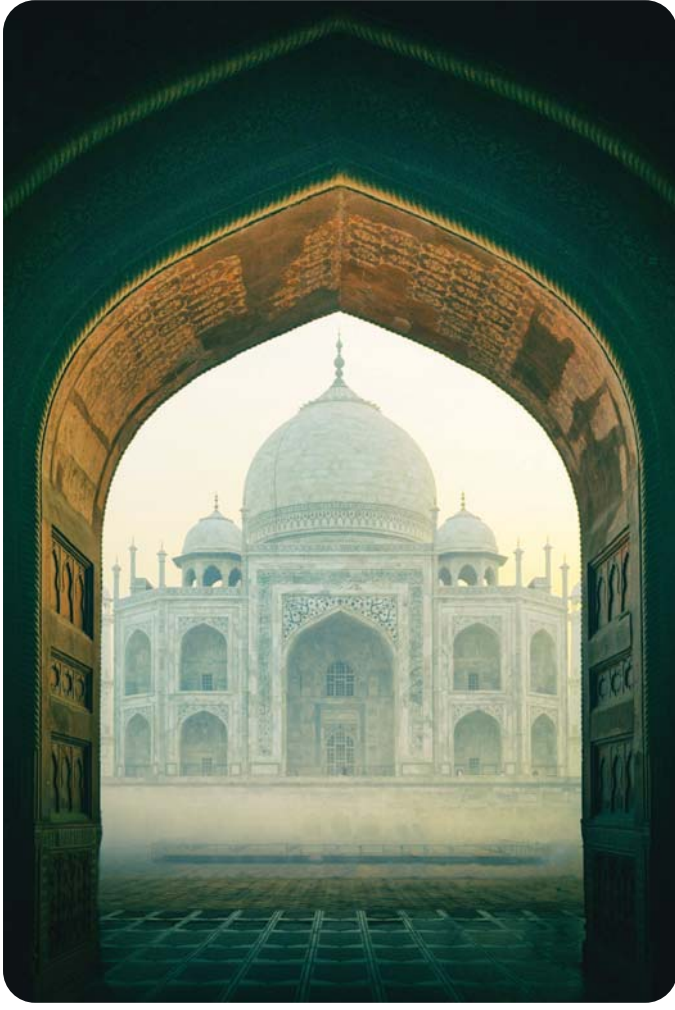
Foreign policy begins on our borders and understandably, that has seen the greatest transformation. A generous and non-reciprocal approach to immediate neighbours has been backed by vastly improved project delivery. As a result, regionalism in South Asia is making rapid strides, reflected in new road, rail and waterway connectivity, power grids, fuel pipelines and border crossing facilities. Improvements in the hard infrastructure have been matched by arrangements to facilitate flow of goods and services. A shared response to the Covid challenge has also strengthened a sense of solidarity. India's support for

Sri Lanka during its economic crisis has had a strong resonance as well.

While development has been the main focus, challenges that emerged to our national security have been countered firmly. ***This includes the robust military deployment in our border areas to ensure that the status quo is not unilaterally altered by China. And a set of policies and actions to delegitimise and respond to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan.***

An India that is more Bharat takes greater pride in its heritage and traditions. Their expression at the international stage is essential to multipolarity and indeed, to India's rise. The celebration of yoga and propagation of ayurveda are important beginnings as also the creation of a lexicon. The broader goal of promoting a better global understanding of India's perspectives and beliefs is work in progress.

On Day 1, at the time of taking office, PM Modi made clear his commitment to a bolder foreign policy that would overcome hesitations and go beyond dogma. He has focused on building greater capabilities, assuming more responsibilities and shaping the big issues of our day. As we enter Year 10, that journey continues.



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