

MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT OF INDIA ON HIS VISIT TO VIETNAM

Hanoi, November 20, 2018

1. At the outset, I wish to express my profound gratitude to you, Your Excellency, for the gracious warmth and welcome extended to me and my delegation. Your special words reflect our civilisational friendship and the depth of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.
2. This is my first visit to South-East Asia and to the ASEAN region as the President of India. I also come 60 years after the 11-day historic State Visit of President Ho Chi Minh to India in 1958.
3. I am glad that my first visit in the ASEAN region has been to Vietnam, a strategic pillar of India's Act East Policy, and our key interlocutor in ASEAN.
4. As Comprehensive Strategic Partners, India and Vietnam have a strong bilateral relationship based on mutual trust, understanding, convergence of views on regional and international issues and strong cooperation in regional and multilateral fora.
5. I began my official engagement in this historic city with my address to the National Assembly. I am truly and deeply honoured by this special gesture shown to me, my people and my country.
6. My talks with President Phu Trong were extensive and productive. Our discussions covered the full range of bilateral and multilateral cooperation. We reiterated the importance of building a peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific region on the basis of respect for national sovereignty and international law.
7. We have agreed to further strengthen our bilateral cooperation in defence, peaceful uses of atomic energy and outer space, science and technology, oil and gas, infrastructure development, agriculture and innovation-based sectors. We have signed three MOUs, namely in the fields of communications, education and trade and investment to take our bilateral agenda forward.
8. We committed to further deepen our defence and security cooperation. I reiterated India's commitment to provide training support for Vietnam

Armed Forces. We also reviewed the implementation of the Line of Credit of US\$ 100 million for building high-speed patrol vessels for Vietnamese Border Guards.

9. We condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestation and agreed to strengthen global fight against this menace. We expressed satisfaction that the two countries would soon begin dialogue on strengthening maritime security cooperation.
10. We agreed to encourage our industry to tap into the growing economic opportunities in our own countries and in the region. India-Vietnam economic relations are on an upswing. Our bilateral trade last year stood at US\$ 12.8 billion. I am confident that our efforts in facilitating our business interactions, such as the Vietnam-India Business Forum that I attended yesterday in Hanoi, will enable us to achieve our bilateral trade target of US\$ 15 billion by 2020.
11. Our cultural similarities are a strong binding element of our friendship. As a tribute to our shared heritage, I began my State Visit from Da Nang, where I visited the Cham temples. It is a matter of great pride for us that the Archaeological Survey of India is undertaking the restoration of three temple groups at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of My Son.
12. India and Vietnam have been linked together over the centuries through trade and the message of compassion and kindness of Lord Buddha.
13. The affection shown by the friendly Vietnamese people has touched my heart. I will always cherish my visit to your beautiful country.

Thank you!