

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT
OF PORTUGAL**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, February 14, 2020

1. Mr. President, I am honoured to welcome you and your delegation on your first-ever visit to India. Bem-vindos à India!
2. As two countries, we have engaged with each other for centuries. It was the spirit of fearless discovery – and the scent of Indian spices - that made Portugal the first country to connect Europe and India by sea, more than 500 years ago. Interestingly, Vasco da Gama's sea route to India not only connected India to the West; it also connected Portugal to the world!
3. And so, Mr. President, even though this is your first visit, you will find this country very familiar. Our shared history runs deep. You will see its indelible imprint – in the Portuguese name of the city you will visit tomorrow Bombaim; in the stories of the famed Alfonso mango; in the culinary delights of ananas and tomato brought to India by the Portuguese. You will find the Portuguese footprint right here in Rashtrapati Bhavan as much– in the beautiful cork and olive trees in our garden!
4. We find a deep imprint of India too in Portugal. We are proud that Prime Minister Antonio Costa, who visited us recently, is the first Indian-origin Prime Minister in the West. India remains alive in Portugal in many other ways as well - through Gandhian thought and legacy, and through yoga and spirituality.

Mr. President,

5. Today, we are once again bringing history full circle – with Portugal partnering us in setting up India's first maritime museum at one of the world's oldest ports, dating back to the Indus valley civilization. At the same time, we are building a modern, forward-looking, partnership on the rich foundations of our shared history. We are strengthening our people-to-people ties with a migration and mobility partnership, and incubating our ideas to build start-up networks. Our businesses have joined hands in niche sectors like shipbuilding, aerospace and defence. Our digital and renewable energy collaborations are breaking new grounds.
6. Our global partnership has added depth to our multilateral engagement and to our common desire to fashion a multi-polar world-order. India looks forward to becoming an Associate Observer of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries, so that we can amplify our developmental partnerships in Africa and elsewhere. We recall that the first India-EU Summit was initiated under the Portuguese Presidency. When Portugal assumes the Presidency of the European Union next year, we once again look forward to deepening our engagement with the EU.
7. Mr. President as you travel through our country, you will experience the depth of our cultural exchanges. I hope you will taste the famous Mumbai Batata Pav – the name is Portuguese but I must caution you that the spices are Indian! I am sure that you will feel at home in Goa too, when you meet many other De Souza's.
8. I wish you a memorable visit and continued peace, progress and prosperity for the people of Portugal. May there be everlasting friendship between our two countries!

Viva Portugal! Jai Hind!