



## India-Myanmar Joint Statement during State Visit of President to Myanmar (10-14 December 2018)

December 13, 2018

1. At the invitation of the President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, His Excellency U Win Myint and the First Lady Daw Cho Cho, the President of the Republic of India, His Excellency Shri Ram Nath Kovind and the First Lady Smt. Savita Kovind paid a State Visit to Myanmar from 10 to 14 December 2018. The visit reinforces the tradition of high-level interaction between the leaders of the two countries in recent years.

2. A ceremonial welcome was accorded to President Kovind at the Presidential Palace in Nay Pyi Taw on 11 December, 2018. President U Win Myint and President Kovind held a bilateral meeting and President U Win Myint hosted a State Banquet for the visiting President in his honour. President Kovind also met with State Counsellor, Her Excellency Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The discussions between the leaders were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere that is the hallmark of the close and friendly relations between the two countries. President U Win Myint and President Kovind also witnessed the signing of MoUs between the two sides in the areas of judicial and educational cooperation. The Indian side also handed over the first 50 units of prefabricated houses built in Rakhine State under the Rakhine State Development Programme funded by the Government of India. Furthermore, both sides agreed to sign at the earliest the MoU for Cooperation on Combating Timber Trafficking and Conservation of Tigers and Other Wildlife and the MoU on Bilateral Cooperation for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons; Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Re-integration of Victims of Trafficking, on which negotiations are nearing completion.

3. On 12 December 2018, President Kovind visited the Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education and the Rice Bio Park that have been set up with the assistance of Indian Government in the precincts of Yezin Agricultural University. Both the facilities were formally dedicated by President Kovind to the people of Myanmar. They demonstrate continuing commitment of India to assist Myanmar in capacity building and

providing technical assistance in the all-important agriculture sector.

4. President Kovind also travelled to Yangon where he visited places of historical and cultural importance, and paid his respects at the Martyrs' Mausoleum. He met with the Indian-origin and expatriate Indian community of Myanmar and also inaugurated the Enterprise India Show, which witnessed the participation of Indian industries to network, partner and explore business opportunities in Myanmar.

5. During the talks, the leaders of the two countries reaffirmed their common aspiration for peace, collective prosperity and development of the region and beyond. They reviewed developments since the visits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Myanmar in September 2017 and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to India in January 2018 and noted the growing exchanges in the bilateral sphere, including in the areas of trade, investment, culture, people-to-people contacts and security that bear testimony to the synergies between Myanmar's independent, active and non-aligned foreign policy and India's pragmatic Act East and Neighbourhood First policies. The leaders agreed to continue exploring new opportunities to expand bilateral relations for the mutual benefit of the peoples of both countries.

6. The Government of India appreciated the Government of Myanmar's announcement to grant Tourist Visa on Arrival, starting from 1 December 2018, to Indian citizens who intend to visit Myanmar. This will promote people to people ties and increase the flow of tourists between the two countries. The Government of Myanmar also thanked the Government of India for according gratis visa for all Myanmar citizens visiting India.

7. President Kovind appreciated Myanmar Government's ongoing efforts toward achieving peace and national reconciliation in the country. He expressed full support of the Government of India to the on-going peace process being pursued with various ethnic armed organizations. He underlined that peace and stability in Myanmar are equally in India's own interest, and that India stands committed to help Myanmar strengthen democratic institutions and emerge as a democratic federal union. In this regard, Myanmar expressed its appreciation to India for the exposure visits being arranged by India for parliamentarians and parliamentary personnel from Myanmar.

8. The leaders agreed that terrorism constitutes a significant threat to peace and stability in the region and should be confronted in all its forms and manifestations. They called on the international community to end selective and partial approaches to combating terrorism and, in this regard, jointly called for the expeditious finalization and adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism by the United Nations General Assembly.

9. The leaders also noted the need to maintain security and stability along the India-Myanmar borders, which is essential for the socio-economic development of the populations living in the border areas. In this regard, both sides underlined their mutual respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and reaffirmed their shared commitment to fight insurgent activity and the scourge of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Both sides reiterated that their commitment to not allow insurgent groups to use their soil for hostile activities against the other

side is essential for the stability of the border regions and the prosperity of the people residing along the border.

10. Both sides reiterated their mutual respect for the already demarcated boundary between the two countries and emphasized the need to resolve amicably outstanding boundary demarcation issues at the earliest, through existing bilateral mechanisms.

11. Myanmar appreciated the initiatives taken by the Government of India for organizing the global celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Both sides recalled the close association between Mahatma Gandhi and the people and leadership of Myanmar.

12. Both sides also exchanged views on the regional and international situation including the need for enhancing closer bilateral cooperation in various spheres in the broader Indo-Pacific region, with an emphasis on maritime security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, transnational crimes and mutually-beneficial development cooperation. They also agreed to work together to deepen cooperation between security agencies of the two countries through institutionalized bilateral mechanisms, including coordinated patrolling initiatives along their land and maritime boundaries. They also agreed to promote cooperation within BIMSTEC, which offers considerable opportunities for partnership in energy, trade and connectivity.

13. India reiterated its commitment to support Myanmar in its efforts to build infrastructure and develop its human resources. Myanmar expressed its appreciation for India's assistance in its endeavour for socio-economic development. The two sides expressed satisfaction at the ongoing capacity building programmes for Myanmar judicial officers, military personnel and police. Both sides reviewed the progress made on projects being executed with technical and financial assistance from the Government of India. With regard to the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project, both sides welcomed the signature of the MoU on appointing a port operator, which would enable the Sittwe Port and Paletwa IWT infrastructure to be used commercially for the development of the surrounding areas. They agreed to expedite the process for the appointment of an operator for this purpose. Both sides also noted with satisfaction that work on the final stage of the project – the road from Paletwa to Zorinpui on the Indian border – was underway and agreed to facilitate movement of project personnel, construction material and equipment across the border through Zorinpui and from Paletwa.

14. The two sides also welcomed the progress of work being executed by Indian agencies on different segments of the Trilateral Highway in Myanmar. Myanmar agreed to convey expeditiously information needed for starting work on the Rih-Tedim road. Both sides noted that the survey has already been conducted for the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the Rihkhawdar-Zowkhawdar bridge and the Bwaynu bridge in Chin State. It was also agreed to cooperate to utilize the various concessional finance instruments extended by India to Myanmar.

15. The two sides welcomed the entry into force of the landmark agreement of May 2018 on land border crossing, which has had a positive

impact in promoting smooth movement of people between the two countries. In order to complement this agreement and derive full value from the various infrastructure connectivity projects under execution, both sides agreed to launch negotiations for concluding expeditiously a bilateral motor vehicles agreement that would enable passenger and cargo traffic to cross the border. India undertook to send a delegation to Myanmar at an early date for this purpose. Both sides expressed their willingness to operate a coordinated bus service between Mandalay and Imphal (Transit at Tamu/ Moreh Border) in order to enhance and facilitate the contact of the people between Myanmar and India across the border. It was agreed that negotiations on Operation of Coordinated Passenger Bus Service between the two countries would further be undertaken by relevant authorities of both sides.

16. The Indian side also informed the Myanmar side that a DPR has been prepared by the Airports Authority of India for the redevelopment of Kalay Airport. This would soon be forwarded to the Government of Myanmar for its comments, after which financing arrangements could be decided.

17. The two sides shared the view that the situation in Rakhine State has humanitarian, developmental as well as security dimensions. India expressed its support for the agreements reached between Myanmar and Bangladesh for the repatriation of the verified displaced persons from Rakhine State and underlined its readiness to continue to assist in addressing this complex issue. Myanmar welcomed the assistance being provided by India for infrastructure development under the aegis of the Rakhine State Development Programme. The two sides noted the progress made in executing a pilot housing project in northern Rakhine and the assistance extended by India for agricultural development and IT education in the State. The Indian side expressed its willingness to consider expanding the existing Rakhine State Development Programme, once the current allocation of US\$25 million is fully committed.

18. The two sides noted the current level of bilateral trade and investment and agreed that, while robust, it had immense potential for growth in a variety of sectors. In this regard, they emphasized the need to improve market access and further facilitate trade between the two countries under the relevant bilateral and regional trading arrangements. The two sides agreed to convene at an early date the next meeting of Myanmar-India Joint Trade Committee. It was also decided that the identified Border Markets/Haats would be operationalized at the earliest.

19. Both sides agreed that there was mutual benefit in promoting greater integration of power and energy supply networks between Myanmar and India, and reviewed ongoing public and private sector initiatives in this regard. Myanmar welcomed India's participation in its energy sector and India expressed its interest in participating in future opportunities for exploration and production in the hydrocarbon sector. India also expressed its readiness to extend technical as well as project-specific assistance to conventional as well as renewable energy-based power development projects identified by the Government of Myanmar. Both sides noted that Myanmar-India Joint Steering Committee is coordinating to promote Cross Border Electric Power Trade. It was agreed that there was considerable potential in advancing cooperation in the renewable energy sector with Myanmar joining the International Solar Alliance recently. The Indian side agreed to send a composite delegation to Myanmar

to discuss potential areas of cooperation in new and renewable energy soon.

20. The Myanmar side expressed appreciation to the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for completing projects to preserve and restore stone inscriptions and temples of King Mindon and King Bagyidaw of Myanmar in Bodh Gaya. Both sides welcomed this development as an important symbol of the shared heritage of the two civilizations. The two leaders also welcomed the plans for ASI to start work in the near future to restore and conserve up to 92 pagodas in the historic city of Bagan.

21. The two sides reaffirmed their commitments to work closely in the UN and other multilateral organizations, noting that they had similar positions on several issues of common interest. They reiterated the importance of reform within the structures of the United Nations, including early reform of the Security Council, and reaffirmed their commitment to support Inter-Governmental Negotiations for comprehensive reforms of the Security Council. Myanmar reiterated its support for India's efforts to become a permanent member of an expanded and reformed UN Security Council. The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to work together to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They also stressed the importance of objectivity and impartiality of the United Nations and its specialized agencies in pursuing their work in the areas of human rights, security and development.

22. Both sides reiterated their determination to intensify their relationship in all spheres and continue on the existing path of good neighbourliness. With this in view, the Indian side informed that, as a preparatory step to relocation of its Embassy to the capital, India intended to set up an Interim Liaison Office in Nay Pyi Taw as soon as discussions on the formalities of opening the office and leasing property were completed with the Myanmar authorities.

23. President Kovind and First Lady Smt. Savita Kovind thanked President U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho for the warm and gracious hospitality extended to them and the Indian delegation during their stay in Myanmar. President Kovind also extended an invitation to President U Win Myint to visit India at a mutually convenient time, which was accepted by the host. The dates for the visit will be discussed through diplomatic channels.

**Nay Pyi Taw**

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