

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB
MUKHERJEE AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF THE
PRESIDENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA, H.E. MR.
XI JINPING**

RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN, SEPTEMBER 18, 2014

Your Excellency, Mr. Xi Jinping,

President of the People's Republic of China,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you, Madame Peng Liyuan, and the distinguished members of your delegation to Rashtrapati Bhavan this evening.

Your State Visit to India is taking place at a time when India and China are looking forward to a new era in our bilateral relations.

Excellency, the people of India see China as a great civilization, a nation that has achieved unprecedented progress and prosperity in a remarkably short span of time. The spectacular success of the People's Republic of China in economic development, poverty alleviation, infrastructure creation and information connectivity is, indeed, inspiring.

As a neighbour, India would be happy to see China continue on its path of robust economic growth and productivity and further contribute to a stronger global economy and peace in the region and the world.

It is India's sincere belief that as our relationship evolves to a partnership that is balanced and broad-based, we will create significant opportunities for both our countries to take initiatives for

mutual benefit in the bilateral context and also to accrue the benefits that we seek from the evolution and growth of Asia.

Excellency,

In our discussions this evening, we agreed that there exists considerable potential for greater co-operation between India and China in the bilateral, regional and international spheres. The agreements for co-operation that our two Governments have signed today in a wide range of areas of common interest reflect the growing maturity in our ties.

We are now focused on giving a fresh impetus to our joint efforts. We would like to realise the full potential of our many complementarities. At the same time, in order to create and sustain a positive environment for this to happen and endure, it is necessary for us to remain sensitive to each other's concerns and aspirations.

Excellency, enhancing our trade and economic co-operation is in our common interest. To achieve this, we can and must, re-double our efforts to address the trade deficit, provide better market access to each other's goods and explore the opportunities to create co-operation in the infrastructure sector.

Excellency, our nations share a desire for early resolution of the outstanding issues between our States - including the boundary question. We are both committed to the maintenance of peace and tranquility at our borders; we both would like to ensure that the dialogue mechanisms that we have created for this purpose are error - proof. It is important for us to improve the dialogue and co-operative engagement between our two militaries and constantly strive to enhance the communication between them at all levels.

Excellency,

It is clear that we are, today, at a defining stage in our bilateral relationship. We now need to take it to a level where our

programmes and initiatives facilitate the realization of our common goals of progress and prosperity for our two nations. Both our countries are committed to working in that direction.

I once again welcome Your Excellency and Madame Peng Liyuan and wish you a very enjoyable and fruitful visit to India.

With these words, permit me, Excellency, to raise a toast to:

- the enduring friendship between our two ancient civilizations;
- everlasting peace between our two societies;
- deepening of the multifaceted relationship between our two Governments; and
- the good health, happiness and prosperity of Your Excellency and Madame Peng Liyuan.

Thank You.