

Doorstop at the University of Mumbai

PRIME MINISTER:

Well stronger and deeper cooperation between Australia and India in every area. Fierce rivals on the sporting field of course but you see the cooperation here that we're going to, that's going to result from this new initiative, it's got strong support from the Indian Prime Minister Mr Modi and very strong support from our Government.

India wants to be more successful in elite sport at the Olympic level, to have Olympic performance that matches its cricketing prowess, as the Minister was saying earlier, but also to see that sport is more widely engaged in across the community and of course starting with the young kids.

It's great to see John Gloster is here and the work he's done with his business to provide an application to support sports training and monitoring across 200,000 students in 200 schools. A great example of Australian expertise in sport and sport conditioning and of course using the technology of the 21st century.

So I'm delighted to be here and of course what a thrill to be here with Sachin Tendulkar. We've had a great discussion and just then we were talking about some of the villages that he's supporting in the Kurukshetra where there is enormous problems of drought and water scarcity and we've talked about how we can assist him and support him with some of the technology and techniques that have been so successful in Australia.

This trip has been all about a deeper and more engaged collaboration between Australia and India in economics, in sport, in health, in science, in education and of course in national security. Very productive visit and it's wonderful to be here with all of these bright eyed young children.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister, on that, with the deeper engagement, there's been a strong undertone on this trip on regional security and that speech you gave to the Defence College.

PRIME MINISTER:

Yes.

JOURNALIST:

How important is India now as a regional player? And how important does it need to become in terms of the international rules-based order in North Korea and all those other challenges?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well India is enormously important. India is the second largest country by population, it will shortly be the largest. It is evolving into an economic super power and one that will have the regional military and strategic clout that comes with that kind of economic strength.

So India is committed to the maintenance of the rules-based international order. We share the same values of democracy and the rule of law.

So we are committed to the same outcomes that as I said are in the region and around the world – rules based order and where there are disputes that they're settled peacefully in accordance with international law.

JOURNALIST:

PM there's a lot of tough talk coming out of North Korea about even using nuclear weapons. Should Australians be concerned about that? Should others be concerned about it? And what's your response to those threats?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well the whole world is concerned about the reckless and dangerous conduct of the North Korean regime.

It is a threat, it threatens regional stability, it threatens global peace and the time has come for all parties, but in particular China which has the closest relationship with North Korea, to bring pressure to bear on North Korea through the sanctions, regime and other means to ensure that they cease this reckless and dangerous conduct.

JOURNALIST:

Just on this partnership Prime Minister, is there any numbers in terms of people we are willing to commit or dollars we might be committing? And was this something that we offered or did the Indians request our assistance in this field?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well it's grown out of quite a long engagement. Obviously Australia and India have a very close sporting relationship not least through cricket, I mean, John Gloster for example has been here for 13 years so that's one of the people-to-people links that have been so important.

But this is a key priority of Prime Minister Modi and when he sought to identify a country that would, who could partner with India he saw Australia as being the best candidate, the partner of choice in this area.

So India will set up, as you heard, an elite sporting university, like the Australian Institute of Sport, they will set up an organisation like that and we're helping them with that. But of course you've got programs at universities here which will cooperate with Australian universities on sports medicine, on sports conditioning, on sports management. This is a big part of the equation too and you've got three, three of our vice-chancellors are here

today, all very keen to work more closely with India in this regard.

You know education is a massive export for Australia and its close to \$2.5 billion worth of education exports to India. 60,000 students, Indian students in Australia at the moment. As you know we are the second most preferred destination for Indian students studying abroad after the US.

So this is a very important relationship at every level, whether you measure it from an economic point of view or from a social or educational point of view.

JOURNALIST:

Deloitte has had a look at what might happen to the Australian economy were there a downturn in China, some scary numbers, I think \$900 billion in lost Australian wealth from home prices slumping and half a million more jobless and the like. What are the risks of that happening in your judgement and is Deloitte right to paint such a grim picture?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well, China is our largest trading partner. The relationship is \$150 billion a year, two-way trade, so a serious setback in the Chinese economy would be negative, would have a negative effect on Australia. But frankly it would have a negative effect on almost every economy.

China is a huge part of the global economy now. The impact of a big, really serious turn down in China would be large.

But having said that, there's no reason to forecast that. Chinese growth has remained strong and stronger frankly than many economists predicted a few years ago.

The Chinese economy is transitioning from one that was very heavily dependent, overwhelmingly dependent on investment to one that is more broad based and that is driven more, as economies are in most parts of the world particularly in developed world, by consumer demand.

Now that of course offers enormous opportunities for Australia as well.

The concern has been that as China makes that switch, that rebalance, is there going to be a big slow down? That's always been the concern. So far the transition is going relatively smoothly and China is maintaining strong economic growth.

So economists can paint a scenario but I am not right now, standing here today, I would not be forecasting a big slowdown in the Chinese economy. The transition that the government has been leading is working well and that is why you are seeing so much more demand for Australian exports, whether is education, whether it is tourism, whether it is food, whether it is wine and of course the enormous expansion of online shopping in China, it is the biggest online commerce market in the world. That's given a lot of smaller Australian businesses more access. All of which is made possible by our

China-Australia Free Trade Agreement so we are benefiting from this transition to a more consumer lead economy

JOURNALIST:

Should first home buyers be allowed to dip into their super to buy a house?

PRIME MINSITER:

About super? Look this is a debate that has gone round and round for a long time and I understand, I've read all of the speculation, standing here in Mumbai I won't contribute to it, although I've expressed fairly strong views about it in the past.

JOURNALIST:

You need to, I guess, say one way or another which view –

PRIME MINSITER:

The Budget is in May. Okay? There's a lot of speculation about the Budget, I understand that, but the budget is in May and all will be revealed.

But on that matter I have expressed strong views about it in the past.

JOURNALIST:

Are you looking forward to or reluctant to return to domestic issues? Excited or reluctant to return to domestic issues?

PRIME MINISTER:

It's been a wonderful trip here to India – it's been very productive.

I want to just say, you talk about excitement. Let me tell you about one new development. You would've seen yesterday we visited Tata Consulting Services which is a big technology, global technology company with a large business in Australia as well. They talked about their TCS labs, their innovation labs that they have around the world and I suggested to the Chief Executive Mr Gopinathan that he should have one in Australia. Well they've now confirmed that they are going to establish a TCS innovation lab in Australia. So that's great news because that will involve more research, more innovation, more work and that very creative end being done in Australia with some of our brightest minds and of course bright minds from all over the world including India.

JOURNALIST:

Prime Minister you got to spend quite a lot of time one-on-one with Prime Minister Modi –

PRIME MINISTER:

I did.

JOURNALIST:

And that seems to have actually got some tangible outcomes but now it's left up to the two countries respective bureaucracies to work on those. Do you think, are you confident that we will see progress at the rate that you want across a gamut of areas? Or do you think that you'll have to come back here or Modi will visit Australia more frequently to actually keep the momentum going?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well let me, let me deal with the free trade issue because I think that's what you're referring to.

Both of us recognised that progress had been slow. I think it's fair to say that there is a long tradition of protectionism in the Indian government system, if you like. Mr Modi recognises that, he is after all a reformer. He's seeking to shake up old practices and get India moving at a fast clip to succeed in the 21st century. So that's why we agreed that we would get our chief negotiators back to the table to set out very clearly what each side is asking for, where they're close, where they're far apart and where they've found agreement and then having done that come back to Prime Minister Modi and me so that we can then see what the progress is.

So we are taking a personal interest in this to ensure that we do get that level of urgency and focus that is needed.

That is the role of leaders to make sure that on both sides we get together and we find out whether we're talking about doing a deal or doing a deal and either way we've got to make some decisions so I think this is a very useful focus.

JOURNALIST:

So you're confident that momentum won't slow down now that you've kicked it along?

PRIME MINISTER:

Well because both sides, both sides have got to report back to their respective Prime Ministers, that's what provides the momentum – it concentrates the mind even in the most stately bureaucratic department.

JOURNALIST:

Mr Turnbull, what's wrong with Mr Shorten saying: "I support the Adani mine but I have doubts and concerns about Adani having \$900 million of taxpayers' money" to fund the rail link?

PRIME MINISTER:

As usual, Bill Shorten is trying to walk both sides of the street. You know, he's been traipsing around Queensland talking about jobs and now he is

casting doubt on a project that will create tens of thousands of jobs. It is vitally important to Queensland's future, to Australia's economic future.

Look let me be very clear about this – I know there are many people in Bill Shorten's Party that on the left, on the Greens, the votes he's seeking from the Greens that don't want to have any more coal mining in Australia.

Well the reality is this – if we stop all of our coal mining today, all of our exports today, India would simply buy its coal, more coal, from Indonesia and South Africa. India has got a growing demand for coal, as you heard yesterday from the Energy Minister, Mr Goyal, yes they are moving on renewables in a very big way too. Very big commitment. And over time the proportion of coal fired energy will decline but in absolute terms their demand for coal is going to grow for many years. So this is a big opportunity and they're committed, they are going to deliver electricity 24x7 to every Indian. That's their commitment.

Now we can either be part of that and provide our cleaner coal to India or we can go down this Green ideological approach Bill Shorten is playing with to close off those opportunities for Australians and the coal will be bought from another market.

So Bill Shorten has got to decide whether he's all talk and no action, or whether he is really committed to jobs. Because what he's done there, he's gone on his bus around Queensland, talked a big game about jobs and then when there is the one big project that we know is going to add tens of thousands of jobs and billions of dollars of investment, he walks away from it.

He lacks commitment, conviction and character on this.

Jobs are important.

He says they're important but what does he do? He's undermining a huge opportunity. What he's doing is undermining a huge opportunity for tens of thousands of jobs in Queensland and to no benefit.

As I said, if we stop exporting coal tomorrow all of the markets we sell coal to would simply buy it from somewhere else so it would not be one tonne less of coal burnt in the world.

So it's completely futile. We've either got to participate in this, create the jobs in the Australia with a cleaner low ash coal that India wants. They want our coal because it's the best coal, they want it and Bill Shorten should be backing our coal industry, backing our exports, backing jobs instead of walking away from them.

You can't walk both sides of the street on this and what he's done is made his whole Queensland trip into a farce. He's exposed it all as being nothing more than a bit of disingenuous show business.

When it came to the crunch he was not prepared to stand up for investment and jobs in Queensland.

Thanks very much.

[ENDS]

Statement on the executions scheduled in Arkansas

Seven executions by lethal injection, scheduled by the US State of Arkansas for the period between 17 April and 27 April, would break the de-facto moratorium on the death penalty observed by this US State since November 2005. Arkansas would also become the first State in the US to conduct seven executions over an 11-day period since the resumption of the use of the death penalty in 1977 in the United States.

The European Union opposes capital punishment, which fails to act as a deterrent to crime, represents an unacceptable denial of human dignity and integrity and cannot be justified under any circumstances. More than 140 countries in the world are now abolitionist in law or practice.

Today, the death penalty is illegal in nineteen of the fifty US States and the District of Columbia. The number of executions in the US has steadily declined to its lowest level in 2016. The executions in Arkansas, if carried out as planned, would be a serious setback in this overall development.

We therefore call on the Governor of Arkansas to commute the sentences of Mr Bruce Earl Ward, Mr Don Williamson Davis, Mr Ledell Lee, Mr Stacey Eugene Johnson, Mr Jack Harold Jones, Mr Marcel W. Williams, Mr Kenneth D. Williams, as well as the sentence of Mr Jason F. McGehee, which has been temporarily stayed, and grant them relief from the death penalty.

Remarks of First Vice-President Frans Timmermans after the College discussion on legal issues relating to Hungary

The College today discussed the important issues of managing migration and our internal security. Dimitris Avramopoulos and Vera Jourova will be in the press room shortly so I won't dwell on these points.

I just want to underline the importance of the Communication we have adopted on children in migration, which sets out the urgent actions needed to reinforce the protection of children in migration.

The aim is to ensure coordinated and effective protection of all migrant children at all stages of the process, so that the best interest of the child is always put first. Dimitris and Vera will explain in more detail what we are proposing.

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At Jean-Claude Juncker's initiative – and I very much welcome that – the College also discussed today a wide range of legal issues relating to Hungary.

Recent developments have led to publicly-voiced concerns from a wide range of stakeholders inside and outside the EU. Questions have been asked about the compatibility of certain actions of the Hungarian authorities with EU law and with our shared values.

Today's discussion allowed us to collectively take stock of the issues at hand, in an objective, facts-based and law-based manner.

The College will take decisions on some of the points discussed later this month. The Commission also decided today that it will prepare and make public its own response to the Hungarian Government's 'Stop Brussels' consultation.

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The recently adopted Higher Education Law is troubling many people in Europe's academic community, as well as politicians across Europe and beyond. It is perceived by many as an attempt to close down the Central European University.

President Juncker said very clearly earlier this week that he does not like this decision

My colleague Carlos Moedas expressed concern in a statement last week that the law might restrict scientific and academic freedom of thought, and our common values of openness, and that it might damage Hungary's academic reputation and relationship with EU partners.

Universities must be places where free thinking and diversity of opinions are cherished and nourished.

As Tibor Navracsics said last week, the Central European University is one of the most important universities not only in Hungary, but in the European Higher Education Area. I agree with Tibor on the importance of the Central European University being able to operate in Budapest undisturbed.

The College today agreed that where the new Law may touch on EU competences, and may also apply to EEA universities, we need to quickly complete a thorough legal assessment of its compatibility with free movement of services

and the freedom of establishment, as well as EU rules on admission of third country researchers.

We will complete this legal assessment as soon as possible and the College will consider next steps on any legal concerns by the end of the month.

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You have also heard from my colleagues Margrethe Vestager and Vera Jourova in this press room in the past week, publicly expressing their concerns about recent developments in Hungary as regards European values.

Our shared European values are set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union.

In our discussion in College, we looked across a range of issues which relate to the respect of these values in Hungary.

The draft legislation tabled last week by members of the governing party on the funding of so-called 'foreign' Non-Governmental Organisations is very much on our radar screen. We will be following it closely.

There can be legitimate public interest reasons for ensuring transparency of funding, but any measures need to be proportionate and must not create undue discrimination within the EU.

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We also spoke in the College about asylum, and respect for the values of human dignity, freedom, respect for human rights, tolerance and solidarity. The Commission has already expressed its concerns about the existing Hungarian law.

The new asylum law adopted by the national parliament at the end of March also raises serious doubts about compatibility with EU law. Dimitris Avramopoulos was in Budapest at the end of last month to raise our concerns and offered to share Commission expertise at technical level to quickly find ways to address these issues.

The College will keep a very close eye on whether timely progress can be made, and will act if we do not see positive developments soon.

As regards the values of equality and non-discrimination, the College continues to be attentive to the situation of the Roma in Hungary, and in particular to the timely resolution of the concerns we have expressed about discrimination against Roma children in education.

The protection of pregnant working women is also an area we have raised formally with the Hungarian authorities and as our concerns remain unanswered, the College will need to consider next steps later this month.

The College will review all these issues closely when it takes the next round of infringement decisions at the end of April.

Wherever individual cases are legally mature and our legal concerns remain unaddressed, we will move to the next steps.

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Respect for the values of Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union applies to Member States more generally, even when they are not acting to implement EU law.

We have seen certain other developments that are relevant to common values such as human rights including human dignity, freedom and equality, and societies which are defined by pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, and solidarity.

Today, looking at the broader picture – the overall spirit of Article 2 as well as the substance of the individual laws – the College resolved to use all the instruments at our disposal under the Treaties to uphold the values on which our Union is grounded.

The College unanimously agreed that a broader political dialogue between the Hungarian authorities, other Member States, and the European Parliament and Commission is now warranted.

Thank you very much

Remarks by Commissioner Dimitris Avramopoulos at the press conference on protecting children in migration and relocation and resettlement

Remarks by Commissioner Avramopoulos

Dear all,

I'm very glad to present to you today, – together with my colleague Vera Jourova – the priority actions for the protection of all children in migration.

Children are a very vulnerable group, but they are not a marginal group in the context of the current migratory situation in Europe.

Today, one in three asylum seekers in Europe is a child.

They need special protection wherever and whoever they are.

The best interests of the child should prevail at all times.

We want to ensure and improve the protection for ALL children at ALL stages of migration.

Every child is entitled to adequate treatment and protection, no matter what his or her legal status is.

We are of course not starting from scratch: both Member States and the EU level have put in place a strong migrant child protection framework in the past years.

But we need to shift gears – collectively. The protection of migrant children starts already before they arrive to the EU. The external and internal dimensions go hand in hand.

Over the past 2 years, we included migration in all our dialogues with third-countries but also at regional and global level. We are and will continue to invest in projects to protect migrant children outside Europe to ensure that they have access to healthcare and education.

We also have to protect children in migration more effectively at all stages inside the EU. We have to ensure that they are not at risk of being abused, that they are not exploited and do not go missing. We also have to avoid that children are drawn into criminal activities or radicalisation.

Our objective is that Member States give their endorsement to these actions over the coming months and that we work together to implement them.

The Commission will ensure that the funding available for the protection of the child is being fully used and that the EU agencies provide technical support to Member States.

Among the key actions, Member States have to ensure that the relocation and resettlement schemes work especially for unaccompanied minors.

This leads me to another point on today college agenda. Today we also adopted the 11th relocation and resettlement report.

We have already relocated more than 16,000 so far in total, of which more than 2,400 in the last reporting period.

With this, Member States, even though not all of them are participating, have set a new record on relocation.

Right now, we have around 14,000 eligible applicants in Greece and around 3,500 in Italy that are registered and ready to be relocated.

If Member States step-up the number of relocations, it is absolutely possible to relocate all those eligible in Greece and Italy by September.

To reach this objective our report today includes a number of recommendations for Member States. Now is the moment to sustain this progress, especially as

regards the minors.

I am pleased that Austria will resume relocation and start with 50 vulnerable migrants including children from Italy.

On resettlement, we managed to resettle over two thirds of the 22,500 people to whom we committed to offer a safe legal path to Europe in July 2015. This is welcome news.

We are delivering on our commitment to share responsibility with third countries such as Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. We need to pursue our efforts to propose a viable alternative to irregular migration.

Finally, today we are also presenting our 6th monthly report on the Security Union. It comes in the aftermath of what is unfortunately yet another deadly terrorist attack on the European soil – Stockholm. Another attack which shows how urgently we must step-up our efforts to deliver a genuine and effective Security Union.

The emphasis of this report is on actions to combat organised crime – an area of criminal activity with frequent links to terrorism, drugs and firearms trafficking, migrant smuggling, cybercrime.

These are all priority policy areas with tangible impacts on the lives of our citizens.

Our work on organised crime and migrant smuggling is of course also closely linked to the protection of all children in migration.

I would like to pass the floor now to Vera, who will tell you more.

Vince Cable: Labour is failing young people in Manchester on Brexit

Vince Cable has warned that young people in Manchester are being robbed of opportunities by the Government's push for a hard Brexit and that Labour is failing to stand up for them.