

# Back to normal after fruitful India trip

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NEW DELHI—By most accounts, President Duterte was well-behaved, got his point across and did not stir up controversy during the official functions of the India-Asean Commemorative Summit and Republic Day celebrations that closed this week.

However, by the time his three-day visit to the Indian capital ended and just before he flew back to the Philippines, Mr. Duterte was back to his colorful self: dropping bombshells, cussing his critics, making profane jokes and threatening murder.

The President, who touched down at Indira Gandhi International Airport on Wednesday, sat down with Prime Minister Narendra Modi for an hourlong bilateral discussion on possible military cooperation within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) bloc, as well as cooperation with India's pharmaceutical sector that could hopefully give Filipinos better access to affordable medicines.

The official agenda out of the way, the President was back in his usual element in a speech addressing Indian investors just before his flight home. In a semicoherent rant, Mr. Duterte took on the Islamic State (IS), local drug traffickers, US imperialism and Kim Jong-un.

Among the highlights:

- Mr. Duterte asked Indian businesses to "avoid Mindanao," as it was still under military rule. At the same time, he assured them that martial law only covered "enemies of the state."

- As if to underline his thorny relationship with human rights advocates, the President said he gave Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi this advice: "Do not mind human rights."

**Virgins as reward**

- Though he did not address the alleged threats against him by the IS, the President referenced its promised reward of virgins in heaven to extremists who would die for their faith. He should also lure foreign investors to the country by promising them virgins, he said.

- He followed this up by saying that he'd rather have his virgins here than in heaven.

- Reprising his earlier rants against the United States and the United Nations, President Duterte slammed the United

\* DUTERTE, MODI -  
ADMINISTRATION

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States for "acting like the conscience of everybody and trying to police everybody," and the United Nations for having "no purpose at all."

- He also took aim at North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and described him as a "guy playing with his atomic toys."

- As he has often thundered, the President threatened to kill his enemies, especially drug traffickers, for "destroying (his) country."

- At 72, he joked, he'd be happy to settle in a room with his books, "and maybe a conjugal visit once in a while with different friends."

But the visit was also marked by trade and economic gains, according to Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez, who cited the following highlights:

- The President would be bringing home \$1.25 billion in investment pledges from Indian conglomerates, as well as the prospect of 10,000 new jobs for Filipinos.

- Both India and the Philippines agreed to form a working group that would flesh out a trade and investment collaboration in two months. This could lay the groundwork for Indian pharmaceuticals setting up shop on Philippine soil, thus giving Filipinos access to cheap medicines

for common health conditions like hypertension, high cholesterol, diabetes and even cancer.

### Renewable energy, IT

- The high-level business delegation also secured commitments from Indian business leaders for investments in infrastructure development, renewable energy, information technology (IT) and business services.

- In concrete terms, these commitments translate to two memorandums of agreement and 10 letters of intent from Adani Green Energy, Hinduja Global Solutions, Tech Mahindra, KG Information Systems Private Ltd., InterGlobe Technologies, National Association of Software and Services Companies, Farm at San Benito, GMR, SPI Global, Tata Consulting Services and WiPro.

- After Modi touted his country's shipbuilding and arms manufacturing capability, President Duterte broached the possibility of purchasing military hardware from India. A possible military cooperation within the Asean bloc could address maritime issues and combat terrorism, piracy in the high seas and transnational crime, the two leaders agreed.

Mr. Duterte also spoke about his controversial war on drugs, while Modi sounded supportive and suggested at one point that the drug menace should be addressed as widely as climate change.

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#### Presidential spokesperson

Harry Roque said that during the plenary session, the President:

- Pushed for regional and multilateral cooperation to address terrorist financing. He also stressed the importance of timely intelligence gathering, sharing and analysis, and said that the Asean must step up cooperation on this;
- Expressed support for the conduct of regular senior officials' meetings on transnational crime in consultation with India;
- Stated that protecting future generations from exposure to illicit drugs remained a top priority and that he welcomed concerted efforts to address the drug menace through consultation with India and Asean senior officials;
- Encouraged India to collaborate with Asean in promoting the rights of migrant workers.

#### Maritime connectivity

- Said that he looked forward to strengthening aviation and maritime connectivity through the conclusion of the Asean-India transport agreements;
- Invited India to invest in submersible cables and port facilities;
- Said that Asean-India trade and economic integration should be intensified through a free trade area;
- Called for stronger cooperation in biodiversity conservation and management to address the degradation of the ecosystem.

Aside from Lopez, Mr. Duterte's high-level business delegation included Foreign Secretary Alan Peter Cayetano, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr., Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanan, Special Assistant to the President Christopher Lawrence Go, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo, Quezon City Rep. Feliciano Belmonte Jr. and Philippine National Police Chief Director General Ronald dela Rosa.

Communications Assistant Secretary Mocha Uson was also part of the presidential entourage, though her itinerary and that of the Philippine media delegation did not intersect. INQ