

**REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY THE PRESIDENT
OF PRESIDENT OF THE SWISS CONFEDERATION**

Berne, September 13, 2019

1. I bring to you greetings from 1.3 billion people of India, the largest democracy in the world and the fastest growing large economy.
2. Mr. President, democracy is the key value that brings our two nations together. Your unique practice of direct democracy continues to be an inspiration for us and the world. In India, this year we celebrated the largest festival of democracy on the planet. And the new Government with a renewed mandate has embarked on a programme to create a New India with the motto 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas', that is - together with all, development of all, and trust of all.
3. We are working with enthusiasm and confidence to make India a 5 trillion dollar economy by 2025. In this transformational journey, we see your country as a natural partner.
4. Mr. President, our partnership is reinforced by the Treaty of Friendship that we signed in 1948. Last year we celebrated the 70th anniversary of the Treaty and our friendship. In these seven decades, our ties have expanded several-fold. Trade and tourism, skills and sports have brought our people together. Swiss technology, brand-names and sporting icons are very popular in India. Last month, P. V. Sindhu, the golden girl of Indian sports, won the World Badminton Championship title in Basel, becoming the first Indian ever to do so. We thank you for cheering for her.
5. Mr. President, I recall the State visit of your predecessor which I hosted in 2017. On the occasion, we issued a Joint Statement providing a comprehensive framework to take our 'longstanding

dynamic partnership' forward. I am happy that in the last few years, we have been able to make significant progress in a wide range of areas, such as trade, investment, education, science & technology and automatic exchange of information on tax matters.

6. Mr. President, India today is a land of huge opportunities. We have abundant and youthful human resources. Our business ecosystem is being continuously improved. There is vast scope to combine our relative advantages, in capital, technology, science and human resources, and to work for mutual benefit.
7. I am confident that our discussions today will take our mutually beneficial partnership to greater heights. And our chocolates and spices will continue to flavour our friendship and togetherness!
8. On that delectable note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to join me in raising a toast:
 - To the health and happiness of President Maurer;
 - To the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Switzerland; and
 - To the enduring friendship between India and Switzerland.

Thank You.