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Media Statement by Prime Minister during his visit to Russia (December 24, 2015)

December 24, 2015

*Your Excellency President Vladimir Putin,
Members the Media,*

Let me begin by expressing my deepest condolences on the loss of lives in the terrorist attack on a civilian Russian aircraft and in the unfortunate downing of the military jet in Syria. In this moment of grief and challenge, we stand in solidarity with the people of Russia.

Mr. President, thank you for generous and warm hospitality. You are the architect of the India-Russia strategic partnership. And, in a changing world, your leadership has kept our relations on a steady course of progress and growth.

Mr. President, I have always had great respect and appreciation for our strategic partnership. It has been a source of strength and success for India in defence, development and diplomacy. And, there is genuine goodwill and mutual respect between our people.

As I look to the future, I see Russia as a significant partner in India's economic transformation and in shaping a balanced, stable, inclusive and a multi-polar world.

We have had excellent conversations over the past two days and very productive outcomes.

It has deepened my conviction that this relationship truly meets the test of a special and privileged strategic partnership.

We have laid the foundation of the future character of this strategic partnership.

The Inter-Governmental Agreement on manufacture of Kamov 226 helicopter in India is the first project for a major defence platform under the Make in India mission. It is rightly with our most important defence partner.

We have made progress on a number of other defence proposals. These would boost defence manufacturing in India and India's defence readiness with next generation equipment.

The pace of our cooperation in nuclear energy is increasing. We are making progress on our plans for twelve Russian nuclear reactors at two sites. The agreement today will increase Indian manufacturing

content in these reactors. It supports my mission of Make in India. I thank President Putin for his support.

With one of the world's largest reserves of hydrocarbons, Russia can be a critical source of energy security for India, especially because of our strategic partnership. With President Putin's support, we are enlarging Indian investments in Russian hydrocarbon sector.

President Putin and I are moving creatively in expanding our economic relations. Following our last Summit, India has created a special notified zone to facilitate direct trade between the world's largest uncut diamond exporter, Russia, and India, which processes 90% of the world's uncut diamond.

Second, we are working on logistics. Our Green Corridor project has taken off. The International North South Transit Corridor through Iran will significantly reduce transportation time and cost.

Third, we are moving forward on the India-Eurasian Economic Union Free Trade Agreement. This will also benefit us in Central Asia.

Fourth, we are encouraging our private sector to connect with each other more. We have just had an excellent meeting of CEO Forum. The agreements and the announcements today give me confidence that we will see huge increase in investments and trade in both directions.

President Putin and I have a high degree of convergence in our positions on global issues and a strong commitment to deepen our international cooperation.

We have strong collaboration in the United Nations. Our membership of BRICS, East Asia Summit, G20 and now Shanghai Cooperation Organisation gives our partnership a global character. It is particularly important in the arc from Eurasia to Asia Pacific, including in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

We are one in our belief that the world must unite and take concerted action on combating terrorism, without distinction and discrimination between terrorist groups and target countries.

We agree that an early political settlement through dialogue in West Asia is essential for restoring stability and containing extremism in the region.

Indeed, all nations must come together, with sensitivity to each other, to address the challenges of our times.

I am very pleased to have deepened my association with President Putin. Together, we have also given new direction and added more momentum and content to our strategic partnership.

Just as I have had the pleasure of visiting Russia twice this year, I look forward to welcoming President Putin in India next year for the BRICS Summit as well as the Annual Summit.

Thank you.



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