

Embassy of India Phnom Penh

Brief on India-Cambodia Bilateral Relations

Historically, India-Cambodia relations are a product of Hindu and Buddhist religious and cultural influences, which emanated out of India. Though Cambodia, like most of its neighbors, is a Buddhist nation, there is a strong influence of Hindu rituals, idolatry and mythology. The pervading influence of Hinduism, Buddhism and Indian architecture are borne out by the magnificent structure of Angkor Wat temple, built between 12th to 14th centuries. Indian influences are also seen on the earlier temples of Cambodia such as Preah Vihear dedicated to Lord Shiva built from late 9th century onwards, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Prohm, Sambor Prei Kuk and other historical sites. There are also strong linguistic connections, with an estimated three thousand words being common between Sanskrit and Khmer languages. From 15th Century onwards, with the decline of Khmer empire, contacts between India and Cambodia declined under the onslaught of European powers seeking colonies in Asia.

Political relations

2. In the 1950s, India was associated with the International Control Commission on Indo-China. India's contribution as Co-Chairman of this Commission came in for widespread appreciation in Cambodia. India established diplomatic relations with Cambodia in 1952 even one year before its independence from France. Immediately after the Cambodian independence in 1953, India was seen as a close friend and a source of inspiration by the Cambodian leadership. Strong personal association between Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Prince Norodom Sihanouk and their initiatives resulted in strong friendly ties between the two countries during the period 1954-1960. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, our first Head of Government, visited Cambodia in 1954 and our first Head of State Dr. Rajendra Prasad in 1959. Nehru and Sihanouk cooperated closely in the process of establishing Non-Aligned Movement. From the 1970s, with brutal regime of Khmer Rouge, Cambodia had a very disturbed and traumatic period lasting few decades. Cambodian leadership is full of gratitude for India for being the first democratic nation to recognize the Heng Samrin regime after the collapse of Khmer Rouge and open its diplomatic mission in 1981. In response to an appeal by the Cambodian Government, the Government of India deputed a team of experts from the Archaeological Survey of India in 1986 for restoration and conservation of Angkor Wat temple.

3. In 1980s India played an active role to facilitate dialogues between Cambodian political factions. India's association in 1980 with the Paris Peace Accord and the intense interaction at high levels for its finalization in 1991 is fondly remembered with gratitude by the Cambodian leadership. India contributed military and non-military contingent for the conduct of the UNTAC sponsored elections in 1993. Their non-partisan and fair role, which brought the 1993 elections to a successful conclusion, was also highly appreciated. In its interaction with Indian leadership, the Cambodian side has always expressed its gratefulness for the help extended by India during difficult periods for Cambodia.

4. There exists abundance of goodwill for India in Cambodia, which has been strengthened by regular interactions at political and official levels, exchange of bilateral visits, aid and assistance, capacity building, cultural exchanges, concessional loans for developmental projects and restoration of temples.

Exchange of High Level Visits

5. There have been regular high-level visits from both sides including regular bilateral exchanges at Ministerial level. The following high level visits have taken place from Cambodia:

- Prince Norodom Sihanouk visited India in 1955 as Prime Minister of Cambodia after he abdicated throne to pursue politics. The visit came few months before the Bandung Conference. He again visited India multiple times in 1956, 1958, 1960 and 1963.
- 1981, 1988, 1990, 1991- Prime Minister Hun Sen visited India.
- During the February 2000 visit of Prime Minister Hun Sen, an Agreement for setting up a Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific & Technological Co-operation, an MOU on Tourism, and a Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) were signed.
- Prime Minister Hun Sen visited India in December 2007. During the visit, seven Agreements/MOUs relating to Transfer of Sentenced Persons, Credit Line, Defence Cooperation, Water Resource Management, Oil and Gas sector and Foreign Office Consultations were signed. A Line of Credit of US\$ 35.2 million on concessional terms was offered to Cambodia for Construction of Electric Transmission Line between Kratie and Stung Treng, Phase I of the Stung Tasal Water Resource Development Project and supply of 180 pump sets/allied equipment.
- In December 2012, Prime Minister Hun Sen participated in the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN–India dialogue partnership.
- Prime Minister Hun Sen paid a State Visit to India on 27th January, 2018. He also participated in the 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and attended the Republic Day Parade 2018 as Guest of Honour along with other ASEAN Leaders. During the bilateral component of the visit, both sides concluded a MoU on Prevention of Human Trafficking, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters and renewed the Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP). A Credit Line agreement for US \$36.92 million for the Stung Sva Hab Water Resource Development Project was also signed.
- H.E. Prak Sokhonn, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Cambodia visited India from 15-17 June, 2022 to

participate in the Special ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Delhi to commemorate the 30th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations.

- Lieutenant General Hun Manet (LGHM), Deputy Commander in Chief of Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and Commander of Royal Cambodian Army visited India from 2-4 February 2023. It was the first visit by any Cambodian Army Chief to India. A number of high level interactions took place during the visit with LGHM calling on Hon`ble Vice President of India Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar, External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar, and Shri Rajnath Singh, Minister of Defence of India. Lt. Gen. Hun Manet also had meetings with Chief of Defence Staff, Defence Secretary, and Deputy National Security Adviser.

High Level Visits from India

- Prime Minister Nehru visited Cambodia in 1954. Nehru was the first Head of Government to travel to the Cambodia after it gained independence.
- President Rajendra Prasad visited Cambodia in 1959. President Rajendra Prasad was the first Head of State to visit independent Cambodia.
- Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid an Official Visit to Cambodia in April 2002. Bilaterally, various agreements were signed and many initiatives announced during the visit, which included setting up of the Asian Traditional Textiles Museum in Siem Reap under Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Initiative. PM Vajpayee visited Cambodia again in November 2002 to attend the 1st ASEAN-India Summit.
- President Pratibha Devi Singh Patil paid a State Visit to Cambodia in September 2010. During the visit, President laid the foundation stone for the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum in Siem Reap.
- Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh led a high level delegation to Cambodia in November 2012 to participate in the 10th ASEAN– India Summit and the 7th East Asia Summit held in Phnom Penh.
- Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari led a high level delegation to Cambodia in September 2015.
- Shri Suresh Prabhu, Hon`ble Minister of Commerce and Civil Aviation visited Cambodia to attend 5th India-CLMV Business Conclave from 21-22 May 2018. On the sidelines of the event, CIM called on PM Hun Sen and met Commerce Minister Pan Sorasak. The Hon`ble Minister again visited Cambodia to attend the RCEP Ministerial meeting on 2nd March, 2019.
- Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Hon`ble Raksha Mantri visited Cambodia from 11-12 June, 2018.
- Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Hon`ble External Affairs Minister visited Cambodia from 28-30 August, 2018.

- Shri Om Birla, Hon'ble Speaker of Lok Sabha accompanied by 5 Members of Parliament visited Cambodia from 21-24 April, 2022. During the visit, the Parliamentary delegation had a Royal Audience with His Majesty the King of Cambodia and held discussions with the Presidents of the National Assembly and Senate of the Kingdom of Cambodia respectively. Both sides discussed enhancing Parliamentary cooperation and also establishing a Joint India-Cambodia Parliamentary Friendship Group.

- At the request of Prime Minister Hun Sen, Prime Ministers held a virtual meeting on 18 May, 2022. PM Hun Sen thanked India for providing 325,000 vaccines under the Quad Vaccine Initiative and also for supporting Cambodia in its economic and social development.

- Shri Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Cambodia from 20-22 June, 2022 to launch the 70th Anniversary of Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India and Cambodia.

- External Affairs Minister Dr S. Jaishankar visited Cambodia from 03-05 August 2022 to attend the annual ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AIFMM). During the visit EAM also called on Prime Minister Hun Sen.

- Hon'ble Vice President of India Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar visited Cambodia from 11-13 November 2022 to attend the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit & 17th East Asia Summit.

- Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh visited Siem Reap, Cambodia from November 22-23, 2022 to attend 9th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) Plus and maiden India-ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting. Raksha Mantri also held a bilateral meeting with General TEA Banh, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Defence of Cambodia.

Cultural Cooperation

6. On an appeal by Cambodian Government in 1980, India was the first country to offer help in restoration and conservation of the world famous Angkor Wat temple in Siem Reap after the fall of the Khmer Rouge. After undertaking the feasibility and other related studies, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) undertook the work relating to restoration and conservation of the Angkor Wat temple from 1986-1993 at a total cost of about US\$ 4 million. India was the first country to offer such assistance and the fact is well appreciated even today by the Cambodian leadership and public alike.

7. Further, on Cambodia's request, India also agreed to restore Ta Prohm temple in Angkor Archaeological Park in Siem Reap. ASI has been working on this project since 2003. This is the most visible project that we are undertaking in Cambodia currently and the work of ASI has been widely appreciated. The first two phases of restoration and conservation of Ta Prohm temple was completed in July 2015 at a total cost of Rs. 34.16 crore (USD 7 million) . ASI is currently undertaking the third phase of restoration and conservation work at Ta Prohm temple at an

estimated expenditure of USD 4.6 million (Rs 29.32 Crores). The third phase of restoration work started in November 2016 and expected to be completed in 2026. In November 2022, Hon`ble Vice President of India inaugurated the Hall of Dancers at the Ta Prohm Temple.

8. In 2014, India was appointed Co-chair along with China for the International Coordinating Committee (ICC) on Preah Vihear, a world heritage site and one of the oldest temples of Lord Shiva. A MoU was signed during visit of Hon`ble EAM to Cambodia in August 2018 for conservation of Preah Vihear Temple. Pursuant to signing of the MoU, a 3-member ASI team has started work on site since 2022. The project costs USD 5.5 million with a duration of 10 years.

9. India has also taken up conservation and preservation of Ashram Maha Russey Temple, Sambor Prei Kuk, a UNESCO world heritage site. The MoU was signed in 2022 and a grant assistance of US\$50,000 is being provided for the work.

10. A Financing Agreement between India and Cambodia for Conservation and Preservation of Wat Raja Bo Pagoda Paintings in Siem Reap, Cambodia was also signed during the visit of Hon`ble Vice President of India to Cambodia from 11-13 November 2022 to attend the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit & 17th East Asia Summit.

11. Since 2015, Mission with the support of Cambodian Ministry of Tourism and Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports has been organizing yoga events to celebrate International Day of Yoga (IDY). The 5th IDY was successfully celebrated in Cambodia in June 2019, which was held in four major cities and attended by more than 2,500 participants. The yoga event in front of iconic Angkor Wat temple grabbed sizable attention on social media. Due to COVID-19 pandemic and the health protocols that were in place in Cambodia in June 2020, the 6th IDY was celebrated in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap. In June 2021, due to grim COVID-19 pandemic situation in Cambodia, the 7th IDY celebrations were held only in Phnom Penh. 8th International Day of Yoga celebrations were held in Siem Reap during the visit of Shri Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs to Cambodia.

12. Since 2016, ICCR has been deputing a Bharatnatyam teacher to conduct dance classes at the Royal University of Fine Arts and the Chancery. A local Yoga teacher and local Hindi teacher have been undertaking classes at the Chancery. India has been maintaining ICCR Chair of Sanskrit and Buddhist Studies at Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University (PSRBU) in Phnom Penh since 2011, a visiting professor has been deputed by ICCR.

13. Mission has been undertaking various Buddhist outreach activities which include translation of Jataka tales in Khmer language, publication of interactive videos of Jataka tales, efforts for digitization of Buddhist manuscripts, e-ITEC courses for Buddhist studies, institutional linkages between Universities from India and Cambodia as well as sending Buddhist scholars for post-doctoral fellowships in India. Mission works closely with ICCR and International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) to organize many Buddhism related conferences and festivals.

Trade, Commercial and Investment Relations

14. Cambodia is one of the priority countries under our *Act East* Policy. The bilateral trade has been growing steadily in the last few years. The principal commodities exported from India are: pharmaceutical products, bovine meat, motor vehicles (autos, motor cycles and spare parts), raw hides and leather, miscellaneous chemicals etc. while the main exports from Cambodia are organic chemicals, vegetable oil, articles of apparel and clothing, footwear etc. The trade figures for the last six years are as follows:

Trade with India (In USD millions)	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23 (April – Feb)
Total Trade	177.24	238.61	234.81	208.21	293.25	320.94
Exports from India	121.41	195.98	188.12	168.86	198.37	198.87
Imports from Cambodia	55.84	42.63	46.69	39.35	94.88	122.07

15. The Decision to provide Duty Free Quota Free (DFQF) access for LDCs was an outcome of the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting, held in December 2005. This decision required all developed-country Members, and developing-country Members declaring themselves in a position to do so to provide duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis. India had extended Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to LDCs, including Cambodia since August 2008. The DFTP Scheme was expanded by the Department of Commerce in 2014 both in terms of coverage and facilitation of trade. Under this Scheme, which covers 98.2% of India's total tariff lines, India unilaterally provides preferential market access for exports from Cambodia.

16. Several Indian companies are doing business in the area of pharmaceuticals with representatives offices in Phnom Penh. Bajaj motorcycles and three-wheelers are quite popular and have significant share in three-wheeler vehicles market in Cambodia. Mesco Gold (Cambodia) Ltd has a gold mining license in Ratnakiri Province in Cambodia.

17. In 2021 both sides have agreed to the Terms of Reference on setting up a Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment and the 1st meeting of India-Cambodia Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment (JWGTI) was held virtually on 1 July 2022.

18. In March 2023, the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) and the NPCI International Payment Limited (NIPL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for entering into a strategic alliance and studying the feasibility and prospects of cooperation and collaboration for enabling cross border payment and remittance between India and Cambodia through the Unified Payment Interface (UPI).

19. Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has signed a Letter of Intent with Telecommunication Regulator of Cambodia in June 2021. MoU for Cooperation in Health and Medicine was signed in November 2022.

Tourism Cooperation

20. A MOU on Tourism Cooperation between the two sides was signed in September 2015 during the visit of Vice President of India to Cambodia. Both sides held the first JWG meeting on Tourism in New Delhi in April 2016 and signed a work plan on tourism cooperation. Both sides also agreed to encourage promotion of tourist destinations and circuits considering demand of Buddhist related spiritual sites. The second meeting of JWG on Tourism was held in May 2018 in Cambodia. The 3rd meeting of the JWG on Tourism was held in the virtual format on 22 September, 2021. During 2019, nearly 70,000 Indian tourists visited Cambodia whereas the figure of Cambodian tourists visiting India during 2019 reached more than 4,000. The civil aviation authorities of the two sides signed an MoU in September 2016 and agreed to grant 3rd, 4th and 5th freedom traffic rights to airlines of respective sides.

Development cooperation

21 At the request of Cambodia, India gifted medicines and 10,000 tonnes of rice to Cambodia in 2002. Subsequently, indelible ink was supplied to Cambodia for the General Elections of July 2003 and for subsequent elections. In 2008, medicines, equipment & ambulances worth Rs. 2.31 crore were gifted to Military Hospital in Siem Reap. A cash donation of US\$ 100,000 was also provided in 2011 to the Royal Government of Cambodia for the relief of flood victims.

22. In 2005, India made a contribution of US\$ 1 million to the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the UN tribunal tasked with the prosecution of the country's former Khmer Rouge commanders. Subsequently, two contributions of US\$ 50,000 each were made to ECCC in 2016 and 2018.

23. Following the visit of PM Hun Sen to India in December 2007, three Lines of Credit worth US\$ 65.20 million were extended to Cambodia for Water Resource Development, Transmission Line and Supply of Water Pumps. Contracts aggregating US\$ 65.20 million have been approved and worth US \$ 55.75 million have been completed.

24. India offered a grant in aid of US\$ 8.5 million for supply and installation of 1500 Afridev hand-operated pumps to augment supply of drinking water in Provinces of Tboung Khmum (1190 pumps) and Banteay Meanchey (310 pumps). The hand pump project, with a revised estimated cost of US\$ 12 million, was launched in April 2017 and completed in August 2020. Government of India has also provided grant-in-aid of approximately US \$ 3 million for two projects, namely, Siem Reap Basin: Development of Master Plan and Study of Ground Water Resources of Kampong Speu Province.

25. During the visit of President Pratibha Patil to Cambodia in 2010, a grant of US\$ 246,000 was announced for redevelopment of India-Cambodia Friendship School in Kampong Cham province. The project was completed and handed over to the Cambodian side in September 2015.

26. During the State Visit of PM Hun Sen to India in January 2018, a Line of Credit for US\$ 36.92 million was extended for Stung Sva Hab Water Resource Development Project.

27. During COVID-19 pandemic, in December 2020, an Indian Naval Ship “INS Kiltan” visited Sihanoukville to deliver 15 tons of flood relief material for the flood affected people of Cambodia.

28. In April 2022, Cambodia became the first country to receive 325,000 covishield vaccines from India under Quad Vaccine Initiative.

29. A grant assistance of USD 426,000 for making three districts and one commune in Koh Kong Province, Cambodia land mine free was announced during the visit of Hon`ble Vice President of India to Cambodia in November 2022.

30. A month long artificial limb fitment camp by Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti under India for Humanity initiative of MEA took place in Banteay Meanchey Province of Cambodia during March 2023. Cambodia Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) was the partner from the Cambodian side. More than 650 people were fitted with artificial limbs in the camp.

Cooperation under Mekong Ganga Initiative (MGC)

31. Mekong-Ganga Cooperation has been established since November 2000 with 6 member countries—Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand, Viet Nam and India.

32. Under the MGC initiative, an Asian Traditional Textiles Museum has been established and opened to public since 2014 in Siem Reap with a financial grant of approx. US\$ 1.8 million from Government of India. Subsequently, an amount of USD 3,41,992/- has been provided to the Museum for its establishment related expenses.

33. Under Quick Impact Scheme (QIP) of MGC, a grant assistance of US\$ 50,000 per project was provided for implementation of five socio-economic projects every year. During 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, fifteen (15) Quick Impact Projects were approved and implemented in the fields of agriculture, health, women empowerment, capacity building, sanitation and environment. These projects have received a good response and created a visible impact among beneficiaries. During the State visit of PM Hun Sen to India in January 2018, PM Modi announced increase in the number of QIPs from 5 to 10 to be undertaken annually in Cambodia. So far, a total of 48 projects have been approved, 31 projects have been completed and 17 projects are at various stages of implementation.

Capacity Building

34. As an initiative towards capacity building, Cambodia-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre was established in Phnom Penh in 2006. Cambodia- India Centre for English Language Training (CICELT) was established at the Royal Academy of Cambodia in 2007. India has also established a Centre of Excellence for Software Development and Training (CESDT) in Cambodian Academy of Digital Technology at an approximate cost of approx USD1.2 million (Rs. 10 Crore) from ASEAN-India Cooperation Fund.

35. Training to Cambodian officials under the ITEC programme has been a successful and widely appreciated aspect of our capacity building assistance. Under the ITEC programme, nearly 2200 Cambodian nationals have been trained since 1981. We have also started conducting customized training programmes for Cambodian officers since 2017. In 2022-23, as against allocated slots of 200, 203 Cambodian officials attended the short term ITEC training programmes, including 13 customised courses specially designed for Cambodia. Hon'ble Vice President of India announced increasing ITEC training slots from 200 to 250 during his visit to Cambodia in November 2022. The beneficiaries of Indian scholarships and ITEC courses have formed a Cambodia India Alumni Association, which has been very useful in building networks among the alumni and the Mission.

36. During the Visit of EAM to Cambodia in August 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed on cooperation between Foreign Service Institute (FSI), India and National Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations (NIDIR), Cambodia. Efforts are underway to organize customized courses for Cambodian diplomats under the MoU.

37. 30 ICCR scholarships for under-graduate, post-graduate and higher studies are available for Cambodian students, including 20 under the Atal Vajpayee General Scholarships and 10 under Mekong Ganga Cooperation every year. During 2022-23, all the 30 scholarships were utilized by Cambodia. Hon'ble Vice President of India also announced during his visit to Cambodia in November 2022 to increase in ICCR scholarships from 30 to 50. India has also offered to receive 2 Buddhist monks/scholars under Distinguished Visitor's Programme. In addition, five scholarships are being offered by Nalanda University to Cambodian students under ASEAN-India fund. On September 16, 2019, India formally launched 1,000 Ph.D. integrated fellowships for students from ASEAN countries in the prestigious IITs as announced by PM during the 25th Anniversary Commemorative ASEAN Summit in January 2018.

Indian Community

38. There are over 1,700 Indian nationals scattered in various parts of Cambodia. Many of them are employed with international organizations and agencies, some Indians are working as senior advisers/consultants in some of the Cambodian Ministries/agencies and in different fields of economy. There is a group of small traders hailing from Uttar Pradesh, who sell clothes and mosquito nets in the countryside. Many of these small traders have relocated to India temporarily due to

COVID-19 pandemic and resultant loss of opportunities/jobs in Cambodia. Indian nationals in Cambodia have formed an association called “Indian Association-Cambodia (IAC)”, which has been collaborating with the Mission for organizing various cultural events.

As on May 2023
