

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,  
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND  
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED BY PRESIDENT OF BULGARIA  
MR RUMEN RADEV**

**Sofia, September 5, 2018**

1. I thank you Mr. President for your warm words of welcome and for your gracious hospitality. It is indeed an honour for me to be paying a State Visit to Bulgaria.
2. Bulgaria and India are special friends. Our ties go deep into history. The timeless vitality of Vitosha mountains and the wisdom and fame of the statue of Sofia have nurtured and nourished our bonds.
3. On the foundation of a rich cultural past and shared values of democracy, we have built a modern partnership. The confidence and trust that we repose in each other are exceptional.
4. Today, we have committed ourselves to further strengthen our multifaceted ties. Our excellent political relations have given us the bandwidth to make our global partnership truly meaningful. It is time now for us to bring similar energy and momentum to our economic relations. India's high growth trajectory and Bulgaria's niche business and technological strengths must embrace each other for mutual growth and prosperity.
5. Excellency, few countries share the comfort of profound cultural understanding and togetherness as we have. Upanishads, Yoga and Ayurveda have given you a deeper understanding of India. And to us, the thought and philosophy of Georgi Rakovski and Boris Georgiev have helped to comprehend and learn about Bulgarian people and their culture.
6. Excellency, the future of our relations lies with our youth. I was delighted to speak to your students at the Sofia University today. We must get our young ones to engage with each other. Your star, Dimitar Berbatov has already inspired many football fans in India. And now, with the magic of Bollywood and the beauty of your mountains at work, we have to do only little to get them together. They can connect and create new ideas and templates for a sustainable, secure and prosperous world.

7. I compliment Bulgaria for successfully holding the rotating Presidency of the European Union. Your leadership has indeed, inspired many.
8. Excellency, I am confident that my visit will mark a new chapter in our warm and friendly relations.

With these words, ladies and gentleman, may I now propose a toast:

- To the continued good health and wellbeing of President and First Lady of Bulgaria; and
- To the eternal friendship between the peoples of India and Bulgaria.

Thank you!