



President hosts Belgian King, invites participation in Indian growth story

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The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, received His Majesty King Philippe and Her Majesty Queen Mathilde of the Belgians, at Rashtrapati Bhavan today (November 7, 2017). He also hosted a banquet in their honour.

Welcoming the King and the Queen to India, the President said he was happy to know that India holds a special place for them and for the Belgian Royal family. He said that this State Visit is even more special as India and Belgium are celebrating 70 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations this year.

The President said that India and Belgium enjoy warm and friendly relations. Our shared values of democracy, rule of law, pluralism and respect for human rights bind us together. World War I forms part of our shared history. Thousands of Indian soldiers fought and sacrificed for Belgium. We in India appreciate the Government of Belgium's efforts towards recognising their valour and sacrifice.

The President said economic relations form the core of the Indo-Belgian partnership. Bilateral trade is growing but we can do a lot more together. We must see how we can replicate the success of the diamond industry in other sectors. The Indian economy is on a steady growth path. Our Make in India, Clean India, Smart Cities and other initiatives offer immense opportunities for Belgian investors. Belgium has global expertise in building and managing ports. India has an ambitious Sagarmala project to develop its port sector. We seek participation of Belgian companies in this regard.

Subsequently, in his banquet speech, President Kovind said that the remarkable transformation of the Belgian economy following the World Wars made Belgium a key player in intra-Europe trade and connectivity. It has, ever since, remained at the vanguard of Europe's industrial progress. He stated that at the present juncture, when India is engaging with the world to bring new energy to its development, we welcome Belgian participation in our growth story.

The President said that Belgium has been instrumental in the process of uniting Europe into a successful single market. The Government of Belgium has remained committed to the European Union project. India, too, sees the European Union as a factor of stability in a changing world and sincerely wishes its people every success.

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