

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND AT
THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF HIS EXCELLENCY DR
FRANK-WALTER STEINMEIER PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERAL
REPUBLIC OF GERMANY**

Rashtrapati Bhavan, March 24, 2018

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you and your delegation Mr. President.

Herzlich Willkommen!

Mr. President, we have welcomed you in India on several occasions in the past. But today it is a very special day. This is your first State Visit to our country.

You have made significant contribution to strengthening India-Germany Strategic Partnership. It is truly an honour to have you with us.

Excellency,

India-Germany friendship is unique and special. On one hand it has the strength of a digital-age partnership, and on the other, the depth of an age-old cultural engagement.

We have had a long tradition of intellectual exchanges between our two countries. German scholars played a key role in promoting Indology in Europe and in the West. The translation of Kalidasa's Shakuntalam into German created quite a sensation among scholars like Goethe. And on us, the arguments of Max Mueller and Hermann Hesse have always resonated with conviction.

Similarities between German and Sanskrit have further influenced our cultural cross-flows.

Excellency,

India-Germany contemporary partnership is built on our shared values of democracy, respect for freedoms and the rule of law. In your journey to Benaras, Sarnath and Old Delhi, you would have experienced it first-hand how much we cherish these values and our cultural diversity.

Our economic and technology partnership has been a story of many accomplishments. We take much pride in it. We appreciated German

technological expertise when telegraph cable was laid between Kolkata and London in 1867. You also helped us set-up IIT Madras, a premier engineering institute in our country. We continue to count on you as our leading high technology partner.

We see Germany as a natural partner in our quest for sustainable growth. Ours is a partnership for the future, be it defining the contours of cyber space or climate change action, digital transformation or harnessing renewable energy.

German companies are helping us take our Make In India, Skill India, Clean India and Start-up India programmes forward. We want many more to join us in our journey.

Excellency,

We have an intensive science and technology cooperation. We also have meeting of our minds on traditional knowledge and medicine. Ayurveda and Homeopathy form part of our shared heritage. The land of Hahnemann and the country of Charaka must come together to chart an alternate way of healthy and sustainable living.

Our people-to-people relations are expanding. Students, skills and sports are establishing new networks of our togetherness.

Excellency,

Our Strategic Partnership is moving to a higher level. Our security, defence and space collaboration is gaining greater latitude in our collaborative world.

Excellency, in these times, no corner of the world is immune to the scourge of terrorism. It poses a constant threat to our peaceful societies and to our development and progress. We must join hands, ever more strongly, to defeat these inhuman forces.

We deeply value Germany's role in promoting global peace and stability. We fully support your efforts to strengthen Europe and a multi-polar world. In this context, the Indian Ocean Region and beyond offers possibilities for mutual collaboration.

Excellency, there is strong willingness in both our countries to deepen and elevate our relations even further. I am confident that your visit would open a new chapter in our bilateral relations.

With these words, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to join me in raising a toast:

- to the health and well-being of President Steinmeier and Frau Buedenbender;
- to the progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Germany; and
- to the ever-lasting friendship between India and Germany.

Danke. Thank you.
