United States Senate

February 23, 2021

The Honorable Taranjit Singh Sandu
Ambassador of India to the United States
Embassy of India to the United States
2107 Massachusetts Ave NW
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Ambassador Sandu:

As a Senator from New Jersey, I represent a vibrant and engaged Indian diaspora that cares deeply about a strong U.S.-India relationship based on our shared democratic values. That is why India’s efforts in late 2020 to rush through a set of laws aimed at “modernizing” India’s farming sector and the violent repression with which state security forces have countered protesting farmers and their supporters have alarmed many of my constituents and me.

Millions of protesting farmers and their supporters have come together in a months-long show of solidarity, spanning regions, faith, and class, to demand the repeal of the laws. The government and security forces have responded to the protesters with unlawful detentions, media censorship, tear gas, water cannons, and physical brutality. Sikh farmers from Punjab, a state that will be disproportionately impacted by the laws, have been maligned as religious extremists and separatists, and are at a heightened risk of violence due to longstanding mistrust and animosities between India’s Hindu and Sikh communities. The Indian government has suspended mobile communications and internet services in and around Delhi several times in recent weeks, and authorities have brought charges against several journalists for documenting police violence.

As Indian farmers and their supporters exercise their democratic duty and privilege to protest, I urge you to press leadership within the Indian government to meet its obligation to democratic principles, equal treatment of all citizens, human rights, and the rule of law for all. My constituents and I deeply value the U.S. relationship with India, and I am hopeful the Government of India will engage constructively with the protesters to find a common ground upon which all sides can agree.

Thank you for your immediate and continued attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Cory A. Booker
United States Senator