

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR
BY THE PRESIDENT OF MYANMAR**

Nay Pyi Taw, December 11, 2018

1. I am grateful to you, Mr President, for your warm words of welcome. Allow me to express my deep appreciation for your generosity and for the hospitality that has been accorded to me, my wife and my delegation. We are all deeply touched. Indeed, we feel at home.
2. I am particularly honoured to be your first state guest after you assumed office as the President of Myanmar.
3. Your beautiful country has a special place in our hearts. We are bound together by shared waters, forests and hills, by culture, cuisine, language and history. And more profoundly, by the blessings of Lord Buddha. These are the bedrock of our relationship, which provide it strength and a unique emotional connect.
4. Our people have much to cherish and celebrate, of our special ties and our friendship. The vibrant Indian-origin community, who have made Myanmar their home, are an organic link between us. Our anti-colonial struggles and our shared aspirations bring us together as well. We gave home to each other when force and fate defeated us. King Thibaw spent his days in Ratnagiri and Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar in Yangon. We have, indeed, been friends in prosperity and as much in adversity.
5. The propagation of *vipassana* in the modern era, a meditation technique developed and practiced by Lord Buddha himself, owes so much to the pioneering work of Satya Narayan Goenka, who received his initial lessons from *Sayagyi U Ba Khin*. And of course, we fondly remember Daw Tint Tint, or Usha Narayanan, the daughter of Myanmar, who became the First Lady of India.

6. Your Excellencies, our discussions today convinced me that our ties can only get closer and more intense from here. Both sides are working tirelessly to enhance the intensity of our bilateral engagement through increased connectivity, capacity-building and growing commercial and cultural exchanges.
7. In India, we are aware of the challenges Myanmar faces in taking forward the peace process, national reconciliation and economic recovery. I want to say to you that the Government and people of India stand by you. We are in full support of your peace process and in preserving the unity and territorial integrity of Myanmar—all of which are fundamentally in our own interests as well. For without that, India cannot succeed in its effort to bring development, prosperity and connectivity to our citizens in the Northeast, which borders Myanmar.
8. Therefore, Excellencies, because our destinies are intertwined and interlinked, our friendship is driven not by short term goals, but by a larger and lasting quest for mutual peace, progress and prosperity. And our partnership with Myanmar is at that important intersection between friendship, neighbourhood and shared core interests.
9. With those words, I propose a toast to:
 - the good health and personal well-being of the President of Myanmar, the First Lady and the State Counsellor;
 - the peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Myanmar; and
 - the timeless friendship and ever-growing closeness between India and Myanmar.

Chezu Din Bade! Thank you.