



PM's statement prior to his departure to Philippines

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Following is the text of the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi's departure statement prior to his visit to Philippines.

"I will be in Manila on a three-day visit starting 12th November. This will be my first bilateral visit to the Philippines where I will also participate in the ASEAN-India and East Asia Summits. My participation in them symbolises India's commitment to continue deepening relationship with ASEAN Member States, in particular, and with the Indo-Pacific region, in general, within the framework of my Government's Act East Policy.

Besides these Summits, I would also participate in Special Celebrations of the 50th anniversary of ASEAN, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Leaders' Meeting and ASEAN Business and Investment Summit.

The ASEAN Business and Investment Summit will boost our close cooperation to further enhance our trade ties with ASEAN member-states, which constitutes a significant 10.85% of our overall trade.

During my first visit to the Philippines, I look forward to have a bilateral meeting with President of the Philippines HE Mr. Rodrigo Duterte. I will also have interactions with other ASEAN and East Asia Summit Leaders.

I also look forward to connecting with the Indian community in Philippines. During my stay in Manila, I shall also visit the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and Mahavir Philippines Foundation Inc. (MPFI).

International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) through Scientific Research and Development has developed better quality of rice seed and helped the global community in addressing food scarcity issues. A large number of Indian scientists are working in IRRI and contributing to R&D in this field. My cabinet approved on 12 July 2017 a proposal for IRRI to set up its South Asia Regional Centre at Varanasi. This will be the first Research Centre by IRRI outside its headquarters in the Philippines. The Varanasi Centre would help increase farmers' income by enhancing and supporting rice productivity, reducing cost of production, value addition, diversification and enhancement of farmers' skills.

My visit to Mahavir Philippines Foundation Inc. (MPFI) will demonstrate India's support for its activities in distributing free prosthesis "Jaipur Foot" among the needy amputees. Since its establishment in 1989, MPFI has fitted nearly 15,000 amputees in the Philippines with Jaipur Foot making them capable of living a new life. Government of India is making a modest contribution to the Foundation to support its noble humanitarian activities.

I am confident that my visit to Manila will give a new boost to India's bilateral relations with the Philippines and also further strengthen the politico-security, economic and socio-cultural pillars of our engagement with ASEAN."

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