

Brief on India-Philippines Bilateral Relations

India and the Philippines formally established diplomatic relations on 26 November 1949, shortly after both countries gained independence. Bilateral relations are friendly, based on shared values and commonalities, such as vibrant democratic polity, pluralistic society, rule of law, an independent judiciary, free press and the widespread use of the English language.

Similar to many other countries in the region, Philippines also enjoys close cultural and civilizational links with India. The presence of numerous words with Sanskrit roots in Tagalog (the local language) and objects such as the Laguna Copper Plate inscription, the oldest artifact discovered in the Philippines written in Kavi, derived from Pallava script; the golden statue of Agusan Tara; and the localized version of Indian epic Ramayana (Maharadia Lawana) testify to the historical links between the two countries.

With the launch of Look East Policy of India in 1992, partnership intensified with ASEAN and also resulted into stronger relations with countries in the region including the Philippines. India's Act East Policy (2014) and vision for the Indo-Pacific with ASEAN Centrality has great synergy with Philippines own approach to the region aimed at realizing a safe, secure, peaceful and prosperous Indo-Pacific. Philippines is the Country Coordinator for ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations since 26 July 2024 (for a three year term, until July 2027).

Interactions, including meetings at the leadership level, between the two countries has been growing and the stage appears to be set for further intensification in the ties, covering a broad canvas of consultations and cooperation on matters related to foreign policy, security, defence, trade, finance, tourism, health, agriculture, people-to-people relations and culture.

India and the Philippines are commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations (in 1949). A joint official logo, to commemorate the occasion, was unveiled by the External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar and the the Ambassador of the Philippines to India, Mr. Josel F. Ignacio, at the reception hosted by the Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines in New Delhi on 13 November 2024.

1. Political relations:

(a) High level visits/Interactions:

Bilateral relations between India and the Philippines have strengthened over the years with regular exchange of high level visits, telephonic conversations, virtual meetings, etc. which continued even during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. had a brief interaction on the sidelines of 21st ASEAN-India Summit held in Vientiane (Laos) on 10 October 2024.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Pabitra Margherita met Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, on the sidelines of the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2025. He had earlier visited Philippines from 13-15 January 2025.

External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Philippines from 25-27 March 2024, and called on President Marcos. He also met his counterpart Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA) Enrique A. Manalo; Secretary of National Defense of Philippines Mr. Gilbert Teodoro; National Security Adviser Mr. Eduardo M. Ano, and Secretary of Information and Communication Technology Mr Ivan John Uy. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and Secretary Manalo also met on the sidelines of ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers Meeting in Vientiane (25 July 2024), on the sidelines of NAM Summit in Kampala (Jan 2024), and in New Delhi, on 18 March 2025, during the visit of Secretary Manalo to India for the 10th Raisina Dialogue. During this visit, Secretary Manalo unveiled a bust of Dr. Jose P. Rizal, the National hero of the Philippines, at Jesus and Mary College, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi.

Secretary of Department of Health, Dr. Teodoro Herbosa addressed the Health Minister's Session of 3rd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 3.0) held virtually on 17 Aug 2024, through a video message. Philippine Transportation Secretary (Minister) Mr. Jaime J. Bautista visited India to attend the 2nd Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference (APAC-MC) on Civil Aviation held on 11-12 September, 2024 in New Delhi. A nine member delegation led by Under Secretary (Vice Minister) Mr. Salvador Mison visited India from 07-11 February, 2025 to participate in the Aero India, 2025. An Indian delegation led by Mr. Nityanand Rai, Hon'ble Minister of State (Home) visited Philippines to attend Asia Pacific Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held on 14-17 Oct 2024.

Other important high level interactions include - brief pull aside meeting between PM Modi and President Marcos on sidelines of ASEAN-India Summit [Sep 2023, Jakarta]; President Marcos' participation in the Leader's Summit of 2nd edition of Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) [Nov 2023]; Secretary Manalo's participation in the 1st VOGSS [Jan 2023]; Telephone call between PM Modi and President Marcos [Aug 2022]; Visit of Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, MOS(RRS) to Philippines to attend the swearing-in ceremony of President Marcos [June 2022]; Visit of EAM to Manila [February 2022]; Visit of SFA Locsin to New Delhi for the 5th Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation [April 2022]; Telephone call between PM Modi and President Rodrigo Duterte [June 2020]; State visit of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind [Oct 2019] to mark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations (bust of Mahatma Gandhi was unveiled at Miriam College, Manila, during the visit), Visit of President Duterte to India [Jan 2018] for 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and Visit of PM Modi to Manila [Nov 2017] for 15th ASEAN India Summit.

Past visits between the two countries include visit of the Philippines Vice President Diosdado Macapagal to India in 1961, stop-over visit of Philippines President Ferdinand E. Marcos [1976], visits by Presidents Fidel Ramos [1997] and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo [2007].

The annual ASEAN/EAS Summits have provided an excellent platform for regular meetings between leaders from both countries. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a bilateral meeting with President Aquino of Philippines in November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar during the 12th ASEAN-India/9th EAS summit. The Vice President of the Philippines Mr. Jejomar C. Binay led a delegation to India in December 2012 for the 10th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi.

(b) Institutional Bilateral Mechanisms:

The umbrella bilateral mechanism is the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC) co-chaired by EAM and the Philippines Secretary of Foreign Affairs, which has met 5 times so far, in 2011, 2013, 2015, 2020 and on 29 June, 2023 in New Delhi. The 5th JCBC meeting in the chairmanship of EAM S Jaishankar and SFA Manalo reviewed developments in bilateral relations and discussed the future trajectory of engagement in all the areas of mutual interests.

Official level Policy Consultation Talks and Security Dialogue meetings have been held regularly from 1994 and from 2004 respectively. The Security Dialogue was upgraded to a 'Strategic Dialogue (SD)' at the 2nd JCBC held in Manila. The 14th FOC and 5th SD were co-chaired by Jaideep Mazumdar, Secretary (East) and Ms. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, the then Undersecretary for Bilateral Relations and ASEAN Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines on 9 September 2024 in New Delhi.

(c) Support at International Fora:

The Philippines has been supportive of a greater role for India in the UN Security Council. They supported our candidature for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term 2021-22 as well as earlier in 2011-12 and India is supporting Philippines candidature for the term 2027-28. Philippines expressed support for the G-4 initiative for Security Council Reform at a meeting by all G-4 HOMs in Manila with SFA on 05 November, 2013 which was reiterated at the Foreign Policy Consultation/ Strategic Dialogue in March 2015. India and Philippines are generally supportive of each other's candidature at the International fora.

(d) Humanitarian Assistance:

India has been offering humanitarian assistance to the Philippines from time to time. In February 2006, following a devastating rockslide in Southern Leyte, India dispatched approx. 28 tons of relief material valued at \$260,000. India contributed \$250,000 for relief efforts after Typhoon Reming/Durian (Dec 2006), \$200,000 in disaster relief following Typhoon Pablo/Bopha (Dec 2012), \$100,000 for the October 2013 earthquake in Bohol, and sending 15 tons of relief supplies (Super Typhoon Haiyan Yolanda) (Nov 2013). India offered \$500,000 for rehabilitation efforts in Marawi City during a siege by armed groups in 2017. During Covid, in April 2020, the Embassy with support of leaders of Indian Community organizations handed over nearly US\$ 250,000 worth of face masks to then Secretary of National Defense Delfin Lorenzana and Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process Secretary Carlito Galvez. In March 2024, the Indian Navy rescued Filipino crew members on-board vessel MV True Confidence, attacked by Houthi rebels off the Gulf of Aden. More recently, in May 2025, Indian Coast Guard rescued Filipino crew members on-board the Liberian flagged container ship MSC Elsa 3, which capsized off the coast of Kochi, Kerala.

2. Defence and Security Cooperation:

Defence cooperation is a key component of India-Philippines bilateral cooperation.

(a) High Level Visit/Exchange:

On 22 November 2024, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh met Secretary of National Defense, Mr. Gilbert Teodoro on the sidelines of the 18th ASEAN Defense Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) in Vientiane, Laos. Earlier, the first ever visit by Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant, CG Admiral Artemio Abu to India held in August 2023 during which two MoU were signed - MOU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation, and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) to operationalize the MoU on exchange of White Shipping Information (2019). The 8th IN-PH Intelligence Exchange (INTELEX) meeting was held in India in July 2023. Philippine Secretary of National Defense, Delfin Lorenzana, visited India for the first ever bilateral Defence Ministerial visit in March 2018.

High-level training visits: Delegations from the College of Defence Management of India visited Philippines in Oct 2015 and Oct 2018. A 27-member delegation from the Indian Army War College, Mhow also visited Philippines in Sep 2019. NDC delegation visited Philippines thrice (22-25 May 2016, 05-10 June 2022, and 02-08 June, 2024). Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr., Chief of Staff, Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) visited India from 17-19 March 2025 to participate in the Raisina Dialogue.

(b) Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Engagements:

India and Philippines have signed an MOU on Defence Cooperation in 2006. Under this MoU, a Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) (at Joint Secretary level) was set up and met five times so far. The 5th JDCC was held in Manila on 11 Sept 2024. The Indian delegation was led by Sh. Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary of India and the Philippines delegation was headed by Mr. Irineo C. Espino, Undersecretary of National Defense. The two countries signed an MoU on Defence Industry and Logistics cooperation in Nov 2017.

(c) Maritime Cooperation

The Inaugural India-PH Track-1 Maritime Dialogue was held in Manila on 13 Dec, 2024. A 4-members delegation led by Ms. Muanpuii Saiawi, Joint Secretary (D&ISA) visited Philippines from 11-13 Dec, met the Philippine delegation led by Mr. Marshall Louis Alferez, Assistant Secretary of the Maritime & Oceans Affairs in the DFA.

Indian Navy and Coast Guard ships regularly visit the Philippines and hold consultations with their counterparts. Three Indian Naval (IN) Ships of the Eastern Fleet INS Delhi, Shakti & Kiltan visited Manila in May 2024. Earlier visit/port calls include ICG Samudra Paheredar in March 2024; INS Kadmatt in Dec 2023; INS Satpura in June 2022; INS *Ranvijay* and INS *Kora* in August 2021; INS Kiltan in Jul 2021; INS *Sahyadri* and INS *Kiltan* in Oct 2019 and ICGS *Shaunak* in Feb 2019.

(d) Training Cooperation

The participation of officers of the armed forces of both countries in various specialized training courses in each other's countries has intensified. An Indian Armed Forces officer has been regularly attending the prestigious Master in National Security Administration (MNSA) course in the Philippines National Defence College in the last several years. There is also regular participation at the Command and General Staff Course (CGSC) of the Philippines.

3. Trade and Commerce:

(a) Bilateral Trade

As per the official trade figures of Department of Commerce, GOI, bilateral trade between India and Philippines (in terms of value) has crossed USD 3 billion mark, increased from USD 2.03 billion in 2020-21 to \$3.53 billion in 2023-24.

Financial Year	India's Export to Philippines	India's Imports from Philippines	Trade with Philippines
2020-21	1457.30	572.47	2029.77
2021-22	2107.24	729.08	2836.32
2022-23	2094.15	959.59	3053.74

2023-24	2097.17	1,433.60	3530.77
2024-25	2162.05	1178.52	3340.57

[in US\$ million]

The major items of export from India to the Philippines include engineering goods; automobiles part and accessories, transmission apparatus, electric transformers, petroleum products, semi-finished products of iron and steel; drugs and pharmaceuticals, organic and inorganic chemicals; electronic goods; plastic and linoleum: rice; bovine meat, oil seeds; tobacco; groundnuts and others. (As per Department of Pharmaceuticals, the Indian Pharmaceutical products account for 12% of the total Philippine Pharmaceutical imports, next only to United States)

The major items of import from the Philippines include Electrical machinery; semi-conductors; ores, slag and ashes; copper, lead; plastics; pearls and precious stones; residue and waste from food industry; animal fodder and others.

(b) Bilateral Investments:

Indian investment valued around US\$ 5 Billion in the Philippines has mainly been in the areas of IT & ITES [BPO]; pharmaceuticals and healthcare; yarn and textiles; chemicals; automobiles; agriculture; biomass energy; FMCG and others.

Notable companies are Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Wipro, HCL Technologies, HGS in IT-BPM Sector; Madras Security Printers, PeopleStrong, Ramco Systems Ltd (ITeS); TVS, Bajaj, Mahindra, Tata Motors in automobile sector; Lupin, Torrent, ZydusCadilla, Sun pharma, Hetero Drug, Claris Life sciences etc. in pharmaceutical sector; Nephroplus in healthcare sector; Splash Corporation (Wipro) in FMCG sector; Prasad seeds, Advanta Seeds, Bioseeds (DCM Group), Agri Exim in agriculture; Thermax Instrumentation Ltd, ISGEC in biomass energy; Sun Source Energy in solar energy; UPL, RM Chemicals in chemical sector; Shri Ram Group (insurance) and others. GMR Group has recently sold its stake in the Cebu International airport to a Filipino company.

Philippine investments in India have been modest in the past and mainly comprise of companies like V. Merida (processing of waste), Ayala's

(Renewable energy, construction & ITES); SPI Technologies (ITES); Del Monte & Liwayway (Food processing); Atlantic Gulf & Pacific Company (AG&P); Lloyd Laboratories, IPI (Pharma). Major investments have been made by Atlantic Gulf & Pacific (AG&P) and AC Energy Corporation in India.

(c) Financial Sector Engagement and Development Cooperation:

An MoU for constitution of JWG on Cooperation in Financial Technology was signed on 19 June, 2023 to facilitate partnership between India and Philippines in the fields of digital payments, financial inclusion, fintech and related areas. 1st meeting of the JWG on Fintech was held on 12 September, 2024 in New Delhi.

India and the Philippines signed an agreement on Indian grant assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIP) in the Philippines on 7 Feb 2023, which for the first time opened a regular grant funding window for the Philippines. On 15 July 2024, the implementing agencies of the two countries (Embassy of India in Manila and Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) of the Philippines) signed individual MOAs for 6 QIPs in the sectors of Agriculture, Disaster Risk Reduction & Management, Healthcare and Livelihood Support.

(d) Agriculture:

The MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture and Related Fields between India-Philippines was signed on 13 November 2017. The 2nd meeting of the India-Philippines Joint Working Group (JWG) on Agriculture was held on 18 May 2018 at Manila.

Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare met Mr. William Dar, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Philippines in New Delhi on 21 April 2022. On request of the Philippines side, training session on Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was organised for the officials of Department of Agriculture, Department of Finance and Philippine Crop Insurance Commission (PCIC) in May 2022.

In October 2023, first batch of ultra-low Glycemic Index (GI) rice samples developed by International Rice Research Institute's Regional Research Center in Varanasi was presented to President Marcos during 6th International Rice Congress in Manila.

(e) Health and Medicine:

Health and Medicine is another focused sector identified by the leaders for bilateral engagement. The Philippines recognizes India as a global leader in terms of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. India continues to be one of the largest suppliers of pharma products to the Philippines. An MOU on Cooperation in Traditional Medicine between Philippines Institute of Traditional Medicine and Alternative Health Care (PITAHC) and National Institute of Ayurveda, Jaipur was signed on 19 April 2022.

The 3rd JWG Meeting on Health was held on 19-20 April 2018 in Manila, under the overall framework of India-Philippines MoU in the field of Health and Medicine signed in New Delhi on 5 October 2007.

(f) Tourism

A bilateral MoU on Tourism Cooperation was signed on 18 October 2019 under which 1st meeting of India-Philippines JWG on Tourism was held on 8 October, 2020. The 2nd JWG meeting held on 21 May, 2024 in Manila and the Indian side was led by Ms. Anita Baghel, Additional DG, Ministry of Tourism and Ms. Verna C. Buensuceso, OIC Undersecretary, Department of Tourism led the Philippine side.

The new Air Services Agreement was signed on 27 Sept 2021 and ratified in June 2023 to facilitate direct air connectivity between India and Philippines. In Sept 2024, a Philippine delegation led by Department of Tourism Secretary Jaime J. Bautista visited New Delhi to attend 2nd Asia & Pacific Ministerial Conference for Civil Aviation. Recently, Tourism Minister of India Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat held bilateral meeting with Philippines Tourism Secretary Ms. Christina Garcia Frasco on the sidelines of the India-ASEAN Tourism Ministers Meeting in Malaysia (20 Jan 2025) which was focused on improving tourism potential and expanding connectivity.

Philippines Government fully implemented e-VISA facility for the Indian nationals w.e.f. 28 October 2024.

(g) Science & Technology

Bilateral Programme of Cooperation (POC) in Science and Technology (S&T), for the period 2019-2022 was signed in Oct 2019 outlining five broad areas of cooperation, namely agricultural biotechnology; health, pharmaceutical & medical sciences; ICT; Material Science & Technology; and Ocean & Atmospheric Science. In its first Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) in July 2021, implementing guidelines on the call for Joint Research Projects (JRP) were finalized and signed. Subsequently, 3 JRP proposals identified for implementation: (i) Virology (ii) Artificial Intelligence, and (iii) Additive manufacturing of new materials.

On 5 March 2024, Embassy hosted the First India-Philippines Tech Summit (IPTS) in partnership with Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and Department of Industry & Internal Trade (DPIIT) from Indian side and Philippine Department of Information & Communication Technology (DICT) and Philippines Chamber of Commerce & Industry (PCCI). The event showcased innovative digital products and solutions from India's vibrant digital ecosystem focusing on 3 key sectors: Agriculture, Finance, and Health. More than 300 Filipino representatives and 50 Indian companies participated in the 1st IPTS.

(h) Consular:

The Joint Consular Consultations Meeting (JCCM) has met four times so far. The 3rd round of JCCM was held on 28 February 2017 in New Delhi. 4th meeting held on 12 April, 2024 in Manila was co-chaired by Shri Muktesh K. Pardeshi, Secretary (CPV&OIA) and Mr. Jesus S. Domingo, Undersecretary for Civilian Security & Consular Affairs, DFA. During the meeting, both sides comprehensively discussed and reviewed all consular matters of mutual interest.

(i) Space Cooperation:

A new area of engagement is Space Cooperation which is progressing well with the participation of Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA)'s scientists in different training programmes in India such as 7th Edition of Bengaluru Space Expo [September 2022]; ISRO's UNNATI Training programme for nanosatellite building [October 2022]; CSSTEAP's 5th Short Course on Weather Forecasting Using Numerical Weather Prediction Models [July-August 2024].

4. Training and Education:

Philippines is one of the beneficiaries of India's flagship capacity building programme—Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). To date, over 1000 Filipino professionals have attended the courses. Electoral Technology, Environmental Impact Assessment, Renewable Energy, Natural Resource Management, Public Health Management Development, and Introduction to Ayurveda were among the popular courses in the Philippines.

ITEC Day is celebrated every year by the Embassy that brings together ITEC alumni across the Philippines. In the FY 2023-2024, 15 Filipino participated in Regular courses; 12 in e-ITEC courses and 31 defence personnel participated in defence courses. In FY 2024-25, 24 Regular ITEC (including 2 Executive courses) and 26 Defence ITEC courses have been availed by the Filipino participants. India also offers scholarships, tuition fee waivers to students from the Philippines under its 'Doctoral Fellowship for India in ASEAN' and 'Study in India' programmes.

5. Culture:

The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the two countries for 2019-2023 was renewed during the President of India's visit to the Philippines in October 2019.

Indian cultural events are organised regularly in the Philippines in commemoration of Indian national days, festivals and other important days such as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Constitution Day, Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, etc. In 2024, Mission launched a compendium of useful resources about the introduction to yoga, yoga therapy and yogic practices on 21 June 2024 on the occasion of International Day of Yoga. Mission also launched a compendium of Indian restaurants in the Philippines filled with fun facts and trivia about the Indian Cuisine and its influence on Filipino food.

As part of the 75th year anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines, Mission organized community welfare activities such as screening of 1000 Filipino women for breast and cervical cancer, Blood donation camp, and India-Philippines @ 75 Friendship Golf Tournament to celebrate the friendship between the people of two countries. The said celebration is a year long event in the Philippines.

6. Diaspora:

About 70,000 members of the Indian community reside in the Philippines, majorly in and around Metro Manila, City of Davao and Cebu, The 19th century saw people from Sindh and Punjab traveling to the Philippines. The Sindhi community, which made its humble beginnings in retail sector, has now established itself as an influential and affluent segment of the Filipino society.

In the last few decades, there has been a growing number of Indian professionals, estimated around 800, who are working in the Philippines, in Indian and multinational corporations, Indian Joint ventures, Asian Development Bank, International Rice Research Institute, and UN agencies. Together with dependents, their number is estimated at around 2,500. The major Indian business associations in the Philippines are the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines (FICCI-Philippines); Indian Business Forum (IBF) and Indian Women in Enterprise (I-WE) Philippines.

The total number of Indian students currently enrolled in the Philippines is around 8800. Most of them are studying medicine and few are pursuing Management, Information Technology, Nursing, Christian Theology & Divinity, Church Music and Pilot training courses.

The Indian diaspora has established 31 Gurudwaras (including Khalsa Diwan) and 8 Hindu temples in the Philippines. There are cultural associations such as Indian Ladies Club, Bharati Indian Expats women's Association, Indian Cultural Association of the Philippines (ICAP) and several spiritual organizations like Sri Satya Sai Organization, Art of Living, Brahma Kumaris, Siddhi Yoga, which regularly celebrate Indian festivals and engages closely with the Indian Embassy and Filipino Community in supporting social, cultural and welfare activities.

20 July 2025