

**SPEECH BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA, SHRI
PRANAB MUKHERJEE AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN
HONOUR OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF
INDONESIA, H.E. MR. JOKO WIDODO**

Rashtrapati Bhavan: December 12, 2016

Your excellency Mr. Joko Widodo, President of the Republic of
Indonesia,
Madame Iriana Widodo,
Distinguished members of the Indonesian delegation,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to extend a very warm welcome to you
and Madame Iriana Widodo on your first State Visit to India.

Mr. President, you represent a country with whom India shares
age-old ties. These date back to at least the Srivijaya dynasty - if not
earlier, when Palembang used to be a major Buddhist pilgrimage centre.
It was part of the Buddhist pilgrim trail up to Nalanda and Bodh Gaya.
These early contacts multiplied many times over in Bali, Borobodur and
Java. In the 13th Century, Sufi traders and Islamic missionaries from
Gujarat carried Islam to Indonesia – which has evolved into your unique
brand of 'Pribumisasi' Islam –that is at the foundations of the social and
religious harmony that are seen in Indonesia today. Epics such as the
Ramayana and Mahabharata, Hindu and Buddhist images, Sanskrit
words and names, the timeless art of *ikat* and *batik* are simultaneously a
part of our common heritage and everyday life in India and Indonesia
today.

During our respective national movements for freedom from
colonial rule, your Founding Fathers – Soekarno, Mohamad Hatta, Sutan

Syahrir worked in close collaboration with our national leaders - Jawaharlal Nehru and Biju Patnaik among others. They shared ideas and strategies, and drew inspiration from each other's struggle - in a way that the course of events in one movement often impacted profoundly the other. Prime Minister Sutan Syahrir's offer of sending shipments of rice to India when Indonesia itself was under attack from the Dutch, and Prime Minister Nehru's reciprocal gesture of dispatching textiles and medicines to Indonesia best captures our great solidarity in those difficult days.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our founding leaders represented not just India and Indonesia, they took it upon themselves to raise the voice of oppressed peoples all over the world. The Asian Relations Conference hosted in New Delhi in March 1947, months before India became free, was an early assertion of Asian identity. The Bandung Conference of 1955, bringing together 29 newly-independent countries from Asia and Africa, laid the foundations of Afro-Asian solidarity. Together Indonesia and India helped to write the closing chapters of colonialism and started the Non-Aligned Movement.

Today, each of our two countries represents a remarkable pluralism - of culture, ethnicity, religion and language. Your motto "*Bhinneka Tunggal Ika*" mirrors our own slogan, "*Unity in Diversity*". We are two of the world's largest democracies enjoying a successful strategic partnership; we are maritime neighbours committed to the security of sea lanes of communication and we are both committed to overcome radicalism and intolerance. Both our peoples believe in the power of dialogue and peaceful means – with greater emphasis on finer human values. We are two large Asian economies endowed with the

means to effectively steer Asia on a positive growth trajectory. As forward-looking nations driven by the aspirations and hopes of our young populations, we are very much in step with each other – even 70 years after our birth.

Mr. President, in the last two years in office, you have led your country with great wisdom and determination. Your State Visit to India is taking place at a time when we both seek to add vigour and new dimensions to our already vibrant agenda. Indonesia is already India's number one trade partner in ASEAN - with a total bilateral trade of close to US\$16 billion; and cumulative Indian investment in Indonesia stands at close to US\$15 billion. Our partnership co-operation in the space sector is now 20 years old. In the areas of culture, education and human resource development too, we are closely engaged. I have no doubt that the talks held today and the agreements and MOUs that were signed will serve as a road map for the realization of our common goals.

Mr. President, we look forward to working with you to achieve the full potential of our economic co-operation, our maritime and air links and in increasing our reciprocal investments.

We would be happy to support your 'maritime fulcrum vision' of Indonesia Nusantara to enable Indonesia to protect its maritime resources and integrity and contribute to the security of the Indo-Pacific.

In the multilateral and global context of facing the common challenges of the 21st Century, it is my firm belief that India and Indonesia, together, are factors of stability for the world.

With these words, I welcome you and Madame once again.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I invite you to join me in raising a toast:

- to the health and well-being of President Joko Widodo and Madame Widodo;
- to the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Indonesia; and
- to the enduring friendship between India and Indonesia.