

## **India - Cambodia Relations**

India-Cambodia relations go back to the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD when Hindu and Buddhist religious and cultural influences emanated out of India to various parts of South-East Asia. Cambodians are today predominantly Buddhist but retain a strong influence of Hindu rituals, idolatry and mythology. The pervading influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Indian architecture are borne out by the magnificent structures at Angkor Wat, Angkor Thom, Bayon, Ta Phrom and other religious and historical sites in Cambodia.

### **POLITICAL RELATIONS:**

India-Cambodia bilateral relations are warm and cordial. In the 1950s, India was associated with the International Control Commission on Indo-China. After the collapse of the Khmer Rouge regime, India recognized the new government and re-opened its Embassy in Phnom Penh in 1981 when much of the world shunned Cambodia. This factor along with India's association with the Paris Peace Accords and their finalization in 1991 is fondly remembered by the Cambodian leadership. India also committed military and non-military personnel for the conduct of the UNTAC-sponsored elections in 1993. India was one of the original contributors to UN de-mining operations in Cambodia. The Government of India also responded to an appeal by Cambodian Government to undertake the conservation of the famous Angkor Wat temple during the period 1986 to 1993 at a cost of US\$ 4 million, at a time when peace in the country was yet to be settled.

India and Cambodia cooperate in a number of multilateral and regional fora. PM Hun Sen formally declared his country's open support in favour of India for permanent membership of the UNSC at the South Summit Conference in Havana in April 2000. Cambodia has time and again reiterated this support at various international fora and during bilateral interactions. In the context of our 'Act East' policy and the ASEAN, Cambodia is an important interlocutor and a good partner.

Contemporary times have witnessed expansion of cooperation in diverse fields such as institutional capacity building, human resource development, and extension of financial assistance in infrastructure projects, security and defence. On the political front, there has been regular exchange of high level visits. Bilateral defence cooperation between two countries has been continuing with the conduct of annual training capsule for Royal Cambodian Armed Forces in Peacekeeping and Demining modules; defence training programmes under ITEC and ship visits by Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard.

### **Exchange of high level visits:**

- Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid an official visit to Cambodia from April 9-11, 2002 and again, from 4-6 November, 2002 for the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN-India Summit. These visits had an excellent impact and reinforced bilateral ties. Bilaterally, various agreements were signed and many initiatives were announced.
- President of India Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil accompanied by high level delegation including 40 business people, paid a six-day state visit to Cambodia from September 13-18, 2010. She visited temples of Bayon, Ta Prohm & Banteay Srey, Elephant Terrace & Angkor Wat in Siem Reap. She also laid the foundation stone for the MGC Asian Traditional Textiles Museum at Siem Reap.

- Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh led a high level delegation to Cambodia from 18-20 November 2012 to participate in the 10th ASEAN– India Summit and the 7th East Asia Summit held in Phnom Penh. During his visit, Dr. Singh paid homage to the late King father Norodom Sihanouk on November 19.
- Vice President of India led a high level delegation to Cambodia from 15-17 September 2015. During his visit, Vice President Ansari held official level talks with Prime Minister Hun Sen and met the Presidents of the National Assembly and the Senate. Two MOUs were signed during the visit – (i) Promotion of Tourism Cooperation and (2) Implementation of Quick Impact Projects under Mekong Ganga Cooperation initiative. Vice President Ansari also handed over the completion certificate of India-Cambodia Friendship School to the Prime Minister Hun Sen. He also visited Siem Reap to see the world heritage sites of Angkor Wat and Ta-Prohm temples.
- Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen and delegation visited India from 8-10 December 2007. A fresh impetus was provided to India’s relations with Cambodia by the state visit of Cambodian PM. During the visit, seven Agreements/MOUs relating to Transfer of Sentenced Persons, Credit Line, Defence Cooperation, Water Resource Management, Agricultural Development, 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
- Cambodian Prime Minister Mr. Hun Sen further led a high level delegation to India to participate in the 20th Anniversary of ASEAN – India dialogue partnership on December 19, 2012. Hun Sen held bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh in New Delhi and asked for US \$ 57 million concessional loan from India for two development projects and also urged India to consider direct flights to Cambodia.

#### Assistance & Aid Projects:

- i. Restoration of Angkor Wat Temple: In response to an appeal by the Cambodian Government to save the famous Angkor Wat temples, GOI responded favourably and it was the first country to offer such assistance. Various teams of Archaeological Survey of India worked from 1986 to 1993. The Project, financed by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was the single largest project with the cost of around US\$ 4 million, and is still appreciated by Cambodia.
- ii. Restoration of Ta Prohm Temple: On Cambodia’s request, India also agreed to restore Ta Prohm temple in Siem Reap. ASI team commenced its work in December 2003 and utilized advanced 3D laser scanning techniques in coordination with Elcome Technologies Limited. Restoration of temple complex at Ta-Prohm has been a major ongoing project and work by the ASI team has been widely appreciated. Phase II of the project was completed in July 2015 and the new phase of project will be commenced soon.
- iii. Aid & Assistance: During 2002, India gifted medicines and 10,000 tonnes of rice. India gifted indelible ink to Cambodia for the General Elections in July, 2003. Medicines, Equipment & Ambulances worth Rs.2.31 crores were gifted to

Military Hospital in Siem Reap in August 2008. The GOI of India provided a cash donation of US\$ 100,000 to the Royal Government of Cambodia to provide relief for the victims of the floods in 2011. The aid was used to purchase foodstuff, mosquito nets and blankets to address the basic needs of the flood victims.

- iv. ITEC Training Programme: Under the ITEC programme of Ministry of External Affairs, over 1200 Cambodian nationals have been trained from 1981 onwards. The range of courses includes English, Computer Applications, Management, Entrepreneurship Development, Rural Development, Agro Industries, Labour Administration, Audit, Finance, Banking etc. 80 civilian training slots have been allotted to Cambodia in 2015-16. Under Defence-ITEC courses, 12 slots for Army courses, 4 slots for Air Force courses and 4 slots for Navy courses have been allotted to Cambodia in 2015-16.
- v. Scholarships: 25 scholarships (increased from 17 to 25 in 2015) for undergraduate, post-graduate and higher studies in India are available for Cambodian students under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation programme (10), General Cultural Scholarship Scheme (13) and Cultural Exchange Programm (02) every year. India has also offered to receive 2 Buddhist monks/scholars under Distinguished Visitor's Programme.
- vi. MGC Asian Traditional Textile Museum: Under the MGC initiative, the Prime Minister during his visit to Cambodia in April 2002 announced setting up of the "Asian Traditional Textiles Museum" at Siem Reap. The construction of the Museum building was completed in end December 2011. An Indian Director joined the museum in July 2013.
- vii. India-Cambodia Friendship School: Former President Smt. Pratibha Patil during her visit to Cambodia in 2010 announced a donation of US\$ 246,000 for redevelopment of India-Cambodia Friendship School in Kampong Cham province. The project has been completed successfully handed over to the Cambodian side during the visit of Vice President of India in September 2015.
- viii. Concessional loans and Grants: Following the visit of PM Hun Sen to India in December 2007, Government of India has so far extended Line of Credits (LOC) of US\$ 65.20 million to Cambodia for Water Development and transmission line projects. In addition, two LOCs are being considered under the revised IDEA scheme amounting to US\$37 million and US\$20 million for two developmental projects. In December 2007, 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 rural areas of Cambodia. 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.
- ix. Quick Impact Projects (QIP) under Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Initiative: During the visit of Hon'ble Vice President to Cambodian, an MOU was signed on 16 September 2015 with Cambodia for implementation of Quick Impact Projects under Mekong Ganga Cooperation initiative. For the financial year 2015-16, Grant Assistance of US\$ 50,000/- each for five Quick Impact Projects related to health, women empowerment, agriculture and skill development was also announced during the visit. The implementation of these projects is underway.

## **COMMERCIAL RELATIONS**

Bilateral trade between India and Cambodia has continued to grow during last five years. The trade figures are given below:

(US\$ mn)

Trade with India	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Jan-Nov. 2015
Total Trade	107.07	124.18	153.98	160.49	168.38
Exports	7.62	11.90	12.72	17.96	36.33
Imports	99.45	112.28	141.76	142.53	132.05
<b>Growth</b>	<b>48.9%</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>24%</b>	<b>4.2%</b>	<b>4.9% so far</b>

India has extended Duty Free Tariff Preference Schemes to Cambodia since August 2008, which has encouraged exports of Cambodian goods to India. At present investment from India is marginal. But Indian companies are showing interest in investment in hotel, hospital, mining and agro-industries sectors, and are discussing projects with Cambodian parties. Indian pharmaceutical companies have their representative offices in Phnom Penh. Bank of India has opened a branch in Phnom Penh in May 2009. A sugar refinery has been set up in Kratie province. Companies like Atul Auto, Bajaj have set up show rooms. Pulsar motorcycles from the Bajaj stables are slowly expanding. Tata is selling farm-track equipment. During 2015, trade delegations from MILLTEC, Federation of Gujarat Industries, Independent Power Producers of India and number of representatives from Indian private Industries/Companies visited Cambodia and interacted with local counterparts. In December 2015, a business event was organized in collaboration with Cambodian Ministry of Commerce and the Cambodian Chamber of Commerce to promote bilateral trade and investment, during the visit of FICCI delegation to Cambodia.

## **CULTURAL RELATIONS**

There exists a Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the two countries. The CEP was signed during PM Hun Sen's visit in February 2000. A new Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Cambodia was signed during the visit of Secretary, Ministry of Culture in June 2013. An MoU on the Establishment of ICCR's Chair on Buddhist & Sanskrit Studies at Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University was signed with Cambodian Ministry of Religions & Cults on 04 July, 2011. A highly successful Festival of India comprising of Buddha Mahotsava and Ramayana Festival was organised in Phnom Penh and Siem Reap in February 2014. On 21 June, 2015 Cambodia marked the International Day of Yoga in front of Angkor Wat Temple, Siem Reap, with the participation of over 1,000 Cambodians and foreigners. The event was organized by the Ministry of Tourism in cooperation with the Embassy of India in Cambodia.

India has been appointed co-chair of the prestigious International Coordinating Committee (ICC) on Preah Vihear, a world heritage site and one of the oldest temples and pilgrimage site of Lord Shiva.

A new MOU on Tourism Cooperation between Indian and Cambodia has been signed on 16 September 2015 during the visit of Hon'ble Vice President of India to Cambodia. Proposal for direct flight link between the two countries is under consideration.

### **INDIAN COMMUNITY**

There are about 1500 Indian nationals working in various sectors in Cambodia. Most of them are based in the capital city, Phnom Penh. Many of them are employed with international organizations and agencies. There are some Indians working as advisers in some of the Cambodian Ministries. There are also a few doctors, working with WHO & other international organizations. There is a group of small traders hailing from Uttar Pradesh, who sell clothes and mosquito nets in the countryside.

The Indians in Cambodia have formed an Indian Association-Cambodia. The Association has been collaborating effectively with the Indian Embassy, and holding get-togethers on festivals and important occasions.

In addition, an Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) has also been established since 2012. The ICC organizes seminars, business events, etc. mostly in collaboration with the Indian Embassy and works towards solutions for common problems faced by Indian businessmen in Cambodia.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Phnom Penh:

<http://www.indembassyphnompenh.org/>

Facebook page of the Embassy:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInCambodia?ref=hl>

Twitter handle of the Embassy: [@indembcam](https://twitter.com/indembcam)

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