

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH  
KOVIND AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN  
HONOUR OF HIS MAJESTY KING ABDULLAH-II IBN AL  
HUSSEIN OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN**

**Rashtrapati Bhavan, 1 March 2018**

Marhaba and a very warm welcome to you, Your Majesty, and to your distinguished delegation.

We have gathered here to celebrate our friendship and our special ties. Our two countries share ancient connections; and we both have followed similar political trajectories.

On these strong foundations, today, we have built a modern partnership.

**Your Majesty**, your State Visit in 2006 laid the way for a closer engagement between our two countries.

Our mutual commitment to scale up the relationship has since been at work. We have exchanged several high level visits.

Our Prime Minister was received in Amman with special warmth and affection last month. You paid personal attention to his visit and went out of your way to ensure that it was a memorable one. You also made special arrangement for his onward journey to Ramallah. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts for this exceptional gesture.

We count you among our closest friends and deeply value your partnership.

**Your Majesty**, Jordan has played a key role in the Middle East. Your country has been an oasis of stability in the region.

We admire your vision and leadership to bring peace and prosperity in your neighbourhood. We have equally high regard for your late father His Majesty King Hussein. He led his people with foresight, sagacity and courage.

We deeply appreciate you providing hope and shelter to a large number of refugees. As a close friend and partner, I am happy that we are giving you a helping hand in rendering humanitarian assistance to them.

**Your Majesty**, your views on religious moderation and inter-faith dialogue come as a beacon of hope for us and for many.

Indeed, as you said in your address this morning - Faith should only draw humanity together, bring different civilizations to understand and embrace each other.

Our people fully share your vision and desire to build a future of peace and prosperity for our children.

We strongly support the Aqaba process you have initiated. We must come together, firmly and decisively, to defeat terrorism.

**Your Majesty**, we have come a long way in our bilateral journey. But we can do much more together. We must bring the thrill of the blockbuster 'THEEB' and the vibrancy of Bollywood to India-Jordan partnership.

In this respect, I must say, your State Visit is most timely. The agenda that we have set for ourselves be it enhancing security cooperation or expanding our economic collaboration, would take our partnership to newer heights. The Indian growth story presents many opportunities for both of us.

Our relationship, Your Majesty, has many champions. But none more than our farmers. You have given them fertilizers and more food crops.

Our cultural connect and people-to-people relations are our biggest strengths. These have led to an invisible thread binding us together, be it the carvings of Petra in Jordan or the rock-cut architecture of Ajanta in India. Let us nurture and celebrate these special ties.

**Your Majesty**, I take this opportunity to convey my deepest appreciation to you for the assistance extended to Indian citizens in times of instability in the region. We remain ever grateful for this.

With these words, I once again extend to you, **Your Majesty**, a warm welcome and wish you and your people peace, progress and prosperity.

Thank you very much, Shukran Jazeelan