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# Delhi's challenge: Donald Trump will play hardball, change rules of the game

Trump's inaugural speech, delivered immediately after he was sworn in as President, set the stage for what could be a hugely controversial and potentially transformational second term as American president.

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Donald J Trump speaks after being sworn as the 47th US President in the US Capitol Rotunda in Washington, DC, Monday. (Reuters)



## Delhi's challenge: Donald Trump will play hardball, change rules of the game

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President Donald Trump promised a "revolution of common sense" in his inaugural speech, vowing to depart from traditional policies and redirect America towards traditional values, sovereignty, and global leadership. He also expressed a desire for peace and a rejection of wa...

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Heralding a "thrilling new era of success", President Donald Trump declared Monday that a "revolution of common sense" will guide his bold new effort to redirect America away from the "liberal extremism" at home and "declinist pessimism" abroad.

Trump's inaugural speech, delivered immediately after he was sworn in as President, set the stage for what could be a hugely controversial and potentially transformational second term as American president.

Attacking America's "corrupt establishment" that has failed to address multiple crises at home and triggered what he called several "catastrophes" abroad, Trump promised radical departures from America's long-standing policies on immigration and trade and more recent ones limiting free speech, promoting race and gender identities, mandating green choices on consumers.

Trump did not announce any specific tariffs on trade but reaffirmed the commitment to taxing imports to promote domestic manufacturing. He also unveiled plans to establish an External Revenue Service to complement the Internal Revenue Service that collects income taxes at home.

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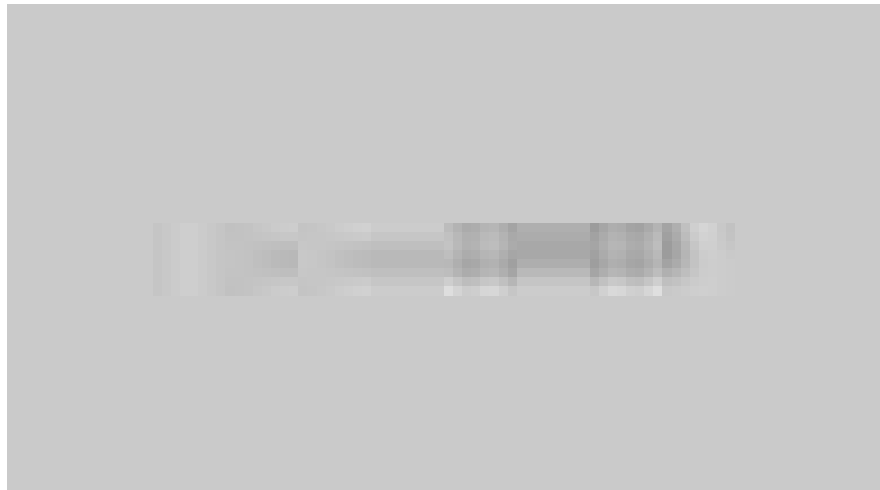
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Trump also reversed American policies on constraining growth to protect the environment and prevent climate change. Highlighting the importance of reducing inflation, concerns about which have been at the heart of wide-ranging support he got in the elections, Trump declared that he is gutting climate controls and unleashing America's energy production, including the drilling of the "liquid gold" under American soil.



US President Donald Trump wraps up his speech during the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the

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Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington, as former President Joe Biden looks on. (AP photo)

Trump promised to rebuild the US economy, renew traditional American values, reclaim American sovereignty, regain control over borders, restore America's global primacy, and reinvigorate American leadership in the outer space frontier, including the planet Mars.



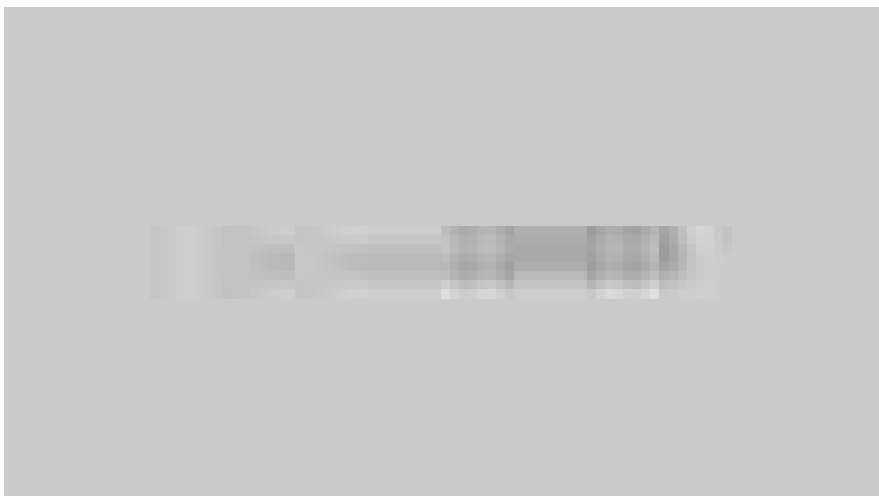
Trump highlighted his aversion to wars abroad and promised to be a “peacemaker.” For Trump, defending America’s borders from alien invasion and securing America’s citizens from criminal gangs is more important than defending nations in distant lands. He is ready to deploy American armed forces to achieve these tasks at home rather than pursue military adventures abroad.

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That does not mean Trump is willing to give up his assertive claims on the Panama Canal. Trump omitted any references to Canada and Greenland but announced plans to rename the Gulf of Mexico as ‘Gulf of America’. Contrary to widespread criticism, Trump is not an isolationist but will pick his fights carefully and decisively where he believes American interests are clear and tangible.

Much like his near magical comeback to power, Trump hopes to propel America towards the pole position in the international system. All major interlocutors of Washington – both friends and foes – must prepare to engage with an America that is quite different from the one that they have been familiar with since the Second World War.



President Donald Trump gestures during the 60th Presidential Inauguration in the Rotunda of the US Capitol in Washington. (AP photo)

India, which has seen its relationship with the United States steadily rise along an upward arc over the last two decades, must now prepare to deal with a

transactional Trump, who is determined to put America First.

Some policymakers in Delhi might feel Trump's hardball realism will be easier to engage with than the liberal hypocrisy and condescension that has long marked US foreign policy. With Trump, it would seem, what you see is what you get.

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Yet Delhi will have challenges ahead, especially on trade and immigration. It will have to temper its tendency to take the relationship for granted and marshal all its negotiating skills at give and take in advancing ties with an assertive Washington under Trump. Internal reform in India could be critical in dealing with the many consequences of Trump's radical solutions to "Making America Great Again."



President Donald Trump speaks as Vice President JD Vance watches at Emancipation Hall after the 60th Presidential Inauguration. (Photo: AP)

In acting quickly and decisively on several complex issues, Trump is keeping his word not to waste even a moment this time around. It is also perhaps practical since he will become lame duck after the mid-term elections set for November 2026. The focus will then turn to the race for presidency in 2028 and the election of Trump's successor.

Trump, then, is ready to go full tilt for the next two years. His speech and the decisions today suggested there is no holding back. Although sceptics, including liberals, environmentalists, and human rights activists, will denounce the talk of a "golden age," Trump can count, at least for now, on expansive domestic support—from the corporate and tech titans, the working classes, and social conservatives. Trump also pointed to the growing support among the Black and Hispanic minorities for his agenda.



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Trump has sounded the bugle for prolonged battle against liberal hegemony that has long dominated America's domestic and foreign policy. Given its global weight,

America's internal war will inevitably envelop America's relations with the rest of the world.

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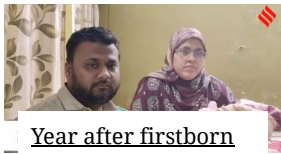


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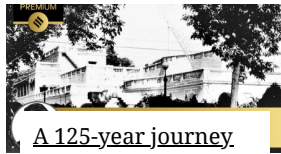
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