

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE  
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN THE HONOUR OF H.E. DR. TONY TAN  
KENG YAM, THE PRESIDENT OF REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

**Rashtrapati Bhavan: FEBRUARY 9, 2015**

Your Excellency,  
Dr. Tony Tan Keng Yam,  
President of the Republic of Singapore,  
Madame Mary Tan,  
Distinguished Guests,

It is my pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to Your Excellency and Madame Mary Tan and the distinguished members of your delegation on your first State Visit to India.

Your Excellency,  
Your visit is particularly significant as it commemorates an important milestone – the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between our two Governments.

Excellency,

India and Singapore have much in common. Our contacts began in the days of the Cholas, who were perhaps one of the earlier inhabitants in your land. These intensified in the colonial era, particularly in the flow of traders, scholars and monks. During our independence movement, many patriots from India sought to combine forces against colonial rule and were based in your country. I am delighted to learn that you will be installing a statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in your India Heritage Centre. In modern times, professionals and workers from India have involved themselves whole heartedly in the economic development and growth of Singapore.

We share a vision for a partnership based on our shared beliefs in democracy, multicultural societies, rule of law, free enterprise, regional role and common links through growing people-to-people contacts. We are

partners across the seas and are an integral part of the regional architecture in the Asia-Pacific region.

Today, we are at an interesting cusp in history, witnessing major transformations around us. We have seen the downturn in the global economy and its impact on our region, even though we have been affected less than others. We have seen the shift of the geo-strategic gravity towards Asia. We have also seen the consolidation of forces in Asia. Excellency, it shall be our endeavour to work together towards maintaining peace and stability in our region and bringing development to our peoples.

In recent years, our bilateral relationship has seen a quantitative and qualitative expansion. I am happy that we have embarked on the “5 S” plank - Scale up trade and investments, Speed up connectivity, Smart cities, Skill development and State focus. This provides a contemporary setting to collaboration in the key areas where we have complementarities. Further, this supplements our ongoing co-operation in traditional areas of economy, security, culture and people-to-people exchanges.

Excellency,

We see Singapore as India’s gateway to ASEAN and enhanced co-operation with the countries in this region. We appreciate your role in bringing India and ASEAN closer together. India is also looking forward to embark upon a larger role in the Asia-Pacific.

Excellency,

I hope you have a successful and enjoyable visit to India. We look forward to your inauguration of the Peranakan exhibition tomorrow which will showcase your cultural traditions to the people of India. I hope you will be able to see some of our cultural sites and experience the pulse of our society.

Excellency, I have no doubt that the exchanges between our two countries during this commemorative year will help to further intensify our

co-operation for the benefit of our peoples and peace and prosperity in our region.

With these words, Ladies and Gentlemen, May I request you to join me in a toast :

- to the health and happiness of His Excellency, President Tony Tan Keng Yam and Mrs. Mary Tan;
- to the continued progress and prosperity of the friendly people of Singapore; and
- to enduring friendship between the people of India and the people of Singapore.