

# Indonesian president attends India's R-Day as guest of honor

A 350-member contingent from Indonesian military also joined the Republic Day parade on Sunday

Sanjay Kumar New Delhi

**India celebrated its 76th Republic Day on Sunday with a colorful parade in New Delhi displaying its military might and Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto as the guest of honor.**

Thousands of people gathered in the capital to watch the long parade commemorating the official adoption of India's Constitution on Jan.26, 1950, after gaining independence from British colonial rule in 1947.

Indian troops and their bands were marching on the Kartavya Path, or the Boulevard of Duty, as the 90-minute parade showcased motorbike stunts and a number of cultural performances involving thousands of artists in colorful costumes.

A contingent comprising about 350 members from the Indonesian military also participated in the parade, marking the first time that troops from Southeast Asia's biggest economy have joined any foreign parade.

Prabowo attended the event as the chief guest and was flanked by India's premier and president, joining a list of foreign leaders who were invited to witness the spectacle, as per the country's tradition.

In 1950 — India's first Republic Day celebration — Indonesia's first president Sukarno was the chief guest.

The celebrations come a day after Modi and Prabowo agreed to expand ties, signing a series of cooperation agreements on health, defense, digital



India's PM Narendra Modi waves toward the public as India's President Droupadi Murmu, with guest of honor, Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto, leave after attending India's 76th Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Sunday. AFP

technology and maritime affairs.

"We discussed ways to deepen India-Indonesia relations in areas such as security, defense manufacturing, trade, fintech, AI and more. Sectors like food security, energy and disaster management are also areas where we look forward to working closely (together)," Modi said following their meeting on Saturday.

Prabowo's visit to India was his first since becoming Indonesia's president in October.

"I want to reiterate my commitment, my determination to

further develop our cooperation and friendship," Prabowo said.

"Our (strategic) partnership will be a strong foundation for the two countries to continue moving forward (and) strengthen the friendship that we have had for 75 years."

Gautam Kumar Jha, an assistant professor at the Center for Chinese and Southeast Asian Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, said the two countries have signaled strong interest in increasing cooperation.

"As a former military commander, President Prabowo

brings a deep understanding of security and strategic partnerships, enhancing the collaboration between India and Indonesia. His role as the chief guest on India's Republic Day is particularly significant compared to previous Indonesian presidents who have visited India," Jha told Arab News.

"President Prabowo's (priorities in) strengthening Indonesia's maritime security, trade and social welfare schemes — such as the mid-day meal scheme currently run in India — are crucial for both nations."