

**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Prime Minister's Office**

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Press Statement by Prime Minister during the State visit of President of Tajikistan to India

**Your Excellency Mr. Emomali Rahmon
President of the Republic of Tajikistan,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Members of the Media,**

I extend a warm welcome to President Rahmon and his delegation in India. Tajikistan is a valued friend and strategic partner in Asia. President Rahmon himself is very familiar with India. We are indeed delighted to have the opportunity to host him again. In India, we deeply appreciate his leadership and contribution to strengthening our bilateral relationship. Our strategic partnership is built on a foundation of mutual respect, trust and shared interests in regional security and development. Our countries and societies also enjoy a natural affinity anchored in deep-rooted shared history and heritage. Our cultural, religious and linguistic inter-mingling from the past has carried into the warmth and friendship that characterizes our people-to-people linkages today.

Friends,

President Rahmon and I had fruitful discussions earlier today. We assessed the broad progress achieved under different pillars of our bilateral engagement, including our partnership in defence and security. India and Tajikistan live in an extended neighbourhood that continues to face multiple security

challenges and threats. The threat from terrorism endangers not just our two countries. It casts a long shadow of violence and instability over the entire region. Combating terrorism has, therefore, been an important area of our cooperative engagement. We appreciate Tajikistan's role in the Central Asian region as a mainstay against forces of extremism, radicalism, and terrorism. President Rahmon and I agreed today to strengthen action on this front based on mutually agreed priorities.

We will do this on multiple levels :-

- through reinforcing overall bilateral security cooperation;
- through greater training, capacity building and information exchanges; and,
- through active coordination in regional and multilateral contexts.

India's membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization will be a valuable platform to work closely on regional security and counter-terrorism efforts with Tajikistan. President Rahmon and I also exchanged views on the developments in our region. We agreed that peace, stability and prosperity in Afghanistan are important for the region. India and Tajikistan are joined in our steadfast support of the Afghan people and their aspirations for a peaceful and prosperous nation.

Friends,

President and I agreed on the need to increase the scope and scale of our economic engagement, especially trade and investment traffic. In this context, hydel-power, Information Technology. Pharmaceuticals and healthcare would be areas of priority action. We agreed that enhanced surface connectivity is crucial to realize the promise of our economic partnership for the benefit of our countries. India supports initiatives to develop the existing port and transport infrastructure and

connecting it through road and rail network to Afghanistan, Tajikistan and Central Asia. In this respect, we will work to build trade and transit links through Chahbahar port in Iran. India is also engaged in facilitating the International North South Transport Corridor with other members, including Tajikistan. Our planned accession to the Ashgabat Agreement will further help in linking us to Tajikistan and Central Asia. India and Tajikistan enjoy a rewarding partnership in capacity and institution-building, including under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation training programme. President Rahmon and I agreed on sustaining and strengthening this partnership.

Friends,

Next year, we will commemorate the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Tajikistan. I am encouraged by the wide-ranging agenda for action that President Rahmon and I have set for our countries during this visit. I further expect that the agreements concluded today and our discussions will help boost practical cooperation in different sectors between India and Tajikistan. I once again welcome President Rahmon and wish him a very pleasant stay.

Thank you. Thank you very much.

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