

India Philippines - Financial Aid

What is the issue?

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India's financial aid to the Philippines to fight the Islamic State signals a reworking of its ASEAN outreach.

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What is the issue going in Philippines?

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- The siege of Marawi, about 800 km south of the capital Manila, began in May.

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- The Philippine security forces launched an offensive to capture Isnilon Hapilon, leader of the IS-affiliated Abu Sayyaf group.

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- Despite the military offensive, militants remain in control of Marawi which they view as key to their efforts to create an IS province.

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- The civilian toll has been rising, with more than 500 people killed and nearly 4,00,000 civilians displaced.

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- Philippine is vowing to "crush" the militants and declaring martial law over the entire southern Philippines.

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- Yet, the end of the conflict is not in sight.

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What is the status of IS?

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- With the recent fall of Mosul and the fight for Raqqa intensifying by the day, there are suggestions that the days of the IS in its current shape are

numbered.

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- The IS of today may appear to be a pale shadow of its past menace when at its peak, since the end of 2014 through 2015.

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- It controlled territory comprising roughly 1,10,000 sq. km, across both Syria and Iraq.

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- But the underlying forces that gave rise to its emergence in West Asia remain as potent as ever and the ideological attraction of its ideology shows no sign of fading.

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What are the significance of India's Aid?

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- India used this crisis to enhance its anti-terror and de-radicalisation partnership with the Philippines.

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- India is conducting cyber security training for the Philippine security forces, focusing on de-radicalisation.

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- India has decided to provide a financial assistance of Rs. 3.2 crore to the Philippines to aid its fight against the Islamic State (IS)-affiliated terror groups in the troubled Mindanao province.

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- This is the first time India is sending aid to another nation to help it fight terrorism.

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- With this financial aid, India has emerged as the largest donor in efforts to contain the crisis.

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- This is seen as an attempts to burnish its credentials as an emerging security provider to the wider Asian region.

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- India's engagement with the Philippines is also key to underscoring its growing role in Southeast Asia.

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Will this things impact china?

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- The Philippines is trying to recalibrate its ties with China, under stress because of a suit brought by Manila to the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague challenging Beijing's claim to almost all of the South China Sea.

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- Though Manila won the case last year, it has not been able to push Beijing to moderate its stance on the maritime dispute.

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- China has provided 15 million pesos (approximately \$3,00,000) in aid compared to India's 25 million pesos (\$5,00,000).

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- India cannot easily match China's growing economic profile but it has other means to build partnership with a very important region in its foreign policy matrix.

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- As India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) celebrate 25 years of their partnership this year, it is a politically opportune moment to upgrade India's regional profile.

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- The recent outreach to Manila is an important step in that direction.

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Source: The Hindu

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