

**Presidential Communications Operations Office  
Presidential News Desk**

**Remarks of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and President of the Republic of India Ram Nath Kovind during the expanded bilateral meeting**

[Delivered at Aguinaldo State Dining Room, Malacañan Palace, Manila | 18 October 2019]

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Excellency, may I be allowed to do the opening remarks in this bilateral meeting?

I warmly remember you hosting the ASEAN leaders at the magnificent Rashtrapati Bhavan at the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and Republic Day celebration. I am pleased to reciprocate your warm hospitality.

Your Excellency's visit is important on two accounts. First, it sustains our tradition of summit-level meetings that generate fresh political momentum for greater cooperation between our countries.

We [were] pleased to host your esteemed predecessor President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam in 2006 and Prime Minister Modi in 2017.

Second, your visit pays tribute to the friendly ties between our nations as we commemorate its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year.

Of course, we are not only celebrating our formal relations but also centuries-old interaction and exchange between our peoples on which our present partnership is founded.

Over the past seven decades, our cooperation has grown significantly and there is still ample room for expansion.

I am optimistic that our meeting today will point us towards the path of a more vibrant bilateral engagement in the years and decades to come.

May I invite Your Excellency to say a few words before we begin our substantive discussions?

**PRESIDENT RAM NATH KOVIND:** Thank you, Excellency. I am honored to be visiting the Philippines on a state visit. I thank you for your warm and gracious welcome.

First of all, I convey my deepest condolences on the loss of life caused by the earthquake in Mindanao on Wednesday. I hope the affected people are able to begin their normal lives soon.

Excellency, I am delighted that my visit marks, as you have said, 70 years of diplomatic relations between our two countries.

We attach the highest importance to our relations with the Philippines which are based on shared values of democracy, rule of law, and celebration of diversity.

As one of the fastest growing economies in the region, the Philippines is growing in importance to our Act East Policy. Excellency, we appreciate your leadership and personal *[unclear]* in deepening relations with India. With the commonalities that we enjoy, India can be a key partner for the Philippines.

Thank you, Excellency.

**PRESIDENT DUTERTE:** Thank you, Your Excellency. Allow me to dis --- now to discuss the key issues of mutual interest to our two countries. India is a...

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