**Delhi: Midlands Engine Event**

* Thank you Dr Singh and thank you Lord Bilimoria – second time in a few days I’ve been his guest, was at University of Birmingham last week to publish plans for the Midlands Engine.
* You might not be too familiar with the English Midlands, but you’ll know all about the people and products it has produced:
* Shakespeare
* The steam engine
* Isaac Newton
* …even Lady Thatcther!
* In 2015, it’s home to a young, highly skilled workforce, working with firms like…
* **Jaguar Land Rover**
* **Rolls Royce**
* **JCB**

…which all have close ties to India.

* **25** top universities, training **half a million** students.
* Birmingham and Leicester are home to some of Britain’s biggest Indian diasporas, means strong cultural ties too.
* Leicester’s **Belgrave Road:** the Diwali lights go up in November, and then in December someone comes round and changes all the signs saying “Happy Diwali” for ones saying “Happy Christmas” but the lights remain the same!
* Half a million SMEs and micro-businesses, a great place for you to do business too.
* Growing international profile:
* **Inward investment up 130 per cent** from 2011 to 2015
* **Exports up 38 per cent** from 2010 to 2013
* **Exporting to 178 countries** worldwide
* **R&D expenditure up 52 per cent** in three years
* **Birmingham airport** is linked to the world**, East Midlands airport** is UK’s 2nd busiest freight hub
* UK government created the Midlands Engine to drive growth in the region:
* Better transport links
* Local decision-making
* Investing in skills
* Midlands is no longer just the heart of England, it’s a global hub – would love to see more Indian businesses become a part of it.