

Speech: 'We seek to align UK interests with ambitions of Karnataka'

It is with mixed feelings I welcome you here tonight. We are gathering to mark Her Majesty's 91st Birthday, but after the horrific incident in Manchester on Monday night, our hearts go out to the families and friends of all those killed and injured. This was a brutal act aimed at the softest of targets: teenagers and children. Such incidents are effective if they change the way we live our lives. For this reason I have decided to go ahead with our event tonight to honour our Queen and to show our resolve to stand up to those who wish to harm us. Can I request a minute's silence as a mark of respect to all those caught up in this tragedy.

I am joined tonight by His Excellency the Minister of Large & Medium Industries & Infrastructure R V Deshpande representing the Government of Karnataka. Minister Deshpande has championed UK-Karnataka links at many events across the year. I am pleased he joins us again tonight.

As many of you are aware Her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth II has two birthdays, her actual birthday in April, and her official birthday in June. In Karnataka neither month is ideal for an outdoor event. We chose today hoping that the weather would be kind. Sadly it looks as if the vagaries of climate change in Karnataka may have got the better of us.

Tonight I would like to focus on three areas:

- I want to honour Her Majesty on her 91st birthday
- I want to share with you the highlights of a year of UK-Karnataka partnership
- I will look forward to a memorable UK-India Year of Culture.

The Queen

In February, Her Majesty the Queen celebrated her Sapphire Jubilee commemorating 65 years of service to her country and the Commonwealth. The sapphire stone is believed to symbolise wisdom, virtue, good fortune and holiness. It is known as the 'Royal' stone. It gives us the colour 'Royal Blue' which many of you are wearing tonight. For our monarch this milestone could not be more appropriate.

The Queen has visited India 3 times. Her first visit was in 1961 when she visited Bengaluru and the Lal Bagh Gardens. She returned in 1983 for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, and then again in 1997. Her experience of world affairs and world leaders is unmatched. Her enduring appeal, however, lies in the straight forward way she interacts with those she meets, however important, on her royal duties.

In her role, she has been supported by her husband Prince Philip who we honour too. In March, Prince Philip announced his retirement from public

duties at the grand old age of 95. Prince Philip in his own indomitable way quipped that he was 'stepping down, not sitting down'.

A year of UK-Karnataka partnership

I'd like to turn now to a year of UK-Karnataka partnership. To put it succinctly, this year has been an 'interesting' one. Two weeks after our Queen's Birthday Party (QBP) in 2016, the UK went to the polls to decide whether, or not, to leave the European Union. You all know the outcome of that vote. That decision has set the UK on a new direction with a destination that is still unclear.

BREXIT brings with it challenges, but also opportunities as the UK forges a new role for itself in the world. It also brings opportunities for a new relationship with India. It was not by chance the new UK Prime Minister chose to visit India on her first bilateral visit outside Europe. In November, Theresa May held talks with Prime Minister Modi in Delhi before flying on to Bengaluru. Why Bengaluru? It's India's city of the future, an innovation hub, and India's start up capital. It is also home to over 100 UK companies who have chosen Karnataka as the base for their country operations – I am pleased many of you have joined us tonight.

The scope of the prime ministers programme underlines the range of UK interests. She met with Chief Minister Siddaramiah and later with UK and Indian companies to discuss trade and investment in the UK and Karnataka. She visited a government school to learn about STEM skills in education and new careers for women. With pupils she welcomed an Indian Air Force flypast highlighting our close defence links. She learnt about innovative UK-India models of advanced manufacture in Pinya and explored our common heritage with a visit to the Sri Someshwara Temple.

Relations are not built on one visit. It is the day-to-day, year-on-year interactions that matter. In November, the UK was India's official partner for the TECH Summit in Delhi. This huge event set out to highlight the strength of UK-India technology ties. Large UK delegations in the areas of precision medicine and advanced manufacturing came on from Delhi to meet with potential partners in Karnataka.

At the British Deputy High Commission (BDHC) we seek to align UK interests with the ambitions of the state. We were able to do this in February when the UK Minister of Defence Procurement Harriet Baldwin, joined eminent local dignitaries to speak on the advanced manufacturing panel at the 'Make in India Conference' in Bengaluru. The minister highlighted the historical aerospace ties between the UK and Bengaluru linking HAL, BAe Systems, and Rolls Royce. During the visit Cranfield University signed a memorandum of understanding with the Central Manufacturing Technologies Institute to strengthen advanced manufacturing cooperation. As the minister made clear 'Make in India' is a concept at the heart of UK-India collaboration and has been so for many years.

UK experts have also been working with local state partners on:

- urban governance
- energy storage and green finance
- the affect of climate change on water systems
- prosthetic technologies
- waste water management (with a water recycling project at the Malleshwaram Dhobi Ghat)
- traffic management and urban security (with a visit by the State Home Minister Parameshwara, to the London Traffic Control Centre)
- disability and careers
- support for start ups and industrial clusters
- improving tax collection and land registration

All these issues are elements of our common prosperity agenda and key to a growing Karnataka economy.

I want to say a bit more about Europe. The UK is leaving the European Union and not the European continent. The UK remains committed to European collaboration on a range of issues. This year in partnership with our European colleagues in Karnataka we showcased British films as part of the European Film Festival, we celebrated the European Football Cup with a reception to watch Germany beat Northern Ireland, we organised a European Climate Action Day Conference in September and joined a European Symposium on Environmental Sustainability in March. This collaboration will continue.

I have talked many times this year about the importance of our living bridges. Living Bridges was a term coined by Prime Minister Modi on his visit to the UK in 2015 to describe the people-to-people ties that bind our two countries.

This year we have promoted our Chevening Scholarship Programme to encourage India's brightest and the best to come to the UK to develop new skills which they can then deploy on their return to India. The programme is now the largest UK country programmes in the world with 130 one-year masters and shorter fellowship programmes available. We have specialist programmes for scientists, engineers, journalists, cyber security specialists, design specialists, financial specialists and lastly for India's future leaders (our flagship Gurukul Programme). In Karnataka, the Chevening Alumni Chapter is 120 strong. This group meets regularly to discuss ways to build on their UK experience and to link the UK with local initiatives. Applications for the next round of the Chevening Scholarship Scheme open in the summer. Please check online for details and pass the word.

The BDHC has also worked with local UK alumni associations including: the London School of Economics, Oxbridge, Cranfield, Imperial College London, and Kings College London to strengthen UK graduate and post-graduate links with the UK.

The UK's TECH Rocketship and India Emerging 20 competitions were launched to encourage young entrepreneurs and to nurture and mentor new start-up talent as they begin their journey to internationalise their companies. We have three Bengaluru TECH Rocketship winners with us tonight. The winners of this year's India Emerging 20 will be announced in Bengaluru tomorrow.

The UK's Longitude Prize is encouraging novel innovation to tackle the global challenges of anti-microbial resistance particularly prevalent here in India.

In July, we brought 40 UK students to Christ and Jain Universities in Bengaluru to participate in a cultural immersion programme as part of our India-wide GenUK Programme to improve youth links.

To increase our geographical reach BDHC teams dealing with trade, investment, science and innovation, energy & low carbon, politics & economics and corporate services joined partners: the British Council, the Welsh government, the UK-India Business Council and the UK Visa Application Centre to set up an office for a day in Whitefield and then in Electronic City to meet local partners who are often unable to come into the centre of Bengaluru. BDHC teams have also made outreach visits to the West (Tumkur, Shimoga, Manipal and Mangalore), to the South (Mysore) and to the North (Belgaum) this year to promote our services. We cover the state.

A Year of Culture

This year you are in for a treat. 2017 will see a blossoming of cultural events and activities in India organised by the British Council, and a similar programme in the UK organised by the Government of India. We believe that by experiencing the most innovative and exciting creative work from both countries and exploring our joint history, people will want to know more about each other's countries and build deeper connections.

The Year of culture was launched in February by Her Majesty the Queen and Finance Minister of India Arun Jaitley at Buckingham Palace. The peacock projection behind me was from that event and is the symbol of the year-long programme. The design was produced by Studio Carrom based out of the UK and Bengaluru.

This year in Bengaluru it will be possible to listen to the Brian Molley Jazz Quartet, and join the Wayne McGregor Dance Company and Attakalari for the launch of MixtheBody. Other events will emerge as the year develops. Our British Council colleagues are on hand to tell you more about what is planned for Karnataka and will even invite you to MixtheCity.

Tonight would not have been possible without the generosity of our sponsors.

Our Gold sponsors are:

- Dynamatic Technologies Limited is a Global Tier-1 Supplier to Airbus, Boeing, and Bell Helicopters. It is a major contributor to the growth of the aerospace industry in India. It has facilities in Bengaluru, Swindon and Bristol and is utilising the UK's competitive advantage to further its globalisation efforts.
- Lodha Group is India's No 1 real estate developer by sales and is also now one of the largest investors from India into UK. The group has

already invested close to £1 billion in the UK market is now looking to further expand its portfolio in London.

- Infosys is a global leader in technology services and consulting. It has been operational in the UK since 1995 with offices in London, Edinburgh and Swindon providing IT services to clients. It has strategic partnerships with 3 UK universities and has brought over 100 UK students to India for summer internships.
- Mindtree is a global IT services company head-quartered in Bengaluru with operations across the globe. Mindtree entered the UK in 2003. It runs a strong portfolio of UK clients and uses its London office to reach out to businesses in the EU.

Some of our Gold sponsors are exhibiting around the site. Please go and visit their stands.

Our Silver sponsor is:

Our Bronze sponsors are:

- Diageo
- Rolls Royce
- Twinings of London

I would also like to thank our sponsors-in-kind, our beer sponsor, UB as well as our 'Best of British' exhibitors showing their advanced engineering products here tonight.

Thank you.

Can I end with a round of thanks to:

- GREAT team who have designed this wonderland (despite the challenges of the weather)
- JW Marriott who have worked with us so closely to deliver our requirements
- QBP Committee at the Deputy High Commission who have put in months of work to bring you this event
- Bengaluru team and Indian network colleagues

Please could I lead you in a round of applause.

Thank you.

Toasts

I would like to propose the following 3 toasts:

- Her Majesty the Queen

- stronger UK-Karnataka partnerships
- State of Karnataka.