

India, U.S. deepen engagement

Stronger ties: Vietnam's PM Nguyen Xuan Phuc, left, PM Narendra Modi and Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte, right, shake hands at the 15th ASEAN-India Summit in Manila. AFP/MANAN VATSYAYANA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday left for home after concluding his three-day visit to the Philippines where he attended the ASEAN-India and East Asia summits besides holding a series of bilateral meetings with a number of leaders including U.S. President Donald Trump.

"After a series of productive bilateral and multilateral engagements in Manila, PM @narendramodi heads for home," Ministry of External Affairs spokesman Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

United approach

On the sidelines of the summits, Mr. Modi held "very expansive" talks with Mr. Trump during which the two leaders carried out a "broad review" of the strategic landscape in Asia, signalling deeper cooperation by the two countries in dealing with sensitive security issues confronting the region.

It is learnt that the broader security architecture in the Indo-Pacific region in the backdrop of China's increasing military presence in South China Sea figured in their talks apart from a host of other regional and global issues including terrorism emanating from Pakistan, North Korea's missile tests, situation in Afghanistan and also the Gulf region.

Mr. Modi also held wide-ranging talks with Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, covering an entire gamut of bilateral relationship. After their talks, the two countries inked four pacts providing for cooperation in a number of areas, including defence and security.

He held wide-ranging talks with his Japanese counterpart, Shinzo Abe, with a focus on ramping up the strategic partnership between the two Asian giants.

Many bilateral meets

Mr. Modi held bilateral meetings with his Australian counterpart Malcolm Turnbull, Vietnamese Premier Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Sultan of Brunei Hassanal Bolkiah and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, and discussed ways to further ramp up cooperation in various key areas like trade and investment.

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