

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND AT THE
BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY MR MOON JAE-IN, THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, July 10, 2018

1. A very warm welcome to you, Mr. President and Madam First Lady, on your first State Visit to India.
2. Mr. President, the Republic of Korea has a very special place in India and among our people. As a country ever so keen to make rapid progress, ever so committed to improving the lives of its people, we have always been inspired by your achievements. We know of your dynamic country and your diligent people through the stunning success of your enterprises, your technological excellence and your world class products.
3. And it is not just goods, Korean popular culture has also charmed us. From Gangnam Style to Korea's band "BTS", our youth are captivated by the tunes of these iconic pop groups—even if many of them have never visited Gangnam! Our people, indeed, share common tastes; from music to cuisine, from the roll of drums to the tanginess of Kimchi.
4. Mr. President, our friendship is unique. Its roots go deep into history. Some 8% of the Korean population trace their origins to the fabled princess Suriratna from Ayodhya. She married King Suro and tied us in a special knot forever.
5. Mr. President, your visit today is an opportunity for us to build upon our Special Strategic Partnership. We deeply appreciate your commitment and the importance you attach to our bilateral relations. And as we work for our shared future, we must pride ourselves in our shared destiny. Every 15th August when we celebrate our independence, we proudly think of you, your sacrifice and rejoice in your liberation day.

6. Mr. President, India and Korea are natural partners, and for more than one reason. Our Act East policy harmonizes neatly with your own “New Southern Community”, in which we understand India is a key pillar. As strong and vibrant democracies, as countries which seek ethical market practices, and as countries with respect for an inclusive, equitable, stable, secure and rules-based international order, it is logical for us to work together. This is all the more so as you, Mr. President, craft an extraordinary effort to reduce tensions in Northeast Asia, and take the path of dialogue to create lasting peace with North Korea. Your conviction is leading to what would truly be termed a historic transformation in global affairs. Our national poet, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore wrote a piece nearly 90 years ago at a difficult time in Korea's history. In it, he forecast that Korea would once again be the “lamp of the East”. And how right he was!
7. As a friend of the Korean people, as a country that empathizes with the traumatic partition of your nation over 70 years ago, we wish you every success.
8. Mr. President, trade and economic cooperation is a vital pillar of our friendship. For our part, we see great complementarities between our economies—not just for trade, important as that is, but also as India seeks to raise the share of manufacture in its GDP, and as we seek to transform governance through the digital revolution. We count on Korean engineering skills, technological prowess and smart innovations to help us build our next-generation infrastructure and to power our growth.
9. As global partners, we have much to do together. Your green growth initiatives and the International Solar Alliance can and must complement each other. We can together help build a climate-smart world. The future of the world we live in, no doubt, would be shaped by the digital revolution. But for our progress to be sustainable, we must harness the depths of our traditional knowledge and the limitless possibilities of blue economy. We must get our young minds to compete and collaborate, on artificial

intelligence and robotics and as much on Korean traditional medicine and Ayurveda. We must capture their imagination and their energy to build a society that is prosperous, progressive and at peace with itself.

10. Mr. President, I understand that your Government's approach has been to ensure taking all your citizens forward together. I am sure this applies to our friendship too. As you say in Korean, Hamke Ha-myeon, song-gong hamnida, which means, "together, we will succeed!"

11. On that optimistic note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me in raising a toast to:

- the health, success and happiness of President Moon and Madam First Lady;
- to the continued success and prosperity of the Republic of Korea; and
- to the lasting friendship between India and the Republic of Korea!

Ga-mab-seum-nida!! Thank you.