

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

Rashtrapati Bhavan, February 27, 2020

1. I am delighted to receive you Mr. President on your first State Visit to India. It has been a little over a year since my State Visit to your beautiful country in December 2018, and less than a year since you honoured us with your presence at the swearing-in of our new Government last May.

2. As neighbours connected by land and water, with a long civilizational friendship, it is only natural that we meet as frequently as possible. After all, from language to food, from dress to rituals, ours are sister civilizations: unique in their own right, but also related. The sacred waters of Irrawaddy and Phalgu have long been part of our religious beliefs, our spirituality and our cultural imagination. And so it is a pleasure to host you as family!

Excellency,

3. Your meetings here would have reassured you that India remains committed to providing its fullest support for the expansion of your democracy and economic development. India stands for a stable, united and prosperous Myanmar, established through a successful peace process.

4. And since peace is indivisible, the settlement of ethnic conflict in your country helps us ensure peace and tranquility on our shared borders. It is in this context that we are happy to help by sharing our experience with democracy, federalism and constitutionalism with you.

Excellency,

5. To foster sustainable peace, we must ensure a peace dividend through prosperity. Connectivity between our countries is already expanding, through the building of roads, use of waterways,

upgradation of ports and increase of bilateral air services. We need to widen such connectivity to include energy as well.

6. Another important element of a peace dividend is the provision of capacity. As State Counsellor Daw Suu Kyi has said, she attaches priority to “*people understanding that they have the power to change things themselves*”. It is in this spirit that India is invested in capacity-building in Myanmar.

Excellency,

7. Myanmar has a proverb and I quote - “the islands depend on reeds, and reeds depend on islands” unquote. That is to say, our interests are inter-dependent. From such wisdom are mutually-beneficial partnerships created. May your pilgrimage to Bodh Gaya and the divine shade of the Bodhi tree, continue to bless our age-old ties.
8. On that special note, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen:
 - I wish good health, success and long life for President U Win Myint, and First Lady Daw Cho Cho;
 - I wish continued progress and prosperity for the people of Myanmar;
 - And I wish everlasting friendship between India-Myanmar.

Thank you. Chezu Din Bare.