

## Delhi Declaration calls for joint fight against terror

Head start: President Ram Nath Kovind, First Lady Savita, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi with the ASEAN Heads of State and their spouses at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Thursday. PTI

Counter-terrorism, identity security, military cooperation, and bilateral financial support were discussed in official level talks with leaders from ASEAN countries held on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit held to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of sectoral dialogue between two sides.

The ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit also came out with a comprehensive statement targeting terrorism and agreed to uphold freedom in the maritime domain.

A common topic at all the discussions that Prime Minister Modi participated was counter-terrorism.

### Disrupting radicalism

Focusing on the presence of the Islamic State and other forms of radicalism in the region, a joint statement, titled Delhi Declaration, issued after the plenary session, supported a common approach to counter terrorism and sought a "comprehensive approach to combat terrorism through close cooperation by disrupting and countering terrorists, terrorist groups and networks, including by countering cross border movement of terrorists and foreign terrorist fighters and misuse of Internet including social media by terror entities."

Out of all the countries of ASEAN region, Philippines had the most serious threat from the Islamic State in the last few years and the bilateral discussion focused on this aspect.

"President Duterte conveyed his deepest appreciation for the \$500,000 assistance that was provided by India to resettle victims of the Marawi siege," said Preeti Saran, Secretary in Charge of Eastern Affairs, highlighting the support that Philippines received from India to counter the Islamic State (IS) terrorists who had taken over the city of Marawi in Philippines where a battle was waged by the Philippines' military forces.

### Working with Manila

A Joint Working Group meeting is likely to be held between the two countries to finalise details of counter-terror cooperation between Delhi and Manila. Mr. Modi also held a discussion with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

"Defence and maritime cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region was discussed which involves manufacturing of offshore vessels which has been contracted to Larsen and Toubro," said Ms. Saran explaining that both sides are likely to operationalise \$100 million line of credit for the same.

The official also said that direct flights would soon connect India with Vietnam.

The issue of security identity cards for the citizens, on the line of the Aadhaar card of India also came up during the bilateral discussion with Philippines. "A team from Philippines was here last week to study the Aadhar card of India, said Ms. Saran.

The security scenario in the Rakhine province was also discussed between Prime Minister Modi and Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor of Myanmar. Both sides discussed the housing

project that India would build to rehabilitate the Rohingya.

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