

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB  
MUKHERJEE AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HONOUR OF HE  
MR. RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN, THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

Rashtrapati Bhavan: May 01, 2017

Your Excellency, Mr. RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

President of the Republic of Turkey,

Madam EMINE ERDOGAN,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege to welcome you all this evening.

I am reminded, at this moment, of the famous words of Yunus Emre - “*A heart makes a good home for the friend.*” We greet you, President Erdogan, Madam Emine Erdogan and the distinguished members of your delegation in this very spirit.

2. Excellency, I recall, with pleasure, my own visit to your beautiful country in 2013. The warmth of the friendly people of Turkey throughout my visit is still fresh in my mind. I am happy that your State Visit to India has given me this opportunity of receiving you and Madam Emine Erdogan in the Rashtrapati Bhavan – and reciprocating the gracious hospitality of your Government and people.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. The relationship between India and Turkey pre-dates the establishment of our diplomatic ties as two modern and independent nations. Down the centuries and through our shared history, it has evolved and deepened. The Turkish contribution to Indian art and architecture, our language, the political and military organizational structure that was developed in our country, some of our laws, our costumes, customs and cuisine, is substantial. Our spiritual and philosophical bonds have been forged by the greatest exponents of Sufism - Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, Yunus Emre, Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti, Nizamuddin Auliya and Amir Khurso. The socio-religious legacy of these poet philosophers emphasised tolerance, universal brotherhood and humanism - timeless values - which are the key to peace and social harmony in present, turbulent times.

Excellency,

4. India’s unambiguous support for Turkey during the Balkan War - and again during Turkey’s independence struggle, demonstrate the depth of friendship and sympathy shared by our peoples at defining moments in our history. We all remember the mission of Dr. Mukhtar Ahmed Ansari to Turkey in 1912 which he undertook to render medical assistance during the Balkan War. Our national leaders, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath

Tagore and Jawaharlal Nehru had empathized, without reservation, with your leaders as they fought for the freedom of your country from foreign rule.

5. Today, as two emerging economies in a globalised world, we both seek to enhance our economic co-operation to avail the current opportunities and build on our complementarities for our mutual benefit.

Excellency,

6. Trade between our two countries has increased manifold since your last visit to India in 2008. This should motivate us to take further steps to enhance bilateral flows of goods and services as well as investments.

7. India's recent economic reforms and flagship initiatives have made us an attractive business destination. We welcome Turkish companies to invest in India - especially in the infrastructure sector where they have exceptional expertise. Equally, we encourage Indian companies to explore prospects in Turkey.

8. The amity between our two countries and the reservoir of goodwill between our peoples is a valuable basis for success - not only in the economic and commercial space, but also in science and technology, the energy sector, agriculture, education, tourism and information technology. Between us, we have the capabilities that, if combined, can achieve the desired results.

9. Excellency, this is a time of unprecedented global challenges. The scourge of terrorism, a reality of our times, has afflicted India and Turkey for decades. India believes that there can be no justification, whatsoever for terrorism. Its use as an instrument of state policy is perilous and reprehensible. We believe that closer co-ordination and concerted efforts by the international community are necessary to tackle this menace effectively.

10. Another global challenge of unprecedented scale is the impact of climate change. There is an urgent need for the world to use science, technology and best practices to achieve the agreed targets so that we can honestly claim to have made the world a better place to live in.

11. I am confident that your State Visit, like your previous visit, will be remembered for its important outcomes, for bringing a fresh impetus to the fruitful cooperation between India and Turkey and for strengthening the mutual understanding and enduring friendship between our two nations.

12. With these words, Mr. President, I thank you for your visit. Please accept the best wishes of the people of India for the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Turkey. I wish you and Madam Emine Erdogan a comfortable and safe flight home.

Thank you.