
INDIA-PAPUA NEW GUINEA BILATERAL BRIEF

POLITICAL RELATIONS

1. India opened its High Commission in Port Moresby in April 1996. Diplomatic relations with the Independent State of Papua New Guinea (PNG) were earlier conducted from Suva/Kuala Lumpur. PNG opened its resident Diplomatic Mission in New Delhi in October 2006. India and PNG enjoy warm and friendly relations. Both countries have been working closely in international fora, including Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement(NAM) and UN.

2. There have been notable **visits from India to PNG**. The **President of India**, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, paid a first-ever State Visit to PNG from 28 to 29 April 2016 at the invitation of Governor General of PNG, Grand Chief Sir Michael Ogio. During the visit, four MoUs were signed on – (a) Agriculture Research Cooperation between University of Technology, Lae (UNITECH) and Indian Council for Agricultural Research (India); (b) Cooperation in Health Sector; (c) Indian Line of Credit of US \$100 million for Infrastructural Development in PNG; and (d) Setting up a Centre of Excellence in IT by India in PNG. During the visit, the President of India also made an announcement to provide retro-viral drugs and equipment for HIV patients in PNG, which were later supplied by the Government of India. Shri Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East) visited on 5th December 2022 for the **First India-PNG Foreign Office Consultations** and met Secretary Elias Wohengu, Department of Foreign Affairs of PNG and discussed bilateral relations. Secretary (East) also visited University of PNG and met Frank Griffin, Vice Chancellor and discussed about strengthening educational links. On Dec 6, Secretary (East) called on PM James Marape and discussed among other bilateral issues about jointly holding the 3rd Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit in Port Moresby, 2023. Secretary (East) also met PNG Minister for State-Owned Enterprises William Duma & Minister for ICT Timothy Masiu. PM Marape delivered his remarks to Inaugural session of Voice of Global South (VOSS), Summit (*virtual*) on Jan 12, 2023, attended by 10 Heads of State/Govt chaired by our PM.

3. On 21st May 2023, Indian PM Shri Narendra Modi arrived in Port Moresby to co-host the 3rd Forum for India–Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) Summit with PNG PM James Marape on May 22, 2023. The Summit was attended by 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs). At FIPIC-3 Summit, PM Modi unveiled a 12-step action plan to strengthen India's partnership with PICs; the plan includes initiatives such as setting up Jaipur foot camps, establishing a specialized cardiology hospital in Fiji, providing dialysis units and sea ambulances, promoting yoga centres, supporting IT, solar projects, SMEs, & offering scholarships for the region. As a gesture of cultural exchange, a Tamil classic that was translated into the local language 'Tok Pisin', was launched by PM Modi. An agreement was reached to establish a Regional IT and Cybersecurity hub at University of PNG (UPNG) in collaboration with the Indian govt. PM Modi was honoured with the Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu (GCL) - the highest civilian award of Papua New Guinea. PM held bilateral meetings with PNG's Governor General Sir Bob Dadae and JM. Both Prime Ministers took stock of the bilateral relationship and welcomed the signing of the agreement for visa waiver for diplomatic and official passport holders and the MoU to establish Foreign Office Consultations.

4. Other important visits from India were (i) 3-member delegation led by Dr. M. Rajeevan, **Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences**, to participate in the 3rd Ministerial Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) Conference, held in Port Moresby on 23-25 August 2017; (ii) 2-member delegation from **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India(ICAI)**, comprising CA M. Devaraja Reddy, former ICAI President, and CA Mangesh P. Kinare, ICAI Council Member, who visited Port Moresby from 17-19 July 2018 to hold discussions with the Certified Practicing Accountants (CPA PNG) and the Society of Indian Chartered Accountants Inc (SICA), in order to facilitate application of CPA PNG for its membership in International Federation of Accountants(IFAC); (iii) 3-member Indian delegation, comprising two representatives of **EXIM**

Bank of India – Ms. Meena Verma, GM, New Delhi, and Ms. Aparna Kulkarni, representative in Singapore and Mr. S. Chinpau Ngaihte, Under Secy (DPA-I), MEA, who visited PNG from 25-29 November 2018 and met the local authorities to finalize Agreement of Line of Credit of US\$100 million to finance infrastructure related projects (*US\$60 million for Bayer-Madang road project; US\$40 million for Hoskins-Kimbe road project*) in PNG. The delegation also visited the site of Hoskins-Kimbe road project; (iv) 4-member Indian delegation led by Cdr. P.K. Srivastava, Director, Ministry of Earth Sciences visited PNG from 25-27 July 2019 *on a scoping mission to set up an Institute for Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research in Pacific region & a network of marine biology research Laboratories*; (v) 2-member delegation led by Justice Shri Sharad Arvind Bobde, Justice, Supreme Court of India (SCI) & Sanjeev Kalgaonkar, Secretary General, SCI visited PNG from 8-10 Sept 2019 to attend Commonwealth Judges and Magistrates Conference held in Port Moresby. Justice Shri Bobde delivered a keynote speech on *“A judicial career from appointment to post retirement”* during the event; and (vi) Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Joint Secy (DPA-II), MEA visited PNG on 17 Dec 2019. She held meetings with Vice-Chancellor of University of PNG (UPNG), had discussions on converting Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Excellence in Information Tech (MG-CEIT) into a regional hub where ITEC trainees from Solomon Islands, Marshall Islands, Micronesia and Palau would undergo training in IT. JS (DPA-2) held a meeting with Director General (Bilateral) Ms. Magdalene Shirley Moihe in Department of Foreign Affairs. Talks, among others, covered India’s proposal to revise the existing MOU on CEIT to include conversion of Centre into a Regional IT Training Centre and facilitation of appropriate gratis PNG visas for foreign trainees.

5. **Two Indian Naval Ships INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata** visited Port Moresby from August 2 to 4, 2023. Capt Rajan Kapoor(INS Sahyadri) & Capt Sharad Sinsunwal(INS Kolkata) alongwith Def Attache Capt Akhlesh Menon called on Commodore Philip Polewara, DCDF, and discussed bilateral defense cooperation, requested PNG to utilize more ITEC defense slots. The ships hosted PM James Marape and his cabinet ministers onboard Naval Reception on August 3. In his speech, PM Marape expressed gratitude for PM Modi's visit in May 2023 and encouraged further cooperation, promoting closer defense ties, naval visits, and people-to-people connections and fruitful exchanges. This was the third visit. Indian Naval Ship 'Sahyadri', commanded by Capt Anil Jaggi with 200 crew members on board, paid a goodwill visit to Port Moresby from 12-15 June 2017. HC and Captain Anil Jaggi jointly hosted Dinner on Board on 13 June 2017 for 300 dignitaries from PNG Defence Forces, Govt officials, Diplomatic Missions, Indian businessmen community members. This was second visit on an Indian Naval Ship; the first one was from 22-24 July 2006 by Indian Missile Frigate Naval Ship 'Tabar'.

6. There have been high level **visits from PNG to India**. The highest-level visit from PNG was by then **Prime Minister Peter O’Neill**, who visited India for Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (**FIPIC**) Summit, held in Jaipur on 21 August 2015, and outlined PNG’s desire to see greater engagement by India with Pacific Island nations in the field of climate change, natural disasters, healthcare, education & other areas. PM Peter O’Neill held a bilateral meeting with PM Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Summit.

6. There were important visits from PNG to India-(i) From July 24-29, 2023, a PNG delegation, led by Minister for ICT Timothy Masiu and Secretary Steven Matainaho, visited Delhi. Discussions focused on IT, biometric-ID, UPI, digital transformation, and e-governance. India's MOS Electronics & IT, Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar, met with Timothy Masiu, discussing IT cooperation. During the visit, an MoU was signed between PNG's ICT Secretary and India's CEO of National eGovernance Division on sharing India Stack, aiming to build capacities and implement population-scale Digital Public Infrastructure and Transformational Platforms for governance efficiency and transparency in PNG; (ii) On 5 July 2023, Dr. Lino Tom, PNG Minister of Health attended 9th edition of International Pharma Exhibition (IPHEX) of PHARMEXCIL inaugurated in Hyderabad as Special Guest of the event; (iii) PNG Supreme Court Chief Justice

Gibbs Salika and two senior judges, Justice Derek Hartshorn and Justice Peter Toliken attended the 23rd Commonwealth Law Conference in Goa from 5-9 March 2023. (iv) At the Indian Government invitation, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Agisa Sekie along with Mr. Tommy Angau, Asst Director, Asia Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) attended Indian Ocean Conference held in Maldives from 1-5 Sept 2019; (v) Election Commissioner of PNG Mr. Patilas Gamato and five other senior officials from Electoral Commission of PNG visited India from 2-5 Sept 2019 to attend Association of World Election Bodies General Assembly, Bangalore & also met ECI officials in New Delhi. (vi) A team of officials from PNG SMEs visited India from 3-9 Nov 2019 for fact-finding trip at the invitation of National Small Industries Corp (NSIC) of India. (vii) From 25-29 March 2019, PNG **Minister of Planning & Monitoring Richard Maru** visited New Delhi. PNG has been working to develop its SMEs sector and to set up Regional Youth Incubation Centres on Indian model as part of Medium-Term Development Plan-3; (viii) **Chief Electoral Commissioner** Patilias Gamato, accompanied by two officials from PNG Election Commission, visited Bengaluru from 10-16 May 2018 to witness Karnataka Assembly elections and interacted with BEL officials regarding supply of EVMs/VVPATs to PNG; (ix) A PNG delegation led by **Minister for ICT and Energy Sam Basil** visited India to attend the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018; (x) A **25-member PNG delegation, led by Minister for National Planning & Monitoring Richard Maru**, visited India from 10-16 Dec 2017. Delegation also included Minister for ICT and Energy Sam Basil, Minister for Education Nick Kuman, West New Britain Province Governor Sasindran Muthuvel; (xi) Ms. Janet Sape, **President/ Founder of PNG Women in Business**, participated in the Distinguished Visitors Programme held in India from 8-17 February 2016; (xii) **Minister of Trade, Commerce & Industry Richard Maru** visited India in January 2013 to attend the Partnership Summit 2013. He was accompanied by a delegation consisting of West New Britain Province Governor Sasindran and officials of Investment Promotion Agency. He held bilateral talks with Minister of Commerce & Industry Anand Sharma; (xiii) **Minister for Petroleum & Energy William Duma** visited India from 30 March to 3 April 2013. He was invited as Chief Guest at the Founding Day celebrations of Petronet LNG Ltd in New Delhi on 2 April 2013. He was accompanied by an 8-member delegation, which included senior officials of his Ministry, an Adviser from PMO and few businessmen. **Petronet/OVL delegations from India** later visited PNG twice & held discussions with State-owned Petromin LNG Holdings Ltd and stakeholders in LNG sector. An 'in-principle' agreement was reached with Petromin for India off-taking of 22.5% gas from proposed Gulf LNG Project. Discussions were also held with InterOil for possible Indian participation in Gulf LNG Project; (xiv) **Parliamentary delegation, led by Speaker Theodore Zurenuoc**, visited India from 26-30 August 2013 to bolster Parliamentary linkages between two Commonwealth Parliamentary democracies; (xv) Brigadier General Francis Agwi, **Chief of PNGDF**, visited India in June 2013 to attend passing out ceremony of PNGDF Cadet Officer at Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. During the visit, he held meetings with Chief of Indian Army, Chief of Indian Navy and Vice-Chief of Indian Air Force in New Delhi; and (xvi) **Foreign Minister Sam Abal** paid a 4-day visit to India in July 2009. This was first-ever bilateral Ministerial visit during which he met EAM, Commerce & Industry Minister, MOS (External Affairs), MOS (Petroleum and Natural Gas).

7. On Sept 27, 2022, EAM met the PNG FM Justin Tkatchenko of Papua New Guinea, on 27 September 2022 in Washington D.C. at his request. Both leaders discussed about (i) FIPIC-III (ii) LOC of US \$ 100 Million (iii) Visa on arrival facility by PNG (iv) more trade and investments from India in manufacturing and agriculture domains.

HUMANITARIAN AID AND OTHER ASSISTANCE

8. India has been providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief to PNG from time to time. A consignment of 7.2 million dosages of anti-retro viral drugs received from India costing US\$3 million, was handed over to Govt of PNG in Nov 2016 by Indian High Commissioner. **Computers and peripherals** worth US\$ 760,000 out of cumulative grant-in-aid under India's Regional Assistance to Pacific Island Countries were provided to Government of PNG during 2017-18. A

cheque for Grant-in-Aid for providing of IT equipment to National Cultural Commission of PNG for US \$ 50,000 (K 178,707) was handed over to PNG Minister of Culture Isi Leonard on Nov 3, 2022. Ministry has recently approved a Grant in Aid proposal to provide support **to improve ICT infrastructure** at University of Technology (UNITEC), Lae for K 5,42,500 (US\$ 153,893).

9. GOI, under an MOU for Establishment of Centre of Excellence in IT, has set up a **Centre of Excellence in Info Tech(CEIT)** at University of PNG in Port Moresby. CEIT was run by two IT Experts from India who were stationed at Centre for 2 years till Nov 2021. A proposal for extension of CEIT for 2 years has been approved and an expert is being identified by MeITy. GOI extended **US \$1 million grant to Govt of PNG towards earthquake relief** in areas affected by earthquake that struck PNG in Feb 2018. GOI also extended a **financial assistance of US\$ 1 million to PNG Govt for relief and restoration work in areas affected by Ulawun volcano which erupted in PNG in June 2019**. 132,000 doses of AstraZeneca Vaccine were donated to PNG USD 450,000 approx weighing 4.2 tons produced by M/s. Mysore Paints and Varnish Ltd flown by air from Karnataka to Port Moresby which arrived in PNG on 21st May, 2022 which were used for PNG Elections 2022. HC handed over indelible ink on July 7, 2022 to PNG Electoral Commission.

ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

10. Bilateral trade figures between India & PNG for the last few years are as follows:
Value: US\$ million (Source: Dept of Commerce, GOI)

Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Export from India to PNG	49.72	56.02	56.17	69.95	85.84
Import into India from PNG	88.97	55.70	125.85	357.58	643.36
Total Bilateral Trade	138.69	111.72	182.02	427.53	729.20

11. **Main items of export from India to PNG** include textiles, merchandise, machinery & equipment, food items, pharma & surgical items, Rubber, etc. However, these are not reflective of actual trade since import of many Indian goods is via third countries. **Main items of import into India from PNG** are Nickel, Copper, Pearls, copper ores, wood & its articles, cocoa.

12. First ever **CII delegation from India** paid a 4-day visit to PNG from 14-18 Feb 2016 to explore business opportunities. Delegation held meetings and interactions with number of high-ranking dignitaries, including PM; Ministers of Trade, Commerce & Industry, Mines, Petroleum, Transport & Infrastructure; Public Enterprises & State Investments, Health, Tourism, Arts and Culture along with Governors of West New Britain Province, National Capital District (NCD); Western Highlands Province; Hela Province; and dignitaries attended. PM's wife hosted lady delegation members at the National Parliament of PNG.

CULTURAL RELATIONS

13. The cultural interactions/initiatives include visit of an **ICCR-sponsored Siddhi Dhamal dance troupe** from India to PNG in Oct 2013. On 7-12 June 2013, in association with University of Papua New Guinea, Mission organized **Indian Film Festival** at the University. A set of **Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi** was also presented to the University of PNG Library separately. Since 2021, Mission has celebrated Constitution Day, Ambedkar Divas, and other functions "Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat", Mission celebrated "Hindi Divas" Holi, Baisakhi & Birthday Jayanti of Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, Rabindra Nath Tagore Jayanti, Janmasthan, Community Milan, Onam etc. at Chancery Auditorium under Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM). Regular Hindi classes are also being organized in the High Commission every Saturday. A reception was held at Hotel Crown for Independence Day 2023 where 400+ Indians, PNGians, diplomats attended. A cultural show was also organised. Chief Guests Gov Allan Bird(East Sepik), Gov Sasindran (WN Britain) spoke on warm bilateral ties. A Blood camp was

organized in the Chancery on July 29, coordinated with PNG Tamil Sangam & POMGEN hospital where Indian diaspora and generous donors donated blood along with HC Inbasekar S and other staff members. On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on 2 Oct 2023, a cultural program, including the recitation of Gandhiji's bhajans, was organized at the Chancery Auditorium. Floral tributes were offered at the statue of Gandhi ji at the University of PNG (UPNG).

14. Since 2015, Mission has been organizing **International Day of Yoga (IDY)** in PNG. On **23 June 2019**, Mission, in collaboration with National Capital District(NCD) Commission, celebrated **5th IDY in Port Moresby** at Sir Hubert Murray Stadium. A record 6000 persons participated in the event, including NCD Governor Powes Parkop, as Chief Guest. IDY 2022 was celebrated in the 4 provinces of PNG. In Port Moresby, it was celebrated at Ela Beach near famous PORT MORESBY name board. IDY 2022 was also celebrated in University of Technology, Lae & by Indian Association in Lae separately at two places. In addition, IDY was celebrated in Kokopo & Jiwaka Province. On June 18, 2023 **IDY- 2023** was celebrated in collaboration with National Capital District(NCD) Commission, at Ela Beach, Port Moresby conducted by Ms.Fazilah Bazari, attended by more than 200 members, diplomats, PNGians. NCD Gov H.E. Powes Parkop inspired assembled participants with yoga benefits. Mission inaugurated auditorium at Chancery on the occasion of Makara Sakranti on Jan 14, 2022; WNB Governor Sasindran was the Chief Guest.

15. An MoU between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and UNITECH, Lae, was signed on 17 August 2018 to establish a long-term **ICCR Chair of Indian Studies at UNITECH**. Prof. Geeta Rani joined UNITECH in January 2021 to take up her assignment as India Chair to teach Economics. On 19 Feb 2019, another MOU on **cooperation in the field of diplomatic training** was signed between the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs of India and the Department of Foreign Affairs of PNG.

16. There are 4,000 members of **Indian Diaspora in PNG**. They include professionals like Chartered Accountants, University Professors, School Teachers & Doctors. Some are engaged in professions like IT, finance, trading, business, missionary work, etc. There are influential Indians owning, directly or in partnership, prominent super stores and business. Governor of WNB Province of PNG Sasindran is of Indian origin & Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardee. Indian Community is making significant contributions to economy and society in PNG. **India extended e-visa facility to PNG Nationals** for ease of travel.
