

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT THE STATE BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF  
TURKMENISTAN**

**Ashgabat, April 2, 2022**

Excellency, I am very grateful for your warm welcome and gracious hospitality to me and my delegation. I am particularly touched by your gesture of coming personally to receive me at the airport yesterday.

This is not only my first visit to your beautiful country but also the first ever visit by a President of India to Ashgabat. I am truly mesmerized by the beauty of your 'white marble city'.

Excellency, please accept my hearty congratulations once again on your election as the President of Turkmenistan. Your election to this high-office at such a young age testifies to the high level of trust and confidence of the Turkmen people in your leadership.

Over the last 15 years, Turkmenistan has achieved growth and development under the wise leadership of your father H.E. Mr. Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov. I am confident that your leadership will take the country to newer heights.

India- Turkmenistan historical and cultural ties go back to several millennia. The relics of "Soma" drink found in Gonur Depe, Buddhist manuscripts and coins excavated from Merv and the Turkman Gate in Delhi built in memory of the Sufi saint Shah Turkmen Bayabani are abiding examples of our age old linkages. I was reminded of these ties today when I interacted with some Turkmeni nationals who were very fluent in Hindi language.

It is a matter of pride that Turkmen people greatly admire Indian films, dance, music, Yoga and, Ayurveda. I hope that the new Programme of Cooperation in the field of Culture signed today will pave the way for further intensifying bilateral cultural exchanges.

I thank the Government of Turkmenistan for the support provided to the Yoga and Traditional Medicine Center in Ashgabat, which is the first of its kind in Central Asia. India will be happy to assist in opening of similar Centres in other cities of Turkmenistan.

Turkmenistan is endowed with abundant natural resources and is strategically located at the cross-roads of Central Asia and Persian Gulf. Chabahar Port in Iran could be the fulcrum that enhances connectivity between Central and South Asia.

As Turkmenistan embarks on a new era of development, India stands ready to partner and support you on this journey.

On that note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I extend my warm wishes for:

- the good health, success and well-being of President Serdar Beridmuhamedov

- the peace, progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Turkmenistan

- the enduring partnership between India and Turkmenistan

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