

Speaking at the event to pay tributes to the martyrs of 26/11

November 26, 2016

... some sung, some unsung who gave their lives so that we could all live in peace and harmony. It's now 8 years and I still remember that day because I remember that day we were planning to actually take a boat ride into the sea. And at the last minute, just before I was leaving home my father suggested, he was not well, and he suggested I don't go, I stay with him and spend some time with him. I would suspect that that would have been that crucial time at about 9 o'clock when these terrorists must have reached here when I would have otherwise been on my way, trying to take a ferry to go to a boat on the sea. And when one remembers that day and all that we saw on television and all the pain and agony that all of Mumbai and all of India and, in some sense, all of the world experienced, one can only but pay tribute to those bravehearts who gave their lives, who did not care for what happens to them but were willing to extend a helping hand to somebody in need, somebody more in trouble.

In fact, I just met Karamveer who used to be the Manager at the Taj in Boston few months ago. And that pain and that agony that he must have gone through losing his whole family just so that he could save thousands of other families from disaster, from the pain of losing someone dear to them, I think reflects the true spirit of a Mumbaikar. I remember John F Kennedy, after the Berlin Wall, which had caused a lot of hardship was broken down, had first proposed *Ich bin ein Berliner* – I am a Berliner. And if one recalls, after 9/11, we all saw the world go and pay tributes to the Big Apple in New York City. After the attack in Paris on 13th November last year, I remember we had all started this campaign on and today as we recall the sacrifice of all the police personnel, the fire brigade personnel, the paramilitary forces, the staff and all the, both these hotels Taj and Oberoi, the people in the railway station who lost their lives, the NSG commanders who battled with the terrorists for I think more than 48 hours and, of course, the people of Mumbai, the Mumbaikars.

It's probably time that all of us pay salute, pay a tribute to them saying 'I am a Mumbaikar'. The true human spirit is stronger than anything that can happen to it. And, in that sense, on that fateful day and the two days after that we saw the spirit of Mumbai at its finest. I am told that you are going to sing the famous Michael Jackson song today – *We are the world*. And today, the time has come where the whole world has recognized that this act of treason, this act of terrorism against India and against all Indians is no more a law and order problem, which some countries had tried to make it out to be in the early years. But it's something which is a curse on humanity. In some sense, the government has also taken it upon itself to cut off the terror financing, a lot of which used to happen with counterfeit notes through the cancellation of 500 and 1000 rupee notes as legal tender. But that can only be one small step.

Ends.