



INDIA NEWS

PRESS RELEASE

This evening, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh telephoned Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gillani and congratulated him on his election. The two leaders had a very warm and cordial conversation.

2. Earlier in the day Prime Minister Singh sent a message of greetings to Prime Minister Gillani, the text of which reads as under:

"Excellency,

Please accept my warm felicitations on your assumption of office as the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

On this occasion, I re-affirm the Government of India's commitment to strengthening friendship and cooperation with Pakistan. We see a stable, prosperous and democratic Pakistan as being in the interest of India and the region.

There is a strong public sentiment in both our countries in favour of accelerating the peace process and establishing a cooperative framework for our bilateral relations. There is a common desire to establish a neighbourhood of peace and progress based on greater linkages between our two people, trust and mutual understanding.

Leading personalities of the coalition that will form your government have been strong advocates of friendly ties between our two countries and have made important contributions to the peace process. I hope very much that we can build upon the progress already achieved and work expeditiously, through the dialogue process, towards agreed solutions of pending issues.

We have an opportunity to transform our relationship into a close, cooperative and mutually beneficial partnership that should be normal between neighbours like India and Pakistan. I look forward to working closely with you towards an objective that I am confident you share.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

signed
[Manmohan Singh]"