

**BRIEF REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA,
SHRI RAM NATH KOVIND
AT THE BANQUET HOSTED IN HIS HONOUR BY THE
PRESIDENT OF ICELAND**

Reykjavik, September 10, 2019

1. Thank you Mr. President for your very warm words of welcome. I am truly honoured to be paying a State Visit to Iceland. This year happens to be the 75th anniversary of the independence of Iceland. I congratulate you and your people on this historic milestone. It makes my State Visit even more special.
2. I am captivated by the smiles of your people and the beauty of your country. I was delighted to meet scores of school children this morning at the Presidential Palace. They greeted me with warmth and affection in their hearts, and flags of the two countries in their hands. I was instantly able to connect with their sentiments and with the popular embrace of our ties. We are fortunate that our broader relationship is wrapped in similar warmth and goodwill. We both desire to build a robust contemporary partnership, one based on next generation technology, digital age, blue economy and green growth. The future of our ties is, indeed, promising.
3. Our two countries have prospered as modern democratic nations, and we both derive inspiration from our celebrated democratic traditions and ethos going back centuries. I will have the honour to visit the seat of one of the oldest Parliaments in the world tomorrow. Its egalitarian spirit would remind me of our own ancient republican polity set up in Vaishali in Bihar, approximately 2500 years ago.
4. Iceland has led the world on many counts. From geothermal energy to genome science and from gender equality to marine economy, what you have achieved has set the bar for many.

You have been a leading voice on global action on climate change. We look forward to your helping hand to strengthen the International Solar Alliance and enable the world move on a cleaner, greener path. And now from the development arena to the playing field – your football team’s splendid show at the FIFA World Cup last year has won you many fans in India. Your tourism campaign “Inspired by Iceland” now has a new meaning for Indian travelers. You will see many more of them visiting you, to enjoy your natural beauty and to feel the warmth of our friendship.

5. With these words, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, I invite you to join me in a toast:
 - To the health and happiness of the President of the Republic of Iceland and the First Lady;
 - To the continued success and prosperity of the friendly people of Iceland;
 - And to the enduring and everlasting friendship between India and Iceland.

Skál Cheers!