

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK

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KAPIHAN WITH THE MEDIA IN BENGALURU, INDIA

[Held at Taj West End in Bengaluru, India | 08 August 2025]

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.: Good morning.

PCO SEC. DAVE GOMEZ: Welcome to the Kapihan India version. The President will issue a short statement, then we'll follow up with your questions.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, we have come to the end of the State Visit, my State Visit here to India. And I must say, I'm very, very encouraged by the exchanges that we have made, both with the government of Prime Minister Modi and President Murmu, but also the exchanges and the discussions that we have initiated between business leaders of India and the Philippines.

And what really — we discovered as we went along in our discussions that the more we looked, the more we found. In other words, the more we discussed what are the possible areas of cooperation, the more areas of cooperation that we found.

Sasabihin natin we talked about agri (agriculture). 'Pag pinag-usapan yung agri, napupunta yung usapan sa digital. 'Pag napag-usapan yung digital, napapag-usapan ang defense and security. It really just the — the whole range of possibilities has now become clear to us. And that's why, in my view, we should look at this visit as just a new beginning in terms of the relationship between India and the Philippines.

India and the Philippines have always had a very good, very amicable relations for the last 70-plus years. And, however, we have not engaged each other aggressively in terms of trade, in terms of all the other, in terms of supply chains, in terms of developing several industries. But now we will.

And that is why, that is one of the reasons why we came here was simply to open those channels. And I think that we have achieved that. And like I said, in the attempt to open some of the channels like in terms of medicine, in terms of digital space, in terms of training, maritime cooperation and all that, lahat 'yan, eh palagay ko 'yung aming pagpasok, kami ito 'yung mga puwede nating gawin. Ngunit noong nasimulan namin 'yung pag-usapan yang mga yan, eh nakita namin mas marami pa palang puwede. Kaya't hindi ako magugulat kung ang mga susunod na buwan ay magdadatingan dito ang mga Philippine businessmen at pati na ang mga iba't ibang ahensya ng gobyerno ng Pilipinas.

Kaya't I am very, very pleased with this visit. I am very happy with the results and I am very glad that we have opened these new lines of communications with India and I'm sure that this will be to the benefit of both our countries. Alright, so, let me open the, let me [unclear].

Q: Hi sir, good morning. Sir, you have mentioned that you had a bilateral meeting with President Murmu. Sir, ano po 'yung mga specific na napag-usapan po ninyo at paano n'yo po ito nakikita na makatutulong po sa pagpapatibay pa ng relasyon ng Pilipinas at India?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, most of the detailed discussion, karamihan ng usapan na medyo detalyado was with the Prime Minister. Ang talagang pinakiusap ko sa Pangulo Murmu ay kailangan ko 'yung sa – I asked, we need your support. And these are the areas that we are interested in, that we are going to pursue and we need her support as President. Hindi naman rubber stamp ang Presidente. Kailangan na aprubahan din niya lahat ng ating nais na gawin. So that was the essence of it. We spoke in general terms, but because by the time I met with the President, she was, we had, by the time I met her, we had already had some discussions. So may resulta na ng kaunti. Sabi ko na nga sa kanya, ito 'yung mga aming nais gawin, ngunit kailangan namin ang suporta mo. She agreed. She says this is good for both our countries.

Thank you.

Q: Good morning, Mr. President. Mr. President, may we know how much or any figure, kung ilan 'yung pledges or investments na maiuwi po sa Pilipinas or any ballpark figure on how many jobs can be potentially generated from these?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, in terms of actual total direct investment, we have already secured 446 million dollars in terms of actual direct investment. But, that is already what we have decided at the end of this trip. Pero marami pang papasok d'yan. Hindi pa 'yan, kagaya ng aking nasabi, simula pa lang 'yan. And we are hoping that we have generated interest in several other areas.

At kung -- 'yung estimate lang namin d'yan with the several other areas is the potential for investment of about 5.6, 5.7 billion dollars. So, malaking bagay talaga.

India is a very, very strong economy. India is the fourth largest economy in the world. And with the prospect of very soon becoming the third largest economy in the world. Kaya talagang napaka-aktibo 'yung kanilang ekonomiya. You know, we see that they have a very strong instinct for progress, for development, especially in the digital area.

Q: Good morning, Mr. President. Can we get your statement on the recent launch po ng China's rocket near Palawan? May mga expert po na nagsasabi if open po ba tayo sa filing of another case against China before an international tribunal? And ano po 'yung ating next legal step kung sakali?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, it's not the first time that this has happened. And, actually, if you look at the incidents, they did not commit any violations. There have been no casualties. We just wish that perhaps they could warn us a little earlier so that we know that the path of the rocket, where the path is and kung magbibitaw sila ng stages kung saan babagsak. And I remember in my trip to Beijing early on, that I told President Xi: "You know, we have no interest in your rockets. Just tell us where they will land, we will collect it and give it to you."

And that continues to be my offer to China is that hindi n'yo kailangan agawin sa amin 'yan. Saka anong gagawin namin d'yan? ... So, sabihan nyo kami kung saan dadaan yung rocket. 'Pag may babagsak, kukunin namin sa dagat tapos dadalhin namin sa inyo. Wala namang problema. The good side to all of this, wala namang casualty. Wala namang tinamaan. Hindi naman nagka-problema.

Q: Good morning, Mr. President. Sir, baka can you provide lang po details sa naging usapan ni Prime Minister Modi, particularly sa defense po. Are there plans to pursue a more formal security cooperation framework like joint production, intelligence sharing, or possibly baka *[unclear]*?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Yes, definitely there is a commitment for India to have a larger profile in terms of the West Philippine Sea. And nung umalis tayo sa Maynila, meron ng exercises, dalawang vessel ng India, at saka dalawang vessel ng Pilipinas.

Tuloy-tuloy naman yan. We agreed that we should do more of it. And India has already made the policy decision to have more of a presence in the region. Because ngayon, kaya nga dati pinag-uusapan lang natin Asia Pacific, ang pinag-uusapan ngayon natin Indo-Pacific. Kaya't lahat ng bansa na pumapaligid sa Indo-Pacific na kasama sa area na yan, ay dapat talagang magkaroon ng mga kooperasyon in many ways.

And we should not ever limit ourselves to just defense and security. Because the economy plays a part in defense and security. So, pagpatibay din ng mga ekonomiya natin, pagpalakas ng ating trade, pagpaganda ng ating relasyon, eh kasama lahat 'yan. Defense and security is only one dimension to the entire problem. So, we try to focus on everything, not just one aspect of the situation.

But yes, the short answer to your question is yes. There is a very, we have committed to more exercises together, and not only bilaterally, but also, of course, multilaterally with other countries as well.

Q: Good morning, Sir. Sir, can we ask your thoughts or reaction doon sa Senate's decision to archive the articles of impeachment against VP Sara. One of the framers po ng 1987 constitution, si Atty. Christian Monsod said it amounts to a dismissal, and you've mentioned po, Sir...

PRESIDENT MARCOS: It amounts to?

Q: To a dismissal po?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No. That is... Let me clarify. The merits of the case were not examined by the Supreme Court. This is not... This does not mean -- this does not decide the merits of the case. It just talked about procedure. So the procedure was faulty, was lacking. So 'yun ang assessment ng Supreme Court. It has no bearing on the rightness or wrongness of the impeachment case.

Q: And your reaction, sir, sa naging pagboto po ng Senado to archive? Nasabi niya, sir, ano kayo? Interested observer po kayo.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Kaya nga. So, I've observed that they voted. I keep telling you, the executive has no role in this. The President has no role. I'm an impeachable officer. I cannot involve myself in any of this. So, wala, it's really the Supreme Court, the Senate, and the House. So, that's where the decisions were made on the issues between the House, the Senate, and the Supreme Court.

The Supreme Court has decided, and like I've said, that's it. The Supreme Court has decided.

Q: Mr. President, good morning po. Mahirap pala ang [unclear]? Ito po. Reaction lang po ng Malacañang doon po sa GSIS investment po sa isang online gambling, yung DigiPlus daw. Paano po, pero nalugi 'yung kanilang investment, isa po ba ito sa mga factor kung bakit may apprehension ang government?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, no, nothing. I didn't even know about that. Hindi ko alam na may ganoon 'yung GSIS. But, no, the revenue side of it is simply not a part of the discussion. Of course, you know, we use that revenue that we are collecting. But that's not really the main point.

The complaint against any of these activities is really the social cost. So 'yan ang pag-aralan natin ng mabuti. That is why we are organizing a...I don't know what you call them.

Internally, we are calling it a conclave to put all of the interested parties such as CBCP has been very vocal on their position so they must be heard. Then, we have to hear about from experts on addiction. We have to hear from parents and from teachers as to what the effects are on children. We have to hear from the police what are the effects in terms of criminality. And we really have to examine what are the options. Ano ba talagang policy natin dapat gawin dito sa illegal gambling? Because it's not that simple. Ang nagiging sigaw lagi, ban this, ban, ban, ban. Ganito. Example lang. Ano ang nangyari sa e-sabong? Binan natin. Natigil ba? Magkano ang pusta sa e-sabong? 50 centimos. So, lahat talaga nadadamay. So, let's use that as an example. Successful ba 'yung pag-ban natin sa e-sabong? Kung hindi, bakit hindi naging successful? Yun ang mga kailangan natin pag-aralan. And ngayon, since nakita natin na nagka-problema, paano natin ayusin 'yung problema. Ang solusyon ba ay mag-ban? O iba 'yung gagawin natin?

'Yun ang question ngayon. Ano yung gagawin natin? Kung hindi ban, ano 'yung gagawin natin? That's what I'm hoping all of these different sectors of society will help will lead us to a good answer. Siyempre, pakikilingan din natin yung PAGCOR. Magkano 'yung kinikita nila. Pakikilingan natin lahat. But all of that, but we have to hear from everyone because it's not a simple...

In my view, ako lang ha, I don't want to influence anyone's opinion here until we hear from the group who will be examining the question. But in my opinion, ban will not take care of the problem. We have to be a little bit more measured in our response.

Q: So sa ngayon po, Mr. President, wala pa pong plano ang gobyerno na magpatupad ng total ban sa illegal gambling? Despite the fact po na iyong illegal gambling po ay nakaka-addict gaya po ng illegal drugs at nakakasira po ng pamilya?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: That's the thing. What is the problem? Is the problem, online gambling? Or is the problem naa-addict ang tao. Nadadamay at natuturuan ang mga bata na magsugal? That's the problem. So let's solve that problem.

You know, ang nagiging -- online gaming is evil. Hindi naman, okay, hindi ban natin. Ganun, nandun ang usapan ngayon when it comes to online gaming. Pero hindi naman -- kailangan talaga may tendency kung minsan tayo dito sa atin, pagka may problem, i-ban. It's not necessarily the solution. Maybe it is. Baka pagkatapos ng usapan nila, sasabihin, hindi, kailangan talaga i-ban. Eh di i-ban. Pero pag-aralan natin na mabuti. Huwag tayong basta pabigla-bigla yung tinatawag --- we have to be measured in our responses. If it comes down to a ban, then we will ban. But if there are better solutions than a ban, we will take those on.

Q: Good morning po, Mr. President. According to COMELEC po, wala na daw pong formal signing for the bill postponing the Barangay and Sangguniang Kabataan elections and that will instead allow it to lapse into [unclear] on August 14. But on your part, sir, have you reached a decision on whether to sign the bill or let the bill?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, I'll sign it. I'll sign it.

Q: What are the main factors po you wait before deciding?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Because we are facing one of the biggest elements here, kakatapos lang natin ng malaking eleksyon, midterm election. Susunod na rito yung BARMM. Isasabay pa natin ngayon 'yung Barangay. Masyado ng --- ang COMELEC actually ang nagsasabi: "hindi namin kaya." Dahil, hindi naman, ano, kailangan nating tutukan yung BARMM. You have to remember, the BARM election that is upcoming in October is the first time we have ever had this kind of election at all. At all. Sa buong kasaysayan ng Pilipinas, hindi pa nagkaroon ng BARMMParliament na hinalal ng tao. So, that is why it is so important.

And, if that election fails, malaking bagay, malaking failure 'yan doon sa peace process. Kaya't kailangan na kailangan maging matagumpay ang pagganap ng halalaan ng BARMM. And that's why we really, really are focusing on that. And again, the local, of course, the local officials are saying, we just finished a local election. Magkakaroon na naman tayo ng barangay election. Parang ganoon din. Halos ganoon din. So, we, with a view on the Supreme Court decision that we cannot shorten the term of the barangay officials, we are actually lengthening the term of the barangay officials.

So that's not in conflict. So I think the most sensible and the most common sense solution is to postpone.

Q: Good morning. You've declared a hardline approach against corruption, even against allies. And impeachment developments aside, how can people still be confident in our accountability mechanisms given all the political noise?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Again, there has been no trial. So the merits of the case have not been examined, tried, adjudicated, argued, discussed. So, accountability just doesn't come into it. People have to understand, it is a procedural question. Sinabi, mali 'yung date, hindi tama ang pagkagawa ng house. Walang kinalaman doon sa laman ng impeachment complaint. Kung hindi, kung paano 'yung pagkahandle ng impeachment complaints.

Q: Sir, how would you address her standing corruption allegations?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Those corruption allegations? Well, you know, we have already COA, we have already all of these. I'm sure the House and the Senate will start to conduct further investigations on this because it's really within their purview. So we have all of the mechanisms that are available to us in terms of checks and balances. All we have to do is to try and get some answers.

We have to make very, very clear to everyone that the Supreme Court decision does not have any bearing on the rightness or wrongness of the merits of the impeachment case. They're not saying that there was no wrongdoing. Neither are they saying that there was no wrongdoing. Neither are they saying that there was wrongdoing. All they're saying is that you did not handle it properly. That's it.

That's why accountability just doesn't come into it here. It's an entirely, highly tangential matter. It is not a central point in the discussion.

May importante na maliwanag sa tao yun. Kasi sinasabi, ah, that natural reaction, hindi ka abogado. Hindi ba sasabihin mo? Sabi ng Supreme Court, hindi pala puwede, hindi talaga totoo. Wala namang ginawang mali pala.

Hindi 'yun ang sinabi ng Supreme Court. Ang sinabi ng Supreme Court, hindi tama 'yung pagkahawak ninyo sa house, ang pagkahawak ninyo doon sa impeachment complaint. Yun lang. So, accountability doesn't come into it. It does not question our accountability whatsoever. Ang COA na dyan, they can examine all of this. And much of this will be, I'm sure, because we are coming up to the budget process. Palagay ko maglalabasan na naman lahat 'yan.

Q: Good morning, Sir. You previously mentioned about strengthening the semiconductor industry and India is being considered as a manufacturing hub as well for these products.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Ang?

Q: India, Sir.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: India is not a big semiconductor. Malakas sila sa digital talaga. Pero hindi sa, they are they are very very they are leaders in many aspects of the digital space. But, meron silang production ng semiconductor pero hindi sila major player when it comes to semiconductor production.

Q: To clarify about the production of the mobile phones, they are -- some products that have grown, popular brands now are being made in India, 'yung mga mobile phones. So, with this, it's the Philippines seeing a deeper cooperation for this sector, especially now that we have elevated it to a strategic partnership?

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Well, yeah, that's exactly correct. This strategic partnership provides us a basis now of having more engagements. But, the engagements that we are really exploring are in analytics, IT. We have even, there was even a proposal for additional towers. You know, we have the Common Towers Program.

May kumpanya na lumapit sa atin na nais tumulong. Magtatayo sila. 'Yun lang ang trabaho nila. Magtatayo sila ng tower para tulungan n'yo nga 'yung programa natin mapabilis. So these are the entire range, the entire gamut of activities that fall under digital activity, we explored.

And certainly, marami talaga. Because we talked about AI, we talked about even training. Because magaling sila dito sa India. Magaling sila.

Marami silang napoproduce na highly, very well trained, na puwede talagang makipag-kumpetensya sa labor market. Who we can take on and who will help us in our digitalization.

So, malaking bagay sa pinag-usapan namin 'yung digital. Malaking AI, we talked about AI, about telecom, about IT. Magaling talaga sila d'yan. World leader sila sa ganyan. Kaya't napakalaking bagay kung mapalalim natin 'yung discussion natin with India when it comes to those.

Eventually, to bring those technologies to the Philippines. And, which is always something, 'yung transfer of technology, syempre. At saka yung mag-training. So, 'yun ang inuna namin. Baka pwede kami magpadala ng tao dito sa mga institute ninyo. Tapos, pagka medyo marami na kayong naturuan, pupunta naman kayo doon para tignan ninyo yung sistema namin and what are your suggestions to make it better. That's what I was saying. The more we look, the more we found. Yung pagka, 'yun lalo yung sa digital. Sabi, pwede natin gawin to. Hindi, pwede pa rin ito. Pwede pa. Ang dami. Ang dami talagang pwede. And India is very ambitious when it comes to the digital space. So it's good to see. It was very, very important for us to see. Ano 'yung direksyon nila? Ano sa assessment nila papunta ang AI? Saan pupunta ba yan? Ano ba yung magiging, ano ba 'yung mga kailangan nating gawin? Because we keep hearing AI is a very powerful tool but any powerful tool, it cuts both ways.

So, papaano natin mabantayan yan? How do we...All of these things, cyber security na pag-usapan natin, syempre napupunta na rin sa defense and security pero it's not necessarily for the armed forces. It's also for our banks, for the armed forces. It's also for our banks, businesses, the government. Ayun, kailangan na kailangan natin yung cyber security kasi nandoon talaga 'yung frontline ngayon.

And being, as I said, a world leader, India has a lot to offer in terms of experience, in terms of training, in terms of all of the things that we in the Philippines need to develop our own digital space. The phrase that I always use now is, we need to develop that and we can see that how to handle. For example, how do you handle AI? Kasi nga marami, siyempre alam natin lahat yung good side. Pero merong medyo not so good side, right? So how do we handle that? How do we work around that? And then, not only in the business field, but also in the political field. What is social media? Where is it headed? How do we deal with it? What, you know, misinformation, disinformation, fake news, all of that. How do we deal with that? Are there methods that we can use?

Maraming bagay talaga, sobrang talaga. Like I say, ang dami talaga pwedeng gawin with India. There really is. And what was going in my head every time that I was talking to people, I said, Why didn't we do this earlier? We should have done this earlier. But I'm happy that we did it now.

Q: Hi sir, magandang umaga po. Sir, you mentioned kanina na may mga bagay dito sa impeachment po na kailangan maging maliwanag sa atin pong publiko. Ang nangyayari po kasi 'yung napapakinggan ay 'yung iba't ibang panig. Have you spoken or have they reached out to you at the very least, 'yung mga allies po ninyo or anybody dito sa sitwasyon na ito kasi nga medyo humahaba na po siya.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Humahaba ang?

Q: 'Yung usapin sir sa impeachment. Maraming kailangan ipaliwanag. You mentioned it already kanina po.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: No, in my case, well, syempre mayroon nagtatanong sa akin. Sabihin, sorry, problema n'yo yan. Hindi ako nanghihiram ng problema. That's your problem. So, that's your problem -- so --- that's --- again that situation does not really involve me uh it would be highly improper for me to tell my friends who are in the Senate and who are in the House, "Ito ang dapat ninyong gawin". Highly improper 'yun. Pati na ako mai-impeach kung gagawin ko 'yun. Kaya hindi ko gagawin 'yun.

So, yes, they ask and we talk about it. You know, it's not as if I try to direct their actions. That would be, that's the last thing I want to do. Besides, when thses all started, I immediately came to the conclusion, I have no part in this. So, we'll just continue doing our work. Mukhang tapos na. Ewan ko kung mag-MR pa ang house.

OFFICIAL: Meron na.

PRESIDENT MARCOS: Meron na. Oh 'yun. Well, then, the process will continue. Pabayaan natin. But if the Senate has decided not to try the case, I don't know. Even if the Supreme Court reverses itself, I don't know where to put the whole thing. I don't really worry about it too much for myself. I just need to... There's just, look, there's so many things we need to do. I don't have... Those are my priorities.

SEC. GOMEZ: Thank you very much, Mr. President. On that note, we conclude today's kapihan. Maraming salamat, everyone. Thank you.

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