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**REMARKS BY PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR. AT THE EXCHANGE OF
BILATERAL AGREEMENTS AND JOINT PRESS STATEMENT**

[Delivered at Hyderabad House in New Delhi, India | 05 August 2025]

You Excellency, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi,

Honorable Ministers,

Our friends from the media,

Namaskar.

A pleasant day to all.

It is but fitting to begin with words of profound gratitude.

Thank you, Excellency, our friend and host, Prime Minister Narendra Modi-ji for receiving us so graciously and hospitably, on this State Visit.

It is my great pleasure to be in India. This sojourn makes me the fifth Philippine President to undertake a visit to this great country, and indeed, in the footsteps of my very own father, who was the first Philippine President to visit India in 1976.

As emissaries of our people, I bring with me the enduring friendship of the Filipino nation.

I carry the message of our solidarity with India, both over the tragic attack in Pahalgam earlier this year, and in the broader fight against terrorism. Despite these challenges, I also bear felicitations on India's remarkable transformation and inexorable march to become *Viksit Bharat* by 2047, under Prime Minister Modi's guiding hand.

I come at a crucial juncture in our bilateral partnership. Today, our relationship enters a new epoch, as Prime Minister Modi and I formally launched the Strategic Partnership between the Philippines and India.

For the Philippines, this is a momentous decision, for we take a very considered path to such elevated partnerships. Today, India becomes only the fifth Strategic Partner for the Philippines.

This new apex attests as much to the remarkably rapid growth, broadening and deepening of our 75-year-old bilateral relationship, the possibilities represented by the strong upward trajectory of our two economies, as it does to the growing alignment of our interests and views on the challenges and imperatives of our time.

This was also the auspicious context in which Prime Minister Modi and I engaged in far-reaching, productive, and forward-looking discussions this past hour.

We agreed to continue leveling up our collaboration in defense and security. We expressed satisfaction over the rapid pace of the Philippines' ongoing defense modernization, and expanding capabilities and footprint of India's indigenous defense industry as a partner in this undertaking, exemplified by our BrahMos project.

We concurred that this should be accompanied with intensified dialogue and exchanges between our defense establishments.

So, we have agreed to establish mechanisms for service-to-service talks, for information sharing, and training exchanges among our militaries. We will foster naval and coast guard interoperability via port calls in cooperative activities, and capacity-building in the maritime domain.

The economic sphere has been a steady engine driving our ties for seven-plus decades. True to our Strategic Partnership, Prime Minister and I have charged our economic teams to shepherd our commerce –now at the USD 3.3 billion in the last year –toward a continued upward trajectory and expanded basket of goods. To this end, we have decided to expedite the work that we are doing to forge a bilateral Preferential Trade Agreement.

We looked at leveraging mutual opportunities to boost two-way investments. Our fast-growing, innovative private enterprises will play an important role in our common march towards progress and development, facilitating innovation, technology transfer and upskilling, and generating employment for our people[s].

For over a millennium, civilizational, cultural, and people-to-people ties have bridged our geographic distance. They will continue to be the enduring foundation of our friendship, and we will enact policies to make sure that this is so.

In this respect, I reiterated our introduction of visa-free entry privileges and extended our invitation for more Indian tourists to visit the Philippines.

I thanked Prime Minister Modi in turn for the introduction of a scheme to grant visas free of charge to Filipino tourists traveling to India.

We welcomed the resumption of direct flights from October this year, and renewed our commitment to sustaining and expanding such direct air connectivity.

Sea lines of communication crisscross the Indian Ocean. Maritime trade to and from the Far East and the Pacific through the Indian Ocean has and continues to underpin our prosperity and our peoples' aspirations that they have held for centuries.

Safe navigation and security are important, especially for Filipino seafarers who are on almost every ship plying these historic and strategic sea lanes.

I again thank the Indian people and the brave men and women of the Indian Navy, through Prime Minister Modi, for your kind rescue of our nationals in 2024 after a Houthi rebel attack. We recognize India's influence as "first responder" role in this critical area, and we want to work with you for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

We both have high stakes in the future of our Indo-Pacific region and the world. The Philippines-India Strategic Partnership will doubtless resonate beyond the confines of our bilateral relationship.

Prime Minister Modi and I have committed to bring our collaboration to bear on shared concerns: a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, security and rule of law in the maritime commons, supply chain resilience, food security, countering terrorism and other traditional and non-traditional threats.

Relative to the maritime sphere, I thanked Prime Minister Modi once again for India's support for the peaceful settlement of disputes and adherence to international law, especially the UNCLOS and the 2016 Award in the South China Sea Arbitration.

As incoming Chair of ASEAN for 2026, as current Coordinator as well for ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, I thanked Prime Minister Modi for his government's support for ASEAN, its unity and centrality, and our Chairmanship in 2026.

Let me close by once again thanking Prime Minister Modi, President Droupadi Murmu, and the Indian Government and people, for your great hospitality and the devotion shown to our relations.

Indeed, today, we herald a new era of closer multidimensional, and impactful engagement between the Philippines and India.

Mabuhay. Maraming salamat. *[applause]*

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