



**Embassy of India
Jakarta**

PRESS RELEASE

DPD Chairman applauds achievements of Dr. B R Ambedkar

In an event organized by the Embassy of India on 14 April 2016 to commemorate the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, eminent jurist, economist, social reformer and Chairman of Drafting Committee of the Constitution of India, H.E. Mr. Irman Gusman, Chairman of the Regional Representative Council (DPD) of the Republic of Indonesia, Chief Guest on the occasion delivered a keynote address. H.E. Ms. Nengcha Lhouvum, Ambassador of India to Indonesia, Hon'ble Mr. Ravi Prakash Verma, Leader of Indian Parliamentary delegation, Hon'ble Members of Parliament of the Republic of India, Indonesian dignitaries, prominent Indian businessmen and professionals and members of Indian diaspora participated in the event.

The text of keynote address is as under:

His Excellency, Mr. Ravi Prakash Verma, Leader of Indian Parliamentary Delegation,
Her Excellency Mrs. Nengcha Lhouvum, Ambassador of India to
Indonesia;
Honorable Members of Parliament of India present this evening;
Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen...

It is indeed an honor for me to be invited and given a chance to address this gathering, commemorating the 125th birth anniversary of one of India's exemplary leaders, the architect of India's Constitution, an inspiring engine of transformation, Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, also known as Babasaheb.

Ambedkar is a big name we in Indonesia know very well along with other such great sources of inspiration as Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi, and further back, Rabindranath Tagore.

The story of Bhimrao, a nobody from a family in Amba-vade village in Ratnagiri district, making his own way to climb the ladder; and left his extraordinary legacy in history is worth remembering.

This whole evening would be insufficient if I would recall the long struggle that Ambedkar has done in the reform movement against social discrimination and his advocacy of the rights of woman and labor, equality before the law, political rights, and the right of a nation to be free and live with dignity.

Seen from Jakarta, his story has become part of India's history, most notably when he published the weekly *Mooknayak* or *Leader of the Silent* in Mumbai in 1920. That was an inspiration for

many. And that particular decade saw the beginning of open liberation movements in Asia, particularly in Indonesia which in 1928 proclaimed our Youth Oath or Sumpah Pemuda where youths from across this country united for independence.

Our similar historical background of struggle against colonial powers was among the reasons for Soekarno and Jawaharlal Nehru to mobilize Asian and African nations to attend the Asia-Africa Conference in Bandung in 1955 which produced the Dasa Sila Bandung to become the foundation for the establishment of the Non-Aligned Movement.

All these we know, but what is worth telling and remembering, I think, are the values he was standing on and fighting for, namely: human rights, including civil liberties for individual citizens, such as freedom of religion, the abolition of untouchability, and the outlawing of all forms of discrimination.

Ambedkar's legacy as a socio-political reformer, had a deep effect on modern India. Amartya Sen described India's first Minister of law as "the Father of Economics", while President Barack Obama while addressing the Indian Parliament in 2010, referred to Ambedkar as "the great and revered Human Rights champion and main author of India's constitution."

Ladies and gentlemen...

As Chairman of DPD, I appreciate the role of the constitution in governing the State and how important it is to draft the laws properly. I had a meeting this afternoon with the Indian Parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Ravi Prakash Verma, and got to know the important role played by Parliamentarians and lawmakers in the history of modern India. When I led an Indonesian parliamentary delegation to India in August 2014, I realized how much India and Indonesia resemble each other in all respects -culturally, historically, and demographically as well. Indonesia is home to the world's largest Muslim population and India has the world's second largest Muslim population.

India is the world's largest democracy and Indonesia is the third largest democracy after India and the USA. For decades, our two countries have been supporting each other in many fields and sharing common or identical views on various global issues. Our bilateral economic and business relations are expanding fast while our centuries of socio-cultural relations are deeply rooted and unshakable.

The Indian culture is so popular in Indonesia, from food to movies, music and pop songs. Little children here can sing Shah Rukh Khan's song: *Kuch Kuch Hotta Hai*: there is something between us. And I must say, there is something between India and Indonesia, now that our bilateral relations have grown so mature, warm, and intimate.

The leadership of our two countries put great emphasis on inclusive economic growth and development, so that the benefit of growth can reach the poorer sections of society. This is in line with Ambedkar's struggle in the social-economic area. In education, Ambedkar said, "If you are educated and your character is still bad, education is of no good to you. Cultivation of the mind should be the ultimate aim of human existence." How true the moral message!

On behalf of Indonesia's House of Regional Representatives, I would now express my highest respect to the late Dr. Ambedkar for his exemplary struggle as well as to the Government,

Parliament, and people of India for preserving this tradition of honoring national heroes and perpetuating Ambedkar's legacy of upholding the values of humanity.

What our heroes have left behind must continue to guide us through challenges of the modern era..... Thank you....!

Jakarta, 14 April 2016

House of Regional Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia

IRMAN GUSMAN

Chairman

Jakarta: 18.4.2016

