

**Press Information Bureau  
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**India and Kyrgyzstan share common concerns on the threat of terrorism, extremism and drug trafficking, says President**

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee yesterday (December 20, 2016) received His Excellency Mr. Almazbek Sharshenov Atambaev, the President of Kyrgyz Republic and Mrs. Raisa Atambaeva at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He also hosted a banquet in their honour.

Welcoming the Kyrgyz President to India, the President complimented him on the successful conduct of the parliamentary elections in October 2015 and for successfully steering a referendum on constitutional amendments earlier this month.

The President said India values its longstanding friendly relations with Kyrgyzstan. India has had civilizational ties with Central Asia, especially countries which were part of the ancient Silk Route, including Kyrgyzstan. Political ties with the Kyrgyzstan have been traditionally warm and friendly. Next year India and Kyrgyzstan will celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations.

The President said India and Kyrgyzstan share common concerns on the threat of terrorism, extremism and drug-trafficking. He expressed confidence that the Kyrgyz President's visit would give a fillip to the efforts to enhance the multi-faceted relations between the two countries.

Subsequently, in his banquet speech, President Pranab Mukherjee said India has always considered the Kyrgyz Republic to be an important part of its extended neighbourhood. Bishkek is closer to New Delhi than many major cities of India. New Delhi is the closest world capital to Bishkek. Our proximity is not only geographical but also historical and civilisational. We have a shared past, reflected in many elements of our culture. Our friendship flourished during the Soviet era and our Parliamentarians and leaders have maintained regular contacts since then. After Kyrgyzstan became an independent state, it was but natural for India to continue and strengthen its long standing co-operative relationship.

The President said we are happy to see that Kyrgyzstan has progressed so well in the last twenty five years. One of its finest achievements is its steadfast preference for and adherence to democracy. We, in India, believe that a democratic system represents much more than just the periodic exercise of voting in elections. Another commonality which binds us is our commitment to secularism. Both our nations, being pluralistic societies, share the view that harmonious co-existence of citizens of diverse faiths and ethnicities is vital for a nation's progress and growth. The success of our mutually beneficial partnership in diverse sectors of our common interest demonstrates the power of friendship between nations. He was

confident that working together, India and Kyrgyzstan can achieve much for the betterment of not only our two peoples and our region but also of the world.

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