

PM statement at press conference with Prime Minister Modi: 22 April 2022

My friend, Prime Minister Modi, Narendra, my khaas dost – is the phrase I wanted in Hindi

We've had a fantastic two days in India

And yesterday I became the first Conservative British Prime Minister to visit Gujarat, your birthplace of course, Narendra,

but, as you just said, the ancestral home of around half of all British Indians.

And I had an amazing reception – absolutely amazing– I felt like Sachin Tendulkar – my face was about as ubiquitous everywhere as Amitabh Bachchan.

I was everywhere to be seen and it was fantastic.

And this morning we've had wonderful talks and I think that they have strengthened our relationship in every way.

In challenging times it is very important that we – the khaas dost – get closer together

and I believe the partnership between Britain and India – one the oldest democracies – Britain is one of the oldest and India certainly the largest democracy is one of the defining friendships of our times.

What we're doing is taking forward an ambitious ten-year roadmap for British-Indian relations, that we agreed last year.

It was great to see you at the G7.

But since then, the threats of autocratic coercion have grown even further and it's therefore vital that we deepen our co-operation,

including our shared interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific open and free.

So today we've agreed a new and expanded Defence and Security Partnership, a decades-long commitment

that will not only forge tighter bonds between us,

but support your goal, Narendra of "Make in India".

The UK is creating an India-specific Open General Export License,

reducing bureaucracy and slashing delivering times for defence procurement.

We've agreed to work together to meet new threats across land, sea, air, space and cyber, including partnering on new fighter jet technology, maritime technologies to detect and respond to threats in the oceans.

We're extending our partnership as science superpowers,

And building on the collaboration between Oxford/Astra-Zeneca and the Serum Institute,

which vaccinated more than a billion people against Covid, – including me – I have the Indian jab in my arm and the power of good it did me so thanks to India

And that has helped India to become what Narendra has called the pharmacy to the world.

Today we are embarking on joint initiatives on malaria vaccines,

On antimicrobial resistance, and a digital partnership between the Indian National Health Authority and our NHS.

We're also taking big steps together on energy security, helping each other to reduce our dependence on imported hydrocarbons – and adopt cheaper, more sustainable home-grown alternatives.

We have a new offer, a new plan to develop offshore wind from the Celtic Sea to Dhanushkodi we've got a new UK-India Hydrogen Science and Innovation Hub,

and we're taking forward the green grids solar power initiative that you and I began, Narendra, at COP26 in Glasgow, together with 80 other countries.

It's an incredible fact that the sun provides enough energy every day to power the world ten thousand times over, you have a lot of solar power here in India – the sun putting in a fantastic performance today and we have quite a lot in Britain as well.

These partnerships form the superstructure of the Living Bridge that Narendra describes between our countries, and today that bridge is humming with goods and services and people and capital, whizzing back and forth east to west

and sometimes it can be hard to tell whether something is British, or Indian or frankly Brindian.

On Wednesday I went to the airport in a Range Rover – Indian-owned, but made in Britain.

And when I arrived here on Thursday, I visited JCB,

British-owned, but made in India. Exporting 60,000 every year around the world, 110 countries.

Or take the example of the Norton Motorbike now being revived in Britain by an Indian company.

I'm very pleased that this visit has not only deepened our economic partnership.

We've agreed new deals worth £1 billion,

and created more than 11,000 new jobs across the UK,

in everything from electric buses to the robotic surgery of Smith and Nephew which I saw yesterday

as well as in artificial intelligence, where India's strengths are remarkable.

And perhaps most significantly for the long term, we are making full use of the freedom that we now have

to reach a Free Trade Agreement,

a deal where you can lift those tariffs – you can, India, Narendra, on our machinery and apples – actually you've already done it on apples so thank you for the apples

and we in turn, we can lift the tariffs on your rice and textiles.

We've already closed four chapters,

and today we're announcing new measures to make it easier to export UK-made medical devices to India

and ensure mutual recognition of UK higher education qualifications.

And as the next round of talks begins here next week,

we are telling our negotiators: get it done by Diwali in October. Get it done by Diwali.

This could double our trade and investment by the end of the decade

widening that living bridge into a multi-lane motorway – pulsating with beautiful jointly made electric vehicles and creating hundreds of thousands of new jobs in both our countries.

So as India celebrates its 75th year of independence,

I am filled with optimism about the years ahead and the depth of the friendship between our countries, and the security and prosperity that our partnership can deliver for our people for generations to come.