



Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (India@75)

Celebration of the 75th Independence Day of India (15 August 2021)



India became independent on 15 August 1947. India and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) established diplomatic relations on 02 February 1956 and both countries are marking 65 years of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2021. The close friendly and mutually supportive relations between India and Lao PDR go back long into history and are based upon deep cultural, religious and people-to-people linkages, as ancient civilisations.

In India, there is a Vat Lao (Monastery of Lao PDR) in Bodh Gaya (Buddhagaya) established in December 2011, about 1.5 km from Mahabodhi Temple, the place where Lord Buddha attained enlightenment. The role played by India as Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control on Indo-China has also reinforced ties between the two countries. India and Lao PDR have bilateral agreements in various areas, such as culture, trade and economic cooperation, defence, science and technology, air services, etc. The two countries also work closely on the international stage in both regional and multilateral fora, especially in promoting the interests of developing countries and the Global South. Close ties with Lao PDR constitute an important building block of India's Act East Policy.

Recent high-level visits include the visit of Honourable Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi to Lao PDR in September 2016 to participate in ASEAN-India Summit and the visit of the then Honourable Prime Minister of Lao PDR, Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith to India in January 2018 to take part in ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit. The then Honourable External Affairs Minister of India (Late) Mrs. Sushma Swaraj visited Lao PDR in November 2018 for the 9th India-Lao Joint Commission Meeting.

In June 2020, Honourable Prime Minister of India Mr. Narendra Modi had a telephonic conversation with the then Honourable Prime Minister of Lao PDR, Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith. The two leaders exchanged views on the health and economic challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister of India commended the effective measures undertaken by the Government of Lao PDR to contain the spread of the pandemic in Lao PDR.

India@75 (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav)

India became independent on 15 August 1947. Celebrations to mark 75 years of India's independence were inaugurated by Prime Minister of India on 12 March 2021.

Celebrations to mark 65th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Lao PDR

The Embassy and Lao Front for National Development (LFND) organized a Talk on "Buddhist Linkages between Lao PDR and India" on 12 March 2021. The then Honourable President of LFND, Dr. Xaysomphone Phomvihane presided over the occasion. More than 60 Buddhist Monks, government representatives and some members of Indian diaspora were present.

A screening of two documentaries titled "The Way of the Buddha" and "The Land of Buddha", dubbed into Lao, was held on 06 April 2021 in the Kaysone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence (KAND). Honourable Deputy Minister of National Defence, Major General Onesy Saensouk presided.

Support to fight COVID-19:

On 04 August 2020, a consignment of medicines and medical supplies gifted by India to Lao PDR was handed over by the Ambassador of India Mr. Dinkar Asthana to the then Honourable Minister of Health of Lao PDR, Associate Professor Dr. Bounkong Syhavong, for use in the Lao public healthcare system.

Heritage conservation

A team from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has been working on restoration of the UNESCO world heritage site at Vat Phou, originally Shiva Temple. The first phase of restoration started in 2009 and lasted till 2017. The second phase

commenced in 2018 and will continue till 2028. The main conservation and restoration work of the Northern and Southern Quadrangle (except Western and Northern gallery of the Southern Quadrangle) has been completed. The remaining portions of the temple will be restored in stages in Phase-II.

Defence cooperation

An Indian Army Training Team (IATT) was established in August 1995 under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme for imparting English language training to Lao People's Army at the Kaysone Phomvihane Academy of National Defence (KAND). It has so far successfully conducted a large number of courses. The team celebrated 25 years of its establishment on 18 September 2020 in which Honourable Deputy Minister of National Defence of Lao PDR, Major General Onesy Saensouk was the Chief Guest. Indian Army had also conducted three training capsules on Unexploded Ordnances and De-Mining in Lao PDR in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Human Resource Development

Scholarships

The Government of India has been providing a large number of scholarships annually to Lao nationals under various schemes. These include fully-funded scholarships by Indian Council for Cultural Relations for studies in undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD courses in Indian universities as well as fully-funded medium and short-term training programmes in various areas under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.

Seven officers from Lao PDR Medical Military Department participated in the first Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV) e-ITEC defence medical course on COVID-19 organised in July 2020 by India's Directorate General of Armed Forces Medical Services.

Lao-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre

The LIEDC (Lao-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre) was set up in Vientiane in 2004. The Government of India provided computers and materials, text books, running expenses for 3 years, furniture etc. for setting up the Centre. It conducts a large number of training courses and workshops for Lao nationals to train them in setting up of small and medium scale businesses.

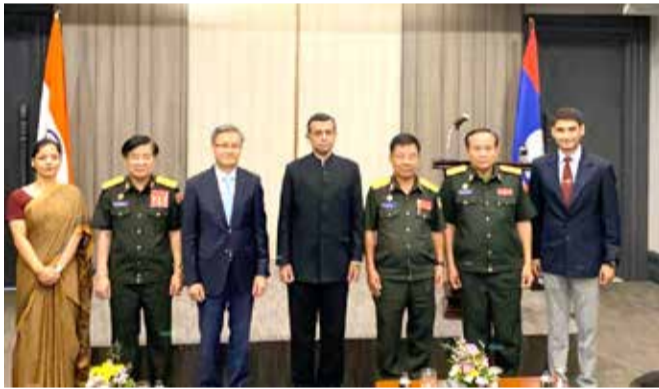
Lao-India Centre for Excellence in Software Development and Training

The Lao-India Centre for Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) was inaugurated on 26 November 2018. So far, the Centre has imparted training to more than 200 participants in different courses such as data communication and networking, information technology, advanced web technologies, ethical hacking and switching etc.

ASEAN-India Hackathon

The ASEAN-India Hackathon was organised by the Ministry of Education of India in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs of India from 1-4 February 2021. The Hackathon emanated from Honourable Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi's announcement at the 16th ASEAN-India Summit in Bangkok in November 2019. For 36 hours, 330 students and 110 mentors from the 10 ASEAN countries and India worked together online and competed as 55 teams to come up with innovative solutions to 11 problem statements. The Problem Statements covered two major themes - Blue Economy and Education.

Honourable External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar and the then Honourable Minister of Education of India Dr. Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' attended the Prize Distribution Ceremony on 4 February and commended the hard work, team spirit, and creativity of the participants. Honourable Deputy Minister of Education and Sports of Lao PDR Associate Professor Dr. Phout Simmalavong attended the event virtually and delivered his remarks.



Celebration of Silver Jubilee of Indian Army Training Team (IATT) in Laos - L to R - Lt. Col. (Ms.) Prabha Bisht, member of IATT, Maj General Khamla Phanhsaiyasouk, Political Commissar, Kaysone Phomvihane Academy for National Defence (KAND), Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Thongsavanh Phomvihane, Ambassador Dinkar Asthana, Deputy Minister of National Defence, H.E. Major General Onesy Saensouk, Brig General Keosouvanh Inthavongsa, Military Commandant of the KAND and Lt. Col. Vikas Bhandari, Team Leader of IATT (18 September 2020, Vientiane).



Ambassador Dinkar Asthana handing over medicines and medical items gifted by India to support Lao PDR's public healthcare system in its fight against COVID-19 to the then Minister of Health, H.E. Associate Professor Dr. Bounkong Syhavong (4 August 2020, Vientiane).



Vat Lao at Bodh Gaya (Buddhagaya) India (Monastery of Laos).



Ambassador Dinkar Asthana and the then President of the Lao Front for National Development (LFND) H.E. Dr. Saysomphone Phomvihane plant trees in LFND, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, H.E. Mr. Thongsavanh Phomvihane, President of Lao-India Friendship Association, Mr. Bountiem Phissamay and other guests look on (Vientiane, 9 October 2020).



Talk on "Buddhist Linkages between Lao PDR and India" at the Headquarters of Lao Front for National Development (Vientiane, 12 March 2021).



Southern Quadrangle of Vat Phou Temple



After restoration



Before restoration



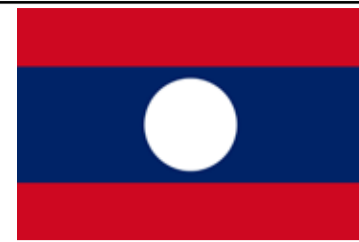
Northern Quadrangle of Vat Phou Temple After restoration

Before restoration



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Concessional loans or Lines of Credit (LOC)

Development assistance in the form of concessional Lines of Credit (LOC) is extended by the Government of India under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) through the EXIM Bank of India. So far, India has provided several LOCs to Lao PDR in power, irrigation and transmission line sectors.

Quick Impact Projects (QIP)

Under the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) framework, India and Lao PDR signed an agreement in 2015 for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) to directly benefit local communities and help them in their socio-economic development and improvement of public welfare. The QIP project 'Establishment of Fertilizer Analysis Laboratory' has completed and a handover event was organised on 12 April 2021. QIP Projects 'Promotion of Goat Raising in Lao PDR' in Jieng Village, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province; and 'Promote Green Cardamom Cultivation in Paksong District, Champasak Province' will be completed shortly. An agreement for three new QIP projects – construction of two school buildings in Luang Prabang and construction of a dormitory at LIEDC has also been signed on 11 August 2021.

Trade and Investment Cooperation

An interactive online Video Conference on "Trade and Investment Opportunities between India and Lao PDR – post COVID-19" was organised on 31st August 2020 with an objective to understand the present status of economic situation in Lao PDR in view of COVID-19 pandemic and to explore opportunities to expand trade and investment between the two countries.

An online video conference 'India-Lao PDR: Trade Promotion in Pharma, Ayurveda & Allied Sectors' was organised on 30th September 2020. An online Business-to-Business meeting was also held.

'Building Bridges for Constructive Development' was conducted from 3-4 December 2020 in virtual mode which was attended by Industry and Commerce Ministers of India, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam (CLMV). The then Honourable Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR, Ms. Khemmani Pholsena emphasized the role of boosting trade and investment in the region to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on economies. Honourable

Minister of Commerce and Industry of India, Mr. Piyush Goyal also attended.

A Webinar and Business to Business Networking Meeting with the motive of enhancing cooperation in ICT between India and Lao PDR was organised on 12th May 2021. Honourable Vice Minister of Technology & Communications of Lao PDR, Dr. Santisouk Simmalavong highlighted the vision of Lao PDR in scaling up the cooperation in the IT sector and recommended key priority sectors i.e. capacity building in ICT, digital governance, digital eco systems and enabling digital payments to boost the economy of Lao PDR.

A Virtual Buyer Seller Meet on the theme "Opportunities in Agriculture Sector between India & Lao PDR" was also organised on 11 August 2021. The Honourable Minister of Agriculture & Forestry of Lao PDR Dr. Phet Phomphiphak addressed the participants.

Ayurveda Day

The Embassy celebrated 5th Ayurveda Day on 13th November 2020. Ayurveda is a natural system of medicine that originated in India more than 3000 years ago and is widely considered to be the oldest healthcare system. The then Honourable Minister of Health of Lao PDR also conveyed his best wishes on the occasion. India and Lao PDR look forward to further cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector through business-to-business linkages and between pharmaceutical companies from India and those in Lao PDR, besides collaboration in generic and traditional medicines.

Indian Community in Lao PDR

The 500-strong Indian community consists of business persons and professionals employed in different organisations in various sectors and contributes to the development of Lao economy.

Going Forward

India looks forward to further expanding and deepening its ties in all fields with Lao PDR.

India remains keen to assist Lao PDR in its attaining the developmental goals it has set for itself. All development cooperation India extends to countries around the world is based on certain principles that have over time come to be known as principles of South-South cooperation: it is a voluntary partnership in solidarity with fellow developing countries. It is demand-driven guided by equality, non-conditionality, non-interference in domestic affairs, and mutual benefit.



Ambassador of India to Lao PDR Mr. Dinkar Asthana inspecting progress of Quick Impact Project for green cardamom cultivation in Paksong District, Champasak Province (22 August 2020)



The then Minister of Industry and Commerce of Lao PDR, H.E. Ms. Khemmani Pholsena virtually addressing the 6th India-CLMV Business Conclave organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 03 December 2020.



Meeting of Prime Minister of India H.E. Mr. Narendra Modi with the then Prime Minister of Lao PDR H.E. Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith (Vientiane, September 2016).



Handing over Ceremony of the Quick Impact Project 'Establishment of Fertilizer Analysis Laboratory' on 12 April 2021.



ASEAN-India Hackathon Prize Distribution Ceremony on 04 February 2021 – The Deputy Minister of Education and Sports of Lao PDR, H.E. Associate Professor Dr. Phout Simmalavong virtually delivering his remarks.



Somhong Irrigation Scheme in Champassak Province – built with Line of Credit from India.



Webinar and Business to Business Networking Meeting to enhance cooperation in ICT sector between Lao PDR and India on 12 May 2021.



Celebration of International Day of Yoga on 26 June 2021 in Vientiane.