

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH  
KOVIND AT THE BANQUET HOSTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC, MR PROKOPIS PAVLOPOULOS**

**Athens, June 18, 2018**

1. I am, indeed, grateful to you, Mr. President, for your warm words of welcome and gracious hospitality.
2. Greece is a very special country for us. Our relations have always been warm and friendly. Today, we both have reaffirmed our commitment to deepen our contemporary ties; drawing inspiration, understanding and strength from our age-old ancient connect.
3. Since I arrived in Greece, Mr. President, I have had engagement and conversations with many Greek friends, and I must say, they have all, and without exception, displayed such warmth and affection that it makes me feel truly special to be visiting your beautiful country.
4. Excellency, our vibrant ancient links have given depth to our engagement as modern nations. Today, I presented you a slice of that special bond, which we have so beautifully preserved and cherish in India. Heliodorus, the Greek Ambassador at the court of Bhagabhadra in Central India, and his pillar, built in Second century BC, stand as tall symbols of our long-standing friendship.
5. Our shared history tells us that Pythagoras was influenced by Indian philosophy and we learnt from you in the field of art and drama. It is interesting that the word for “stage-curtain” in Sanskrit is YAVANIKA, derived from our word for Greeks, YAVAN.
6. Mr. President, as India emerges a powerful engine of the global economy, new opportunities are coming up for Greek companies willing to write new chapters in Indo-Greek relations. India’s growth story and world class Greek expertise in shipping, maritime services, agriculture, food processing and tourism can be a perfect match for each other.

7. We also need to redouble our efforts to bring our trade to a higher plane. Indian Mangoes and Greek Olives are worth their weight in gold. Let us give them a bigger share on our plate and in our palate!
8. We thank you for inviting India to participate in the Thessaloniki International Fair next year as “Honored Country”. It will be an honour for us to do so. I hope this turns out to be a new beginning in our trade relations.
9. Excellency, your panoramic and picturesque settings, from Acropolis to Santorini, are great attractions for our tourists and our film Industry. We also wish to welcome more Greek friends to visit India. Let us work to give more wings to our people-to-people relations.
10. Excellency, India-Greece global partnership is of high import. Both our countries are committed to sustainability. And as we do so, we could also look at collaborations to strengthen the International Solar Alliance and tackle climate Change.
11. Mr. President, our two countries have a common stake in promoting multilateralism and global peace and security. We thank you for your consistent support for our candidature for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. We must also redouble our efforts to fight and defeat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
12. Mr. President, our relations based on shared values have stood the test of time. They ring true today, and will for the years to come. On that optimistic note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, please join me, in raising a toast to :
  - the health and happiness of President of the Hellenic Republic and First Lady;
  - the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Greece; and
  - the everlasting friendship between India and Greece.

Thank you!