

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA AT THE BANQUET
HOSTED IN HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT OF FEDERAL
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF NEPAL, RT. HON'BLE, BIDYA
DEVI BHANDARI**

Rashtrapati Bhavan: April 18, 2017

Your Excellency, Rt. Hon'ble, Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari
President of Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal,
Hon'ble Ministers of the Government of Nepal,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me immense pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to you, Madame President, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan this evening on your first State Visit to India. The memories of my own State Visit to Nepal just a few months ago, Your Excellency's gracious hospitality during my visit and the overwhelming affection shown to me by the people of Nepal are still fresh in my mind.

Excellency,

The close bonds of kinship and cooperation between India and Nepal are defined by our geography and enriched by our common culture and history. Our age-old fraternal relations have been nurtured by successive Governments and leaders in both India and Nepal into a dynamic and enriching partnership. We consider it natural and logical that as neighbours with a unique and exemplary relationship, both our nations should continuously build on our many complementarities, explore all opportunities and pursue new avenues of cooperation to our mutual benefit.

Excellency,

India has an abiding interest in the socio-economic development of Nepal. We believe that the prosperity, security and welfare of our two nations are inter-linked and inter-dependent. India is committed to extending all possible support in accordance with the priorities of the people and Government of Nepal.

Today, as democratic and pluralistic nations, both India and Nepal aspire for a higher growth rate, an inclusive society, sustainable development and an external environment that facilitates our national development. Both our peoples are opposed to the menace of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Development and progress is what is of utmost importance to us. Towards our common goals, we have been co-operating closely, to very successful outcomes.

Excellency,

Nepal is passing through a crucial phase in its quest for peace, stability, and multi-party democracy with the aim of consolidating the gains of democracy and achieving economic prosperity. India lauds the enterprise and achievements of the people of Nepal. Their wisdom and resilience will, no doubt, succeed in forging consensus through dialogue and understanding - so as to achieve their objectives within a federal and democratic framework, taking all sections of their society on board. We wish the people of Nepal every success in this noble endeavour.

Excellency,

Today, as India witnesses a dramatic economic transformation, it presents unprecedented opportunities to investors and partners in all sectors. We welcome the people of Nepal to take full advantage of these. We are happy to note the increasing exchanges of businessmen, industrialists and investors as well as students, scholars and academicians - and enhanced levels of tourist flows between our two countries.

Your visit, Madame President, has provided us an opportunity to reaffirm our special relationship and to identify ways and means of further enriching our multifaceted partnership. During your brief stay in India, in your meetings with a cross section of our leadership and our people, you will find one clear and consistent message - of India's unequivocal commitment to her bilateral co-operation and friendship with Nepal. India also seeks to advance our common interests through regional and sub-regional cooperation based on respect and sensitivity to each other's

interests and concerns. Together, we can work with our neighbours for a better future for our respective peoples – and, indeed, our whole region.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen,
May I invite you to join me in raising a toast

- to the good health and personal well-being of Her Excellency, the President of Nepal;
- to the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Nepal; and,
- to successful co-operation and enduring friendship between India and Nepal.
