

India-Viet Nam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

I extend my heartfelt greetings to Tien Phong newspaper readers on the occasion of the National Day of Viet Nam, a longstanding, steady friendly country for India right from the days of President Ho Chi Minh.

2. India and Viet Nam have enjoyed a unique and special partnership ever since the independence of Viet Nam. Documented historical facts are self-evident: participation of representatives of President Ho Chi Minh at the Asian Relations Conference hosted by India in New Delhi in March-April 1947; India's Chairmanship of the International Commission for the Supervision and Control in Viet Nam following the Geneva Accords of 1954; Indian leader being among the first to visit Hanoi in October 1954 shortly after the 1954 transfer of power; while India's consular relations with Viet Nam existed in 1950s and 1960s, India established diplomatic relations at the level of Ambassador already in January 1972; solidarity and friendship between us during the 1970s and 1980s; and strong economic development partnership between India and Viet Nam throughout the 1980s, 1990s and into the 21st century. Over the last seven decades, the two countries navigated their national journeys of growth and development while the international equations evolved constantly, but the India-Vietnam friendship strengthened continuously irrespective of these changes nationally and globally.

3. In 2016, India and Viet Nam decided to elevate their relations as Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the visit of the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi to Vietnam. This partnership represents strong mutual political understanding, appreciation for each other's perspectives and considerable convergences in securing a conducive environment for peace, development and prosperity in Asia and globally. There is little doubt that the sound path of progress of India and Vietnam marked by strength of their

national resolve, people-level affinity and aspirations, and convergences of our international perspectives & interests will promote further brighter, stronger future of the friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

4. In December 2020, our leaders endorsed a Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People that provides the framework to delineate comprehensive efforts in various areas of cooperation by the two countries. This year 2023 has seen meetings between the two Prime Ministers as well as the two Foreign Ministers, bilateral visits of the Ministers of National Defence, Public Security, Agriculture & Rural Development, Justice, President of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, several heads of provinces, deputy Ministers and senior officials between our two countries. These exchanges represent the broad scope of bilateral cooperation and dynamic activities between the two governments, officials, institutions and agencies.

5. As two rapidly growing nations, economic and business cooperation is a focus of active efforts to lift further the bilateral trade of USD 15 billion in 2022 and cumulative Indian investments of about USD 2 billion. Hundreds of Indian enterprises in Vietnam are generating economic value in sectors such as consumer goods, automobile sub-systems, sugar & coffee, IT services, mineral processing, hydrocarbons, garments, engineering goods and services such as aviation, banking, food, tourism. New opportunities are appearing in energy, infrastructure, electronics, digital technologies, connectivity, futuristic innovations, and arrangements for facilitating trade, resilient supply chains, bilateral real-time digital payment transactions, direct shipping are being discussed. ASEAN-India in Trade Goods Agreement of 2009 is being reviewed to expand our preferential trade measures between us. Growing civil aviation is providing a fillip to direct travel and tourism through over 50 flights per week and further expansion is being planned.

6. Defence and security needs are a fundamental element for nations and India and Vietnam are actively engaged in developing cooperation in these areas using the sound foundation that exists between us. Active defence exchanges, military-to-military talks, exercises, training, technical exchanges and equipment transfer could be supplemented further in the face of emerging priorities and interests. Recent ASEAN-India Maritime Exercise in May 2023 in Singapore displayed regional dimensions of the defence cooperation involving the two countries.

7. Civilizational & cultural ties and people-level warmth & appreciation are a special feature of India-Vietnam friendship. The common heritage of Shakyamuni Buddha provides spiritual underpinning for both of us and last year. Archeological Survey of India completed restoration of three temple groups dating back 13 centuries at My Son sanctuary in central Vietnam and we are now preparing for the implementation of the next phase of our heritage conservation projects in Quang Nam and Phu Yen provinces in Viet Nam. The International Day of Yoga this year saw over 35 public practice sessions across Vietnam with tens of thousands of participants. Ten projects per year executed by India in Vietnam serve communities in various provinces of the country. Cultural troupes, education & training exchanges, active contacts between our academic institutions enrich our people-level connect, that holds further promise for India-Viet Nam cooperation.

8. This year, India is steering pressing global issues with a sense of purpose as the G20 President amid a complex international environment. India's outreach to the Voice of the Global South through a Summit in January 2023 showed our inclusive and consultative approach in chairing the G20. We are glad that the President of Vietnam participated in the leaders' session of this Summit hosted by the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi. Internationally, India and Viet Nam support multilateralism, international law

and rules-based order, and work together in the United Nations, ASEAN-centric structures and various international forums such as Mekong-Ganga Cooperation initiative, and outlook for peace, security and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific.

9. The combination of excellent support of our political leadership and our converging interests, in the midst of a complex global environment generate strong rationale for expanding the comprehensive strategic partnership between India and Vietnam. The Governments in the two countries have demonstrated strong resolve to realize the potential of our bilateral ties. This effort could benefit from further impulse by both countries as they develop nationally and contribute to regional and global peace, security and prosperity.

10. India has just celebrated its Independence Day a couple of weeks back and we are now marking the National Day of Viet Nam. It is a good occasion to reaffirm our joint resolve to work together for more dynamic endeavours by both countries to strengthen and deepen the comprehensive strategic partnership across all domains between two countries.