



Golden Peacock Award Chief Guest address

The Rt. Hon. Priti Patel MP

Hon'ble Cabinet Minister & the Secretary of State for
International Development, Government of UK



Good evening ladies and gentlemen, it's a great pleasure to join you here tonight.

I want to start by thanking the Institute of Directors of India for this recognition, and to say how honoured I am to accept this prestigious award.

I am in distinguished company. Past recipients of Golden Peacock awards have made huge contributions to strengthening the relationship between the UK and India in business, public causes and society. I am delighted to join them and the Honourable Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh this evening to receive this award.

It was an honour to have the chance to meet Chief Minister Naidu today to discuss the outstanding work his state is doing on smart urban development in collaboration with the UK. His recognition this evening is very well deserved. The UK-India partnership in smart cities like Amravati on intelligent transportation, urban innovation and infrastructure financing showcases Indian and British ingenuity at its finest.

I have had the privilege throughout my career, in my role as an MP, as a Cabinet Minister and as International Development Secretary, to champion the UK Indian diaspora, and to champion the relationship between our two great nations.

And this evening I wanted to briefly take this opportunity to talk about how this relationship continues to evolve and grow, and the vital role that British Indians play in forging this strong relationship.

India and the UK

This is, of course, a very exciting moment in India's history. India is one of the cradles of civilisation but it is also a young nation. Half the population is under 25...one million new people enter the job market every month. This is perhaps the biggest and youngest workforce the world has ever seen.

And India has a truly visionary leader - who is committed to making the very best of this youth dividend, for the young people themselves and for the country.

India boasts one of the fastest growing economies in the world and we support the drive for more inclusive growth to generate prosperity for all of the people of India.

Whether by increasing the skills of 500million young people...or by building 100 smart cities...or by providing around the clock electricity.

This is also an exciting time for the UK's relationship with India - my Government is determined to be a key partner in turning vision into reality.

This is in our shared interests. In particular, Brexit provides a unique opportunity for the UK and India to forge a deeper, wider, stronger partnership with each other.

Today India invests more in the UK than in the rest of the EU combined.

800 Indian companies operate in the UK - accounting for 110,000 jobs and £47.5billion in revenues. We welcome this investment along with the innovation, employment and extensive business relationships that

Excerpts from the Chief Guest address delivered by

***The Rt Hon Priti Patel MP**

Hon'ble Cabinet Minister & the Secretary of State for
International Development, Government of UK
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it brings.

This investment brings with it innovation, employment and extensive business relationships.

At the same time though, the UK is one of the largest investors and employers in India - and there is huge further scope for Britain to invest in India's fast growing markets to the benefit of both countries.

Thanks to India's commitment to funding its own development, India no longer needs the UK's traditional financial aid...instead through our investment and expertise the UK and India are building a relationship based on mutual prosperity.

For example, the UK is working with India to realise the potential of its young workforce through skills training and start-ups.

There are also extensive research collaborations between UK and Indian scientists into new technologies such as low cost low carbon energy. And we are bringing in the best of British expertise to work with India in planning India's new smart cities.

Building a stronger partnership based on shared values

The UK has a strong partnership with India, including through our close relationships with states like Andhra Pradesh. We have worked together to capitalise on the vast opportunities India's rapid growth provides – drawing on the Best of British expertise.

So we are strong partners in many ways – but I believe there is still scope to go much further.

In today's world, with all the uncertainties we face – the world's oldest democracy and the world's largest democracy should, unquestionably, stand shoulder to shoulder.

We are united on far more than our shared economic interests.

We place the same value on democracy, freedom and a rules-based international system.

I believe there is much more we can do together in the wider world. Both India and the UK have a long history of engagement in African and other developing countries. And we have good partnerships already on investment, innovation and development cooperation.

I would like to see us take these to another level to maximise our potential as a joint force for good in the world.

In particular, India has a special role in the Commonwealth. After all,

over half of the population of the Commonwealth are Indian.

Next April London will host the Commonwealth Summit. And we want the Summit policy priorities to reflect Indian priorities. Many Commonwealth countries can benefit from India's experience of sustaining economic growth and using it for poverty reduction.

I am confident that India will play a central role at the Summit and beyond; working with Britain and other Commonwealth countries.

But, of course, building ties between our two great nations isn't just an activity for governments.

The UK's 1.5million strong Indian diaspora contributes so richly to British life, success and identity – in business, trade, science, sport, the arts and politics.

Prime Minister Modi was so right when he talked about there being a “living bridge” between our two countries.

Hundreds of thousands of relationships and interactions between individuals, families, communities, cities, institutions and enterprises...generating so much that is good for both countries, and the wider world.

I firmly believe that the unique connection between India and the UK is built on deep, mutual understanding of each other's cultures.

I'm proud to see how, at this time of the year, Diwali is embraced by our whole country...with people of all faiths, and none, joining Hindus, Sikhs and Jains in celebrating the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, hope over fear.

Conclusion

So in conclusion, I believe our vibrant people to people links are the cornerstone in helping the relationship between the UK and India to flourish and reach its full potential.

And I believe every member of the UK Indian diaspora community – whether through business, trade and investment, tourism, education, culture, or family ties – plays a part in strengthening the relationship between our two nations. Every one of us acts as an ambassador for this relationship.

And working together we can deliver an even stronger UK-India partnership for the 21st Century... Two great nations, with a shared history – and one glorious future.

Thank you. ■

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