

**Press Information Bureau  
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**‘Putting the people first’ is the guiding philosophy of India-Myanmar development cooperation partnership, says President**

The President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee yesterday (August 29, 2016) received His Excellency U Htin Kyaw, the President of Republic of the Union of Myanmar and Daw Su Su Lwin at Rashtrapati Bhavan. He also hosted a banquet in their honour.

Welcoming the President of Myanmar, the President thanked him for choosing India for the first bilateral overseas visit as the Head of State of Myanmar. He said this is fitting, considering the bonds of friendship, culture, spirituality and history that unite India-Myanmar. He congratulated the Myanmar President on the historic victory of the National League for Democracy in the general election held in November 2015 and expressed delight at the peaceful and orderly transfer of power.

The President said India shares a longstanding historical and cultural relationship with Myanmar which has been cemented by our shared struggle against colonialism. India has been consistently supportive of Myanmar’s progress from military rule towards democracy in recent years guided by the wisdom of its civilian and military leaders and the political sagacity of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who led the democratic forces. As a close friend and a country whose democratic institutions have matured over the years, India celebrates Myanmar’s success and will continue to support Myanmar in strengthening democracy in their country. India is committed to assist in any way that India can in the development and initiatives for the progress of the people of Myanmar.

Subsequently, in his banquet speech, President Pranab Mukherjee said as a friendly neighbour and development partner, India has always stood beside the people of Myanmar with support and assistance when it was required. 'Putting the people first' is the guiding philosophy of India-Myanmar development cooperation partnership. Going forward, India looks forward to working with Government of Myanmar in areas that it has prioritised – such as infrastructure development, connectivity, capacity building, education, healthcare and the setting up of small development projects.

The President said India sees Myanmar as a key partner in its 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policy. As Government of India looks eastward to rejuvenate historical, cultural and commercial links between India and Southeast Asia, Myanmar is the first on our horizon. India attaches high value to Myanmar's contribution and further role in achieving our shared vision of stability, peace and progress in the region. Government of India welcomes the bold step taken by State Counsellor, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in initiating an inclusive process for peace through the 21st Century Panglong Conference. With regard to our common security concerns and our joint efforts in the area of border management, we have agreed to accord special attention to the economic progress of our border areas – that will transform them into zones of peace and prosperity. We would like to see Myanmar as India's gateway to ASEAN and India as Myanmar's bridge to South Asia.

The President said the State Visit of President of Myanmar is opportune as it is taking place at the very beginning of the Government's term – as Myanmar embarks into a promising new chapter in its history. Government of India stands ready to extend unstinting support whenever, wherever, and however Myanmar desire it for achieving the aspirations of its people and the policies of Government of Myanmar.

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