

## India, Indonesia elevate ties

Red carpet welcome: PM Narendra Modi at an Indian Community event in Jakarta, Indonesia, on Wednesday. PTI

India and Indonesia on Wednesday elevated their bilateral ties to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The two countries condemned terrorism in all its forms, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi held “productive discussions” with President Joko Widodo.

The two countries also signed 15 agreements, including one to boost defence cooperation, and called for freedom of navigation in the strategic Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. Modi, who reached Jakarta on Tuesday night on his first-ever official visit to Indonesia, was accorded a red carpet welcome on Wednesday morning at the Merdeka Palace, one of the presidential palaces in Indonesia. The two leaders discussed areas of strategic cooperation and ways to ensure better economic ties and closer cultural relations, besides regional and global issues of mutual interest.

In a joint press statement after the meeting, Mr. Modi said India’s Act East Policy and the vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for all in the Region) matched Mr. Widodo’s Maritime Fulcrum Vision.

“As mutual partners and neighbours, our worries are similar. It is our duty to ensure maritime security and safety. This is also for the safety of our economic interests,” he said.

### 30-day free visa

Mr. Modi announced a free 30-day visa for Indonesian citizens and invited the diaspora to travel to their country of origin to experience the ‘New India.’

Addressing a gathering of the Indian diaspora at the Jakarta Convention Centre in the Indonesian capital, he said, “not only do the names of our nations rhyme, but also there is a distinct rhythm in the India-Indonesia friendship.”

“We will grant free of cost visa for Indonesian citizens for travel of up to 30 days,” Mr. Modi said, amid applause.

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