



# BUNDESPRÄSIDENTIALAMT

The speech online:  
[www.bundespraesident.de](http://www.bundespraesident.de)

page 1 to 2

**Speech by Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier  
on the occasion of a state banquet with the President of  
the Republic of India  
in Delhi, India,  
on 24 March 2018**

I would first of all like to express my heartfelt thanks to you, Mr President, for your hospitality. One thing that we have in common is the fact that we both assumed the office of President in our respective countries last year. I am all the more delighted that you are also making my acquaintance on this state visit. I consider your generous invitation to this state banquet at the Rashtrapati Bhavan to be a sign of the excellent relations between our two countries. Thank you very much for this.

I would also like to thank you, Prime Minister. I consider it to be a great honour that you gave us the opportunity to take up the discussions we held in the garden of Schloss Bellevue last year once again on our joint visit to the wonderful gardens of the Sunder Nursery today. It appears that this is becoming something of a great tradition.

I visited India several times as Foreign Minister and I am thus all the more pleased that during the last few days I have had the opportunity in Varanasi and Delhi to gain so many new impressions and meet so many interesting people. However, I also see many familiar faces and I am happy to regard that as a demonstration of the close relations between our two countries. You will have already noticed that I enjoy being here in India – to me as a German, every visit here is a remarkable new experience.

However, it has to be said that I am neither the first nor the only German fascinated by India. Since the pioneering research carried out by Max Müller, if not before, there has been considerable interest in your country and in Indian civilisation. It has continued to this very day and you can quite literally see it in our streets and in some aspects of our everyday culture. My impression is that this interest is mutual. Just take, for instance, the large number of Indian students and

ADDRESS	Bundespräsidialamt 11010 Berlin
TEL	+49 30 2000-2021
FAX	+49 30 1810200-2870
E-MAIL	presse@bpra.bund.de
WEBSITE	<a href="http://www.bundespraesident.de">www.bundespraesident.de</a>

researchers studying or working at German universities. I consider all of this to be a valuable foundation for the relations between our countries – we can, and indeed should, build on that.

At any rate, I have the greatest respect for what has been achieved in India during the last few decades. People here have been struggling for many centuries to deal with immense cultural and religious diversity and have done so through tolerance and mutual respect. Despite all the setbacks, India has thus gained a valuable asset which other countries envy. It therefore goes without saying that one of the aims of my visit is to better understand this experience.

However, I have equally great respect for the challenges you face. Year after year, ever new generations of young people in India demand economic participation and employment. We can only imagine the magnitude of this task. In Germany, too, economic success and social stability largely hinge on people having a fair chance to develop and hone their talents. Naturally, it is anything but easy to maintain this state of affairs. We cannot afford standstill in either country – and naturally Germany looks to India in the quest for fresh dynamism. We recognise the many outstanding talents as a great opportunity and see many chances for investment as well as for academic and cultural cooperation. One of the reasons for my visit is to highlight and foster these chances.

But in a world where “every man for himself” holds sway in many places, we have placed our faith in India as a partner who is committed to an international order based on mutual respect and jointly agreed rules. We are increasingly aware of what India and Germany can do together to foster such an order – for instance, for the safety and freedom of sea routes or for the future of international trade. In both areas, the undermining of existing regulatory systems or of international law is not in the interest of our great trading nations.

India and Germany have much to offer each other. We can further develop technologies together, create new opportunities in the development sphere and cooperate on better protecting the environment. We can use our bilateral cooperation to help resolve global issues, for example in the sphere of climate protection – especially as these questions are being ignored by others at present. We can work together to promote an open, rules-based international order. My state visit demonstrates our desire for renewed momentum in our relations. I am confident that the huge potential of our cooperation in the spheres of culture and business and at international level will bear ample fruit in the coming years.

Thank you very much for your friendly reception and for your attention.