

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR
BY THE PRESIDENT OF BOLIVIA**

Santa Cruz, March 29, 2019

1. I thank you, brother Evo Morales, for your warm words of welcome. Allow me to express my sincere gratitude for the most gracious hospitality accorded to me and my delegation. I am delighted to pay the first ever State Visit from India to your beautiful country. And to have been conferred with the highest award of Bolivia has added further to the honour.
2. This visit is indeed very special for us. When I landed on the soil of your beautiful country, Excellency, I instantly felt a sense of familiarity and happiness. Little wonder then that through the twist and turns of history, both of us were called Indians! We keep this special bond close to our hearts and cherish it to the fullest.
3. As two ancient civilizations, we share much in common. Cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity defines our people, and unity in diversity is our shared achievement. We deeply appreciate the role played by Bolivia at the United Nations in declaring 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.
4. Both our countries are storehouse of ancient knowledge, spirituality and nature, from Tiwanaku to the Himalayas and beyond. In them, lies solutions to many of our modern-day challenges. For this reason and for our togetherness, we supported your launch of the International Year of Quinoa, the “Golden Grain of the Andes” at the United Nations in 2013. And we remain grateful to you for your support and solidarity to declare 21st June as the International Day of Yoga by the United Nations.

5. Brother Evo Morales, there is much that India and Bolivia can contribute to each other's march towards progress and development. Today, we have committed ourselves to an expanded bilateral agenda and signed several agreements to deepen our ties. Let us work together for a brighter future for our people.

6. With these words, I propose a toast:
 - To the good health and happiness of President Evo Morales Ayma;
 - To the success and prosperity of the people of the Plurinational State of Bolivia; and
 - To the everlasting friendship between the Republic of India and the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

Jallalla India – Bolivia Friendship!

Muchas Gracias!