

Brief on India-Philippines Bilateral Relations

India and the Philippines formally established diplomatic relations on 26 November 1949, shortly after both countries gained independence [Philippines in 1946 and India in 1947]. Relations have been friendly with shared values and commonalities, such as vibrant democratic polity, pluralistic society, rule of law, an independent judiciary and free press, and the widespread use of the English language.

Culturally, like many of the countries in the region, Philippines also enjoyed civilizational links with India. However, in the case of the Philippines, this is yet to be fully explored and documented in a systematic way. 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.

When India launched the Look East Policy and intensified partnership with ASEAN in 1992, this also resulted in stronger relations with countries in the region including the Philippines, both bilaterally and in the regional context. With the Act East Policy initiated in 2014, the relationship with Philippines has diversified further into political-security; trade and industry and people-to-people realms. Coupled with current development trajectory in the Philippines, the stage appears to be set for further intensification in bilateral relations, 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.

1. Political relations:

(a) High level visits/Interactions:

Bilateral relations have strengthened over the years with the exchange of high level visits, telephonic conversations, virtual meetings, etc. which continued even during the Covid-19 pandemic. On 7 Sep 2023, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. had a brief pull aside meeting on the sidelines of 20th ASEAN-India Summit held in Jakarta. In June 2023, Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA), Enrique A. Manalo visited India for the 5th JCBC. He also called on the Vice-President of India, Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar during his visit and delivered the 42nd Sapru House lecture at ICWA. Earlier in January, he addressed the Foreign Ministers' Session of Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) held virtually in the chairmanship of Dr. S. Jaishankar, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister. Speaking on the occasion, SFA stressed on sustainable development, global health, and climate change.

The year 2022 saw many high level interactions. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi spoke over phone with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. [05 Aug] and congratulated him for his election as the 17th President of the Philippines. PM

reiterated the important role that Philippines plays in India's Act East Policy and its Indo-Pacific vision, and expressed the desire to further expand bilateral relations. Earlier, EAM Dr. S Jaishankar visited Manila from 13 to 15 February and met then SFA Mr. Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. during which the whole gamut of bilateral relations was discussed. Upon EAM's invitation SFA Locsin visited India on a bilateral visit from 23 to 26 April and also participated in Raisina Dialogue 2022 during the visit. On 30 June, Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, MOS(RRS) attended the inauguration of H.E. Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. as 17th President of the Philippines as the Special Envoy of the PM. On 12 Nov, 2022 EAM met the SFA, Mr. Enrique A. Manalo on the sidelines of the 19th ASEAN Summit in Cambodia. Both took stock of the bilateral relations and agreed to explore the potential for further strengthening it.

In June 2020, PM had held a telephonic conversation with President Rodrigo Duterte during which PM assured President Duterte of India's commitment to support the Philippines in its fight against the pandemic. In November 2020, EAM and SFA Locsin co-chaired the 4th bilateral Joint Commission meeting in virtual mode. The two Foreign Ministers also held a telephonic conversation in April 2021 and discussed COVID-19 situation and the Indo-Pacific.

Other recent high level interactions include state visit of President Shri Ram Nath Kovind [October 2019 to mark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations], President Duterte (January 2018 for 25th ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit) and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi (November 2017 for 15th ASEAN India Summit, with a strong bilateral component). EAM also met SFA Locsin in August 2019 on the margins of the 9th East Asia Summit (EAS) and 26th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Bangkok.

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 H.E. Ferdinand E. Marcos [1976] and Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the Philippines in 1981. The 'Look East policy' resulted in increased frequency of high-level contacts and saw visits to the Philippines by Presidents R. Venkatraman [1991] and Abdul Kalam [2006], Cabinet Ministers and other political dignitaries from India. Similarly, from the Philippines, there have been visits by Presidents Fidel Ramos [1997] and Gloria Macapagal Arroyo [2007], Cabinet Ministers and other high level political dignitaries.

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. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh visited Cebu, Philippines in January 2007 for the 5th ASEAN-India and 2nd East Asia Summits. The Vice President of the Philippines Mr. Jejomar C. Binay led a high-powered 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 meeting in the chairmanship of EAM S Jaishankar and SFA Manalo reviewed recent developments in bilateral relations and discussed the future trajectory of engagement in all the areas of mutual interests. progynova

Official level foreign policy and security dialogue meetings have been held regularly (from 1994 and from 2004 respectively, when the security dialogue was upgraded to a 'Strategic Dialogue' at the 2nd JCBC). The 13th Foreign Office Consultations(FOC) and 4th Strategic Dialogue(SD) was co-chaired by Shri Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East) and Ms. Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro, Under Secretary for Bilateral Relations and ASEAN Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Philippines in Manila on 17 August and 18 August 2022 respectively. During the meeting, the entire gamut of India-Philippine relationship was discussed and views were exchanged on regional and global issues. The 12th Foreign Office Consultations(FOC) & 3rd Strategic Dialogue(SD) was held in New Delhi on 27 February 2017.

(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. Philippines expressed support for the G-4 initiative for Security Council Reform at a meeting by all G-4 HOMs in Manila with Secretary for Foreign Affairs on 05 November, 2013 which was reiterated at the Foreign Policy Consultation/ Strategic Dialogue in March 2015. Philippines supported India in the recent election to IAEA, INTERPOL, IMO, CLCS and ITU. There are regular consultations between delegations of both countries in the UN and other multilateral fora. Several Foreign Service officers from the Philippines have attended the ASEAN diplomats' course that is held at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service(SSIFS) in India.

(d) Humanitarian assistance:

India has been offering humanitarian assistance to the Philippines from time to time, though at a modest level. In February 2006, in the aftermath of massive rock slide-debris avalanche in the province of Southern Leyte, which led to death toll of 1,126, Govt. of India provided around 28 tons of relief material worth US\$260,000. Again in December 2006, GOI donated US\$ 250,000 for relief and rehabilitation of communities affected by super typhoon Reming/Durian which resulted in 1399 deaths. Following the tragic loss of life, livelihood and property as a result of typhoon Pablo/Bopha, which struck southern Philippines in December 2012, the Government of India provided disaster relief assistance of \$200,000 to the Philippines Government and \$ 100,000 as disaster relief assistance following the October 2013 earthquake in Bohol. India also sent 15 tonnes of relief material in the aftermath of the super typhoon Haiyan(Yolanda) which occurred in November 2013. We provided immediate relief assistance of \$ 500,000 (equivalent to 25 million pesos) on 11 July 2017 for the relief and rehabilitation efforts underway in the city of Marawi which had come under siege from May 23, 2017 when armed terrorists belonging to the Maute group with reported allegiance to ISIS took over the city. The Embassy with support of leaders of Indian Community organisations handed over nearly US\$ 250,000 worth of face masks for COVID19 frontlines to Secretary Lorenzana and Secretary Galvez in Manila on 9 April 2020.

2. Defence and Security Cooperation:

The main stay of bilateral defence cooperation continues to remain capacity building with training exchanges and visits of delegations. Defence ties were significantly enhanced with the signing in January 2022 of a contract worth US\$ 374.9 million to supply the BrahMos missile system.

A 5-member delegation led by Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant, CG Admiral Artemio M Abu visited India from 21-23 August, 2023. During the visit, MOU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation was signed by PCG Comdt. and ICG Director General Rakesh Pal. The MOU signing was preceded by bilateral meeting between the PCG and the ICG in New Delhi. Also, Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the exchange of White Shipping Information was signed by PCG Comdt. and Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral R Hari Kumar apart from other engagements.

Inaugural India-Philippines Maritime Track 2 Dialogue, co-chaired by National Maritime Foundation and Stratbase ADR Institute of the Philippines, held on 12 Sep, 2023 in Manila. Philippine Army delegation led by Lt Gen Roy Mabagos Galido, Commanding General Philippine Army visited India to attend 13th Indo-Pacific Army Chief's Conference held from 25 to 27 Sep, 2023 at New Delhi.

Secretary, National Defense, Delfin Lorenzana visited India with a five-member delegation for the first ever bilateral Defence Ministerial visit from 09-11 Mar 2018. Apart from bilateral interactions with then RM Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman, he also visited defence establishments and leading defence Industrial/ equipment production centres in India. Philippines participated in the Def Expo 2018 (11-14 Apr 2018 at Chennai) with a two-member delegation.

Both countries signed an Memorandum of Understanding(MOU) on Defence Cooperation in 2006. A Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) at the Joint Secretary level was set up under this MoU, which has met four times so far, most recently on 31 March 2023 in New Delhi. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the ongoing bilateral defence cooperation and discussed effective and practical initiatives to further expand engagements.

The two countries also signed an MoU on Defence Industry and Logistics cooperation in Nov 2017 and have also set up a separate Joint Defence Industry and Logistics Committee (JDILC) under the MoU. This mechanism has met thrice, including on 11 March, 2022. Indian Navy and Philippines Navy are also working on Hydrographic Cooperation. The first virtual conference in this regard was held on 31 May 2022.

The 8th Intelligence Exchange (INTELEX) meeting was held in India on 12 July, 2023. Lt Gen DS Rana, DG Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) and Maj Gen Ferdinand T Brandon, Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Armed Forces of the Philippines(AFP) led their respective delegations in the meeting held in New Delhi. Both sides discussed issues of mutual interest and explored avenues for further cooperation and strengthening the strong bilateral relationship.

Indian Navy and Coast Guard ships regularly visit the Philippines and hold consultations with their counterparts. INS Satpura made a port call to Manila from 3-7 June, 2022 for Operational Turn Around(OTR). Two Indian Navy Ships INS *Ranvijay* and INS *Kora* visited Manila from the 24-26 August 2021. The ships also undertook the first-ever bilateral Navy-to-Navy Passage Exercise in the West Philippine Sea during the visit. INS *Kiltan* visited Manila from 03 to 05 Jul 21. Other recent ship visits to Philippines include INS *Sahyadri* and INS *Kiltan* from Oct 23-26, 2019 and ICGS *Shaunak* from 01-05 Feb 2019 on the occasion of Indian Coast Guard Day.

The participation of officers of the armed forces of both countries in various specialized training courses in each other's countries has intensified. This includes the course subscription last year by Philippines to India's prestigious National Defence College(NDC) for the NSSS course, the first in several decades. 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.

High-level training visits remained a priority, in pursuance of which the delegations from the College of Defence Management of India visited Philippines from 26-30 Oct 2015 (HDMC -11) and from 22-26 Oct 2018 (HDMC-14). A 27-member delegation from the Indian Army War College, Mhow, also visited Philippines from 24 to 28 Sep 19. NDC delegation visited Philippines twice from 22-25 May 2016 and from 05-10 June 2022.

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) increased from USD 1.89 billion in 2015-16 to USD 3.05 billion in 2022-23, crossing USD 3 billion mark for the first time.

Financial Year	India's Export to Philippines	India's Imports from Philippines	Trade with Philippines
2015-16	1353.34	542.16	1895.50
2016-17	1482.52	494.62	1977.14
2017-18	1692.83	764.36	2457.20
2018-19	1743.64	581.10	2324.74
2019-20	1525.96	523.83	2049.79
2020-21	1457.30	572.47	2029.77

2021-22	2107.24	729.08	2836.31
2022-23	2094.15	959.59	3053.73

[in US\$ million]

The major items of export from India to 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. Philippines account for around 20% of total Indian pharma exports to the ASEAN region. The major items of import from 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 in the Philippines has over the years been mainly in the areas of IT& ITES [BPO]; pharmaceuticals and healthcare; yarn and textiles; infrastructure (airport); chemicals; automobiles; agriculture; biomass energy; FMCG and others. Estimated Indian investments in the Philippines is valued around US \$ 5 billion. Notable among these are Tata Consultancy Services (TCS); Infosys; Tech Mahindra; Wipro; HCL Technologies; HGS in IT-BPO 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; GMR Group (airport); 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, Indofil, RM Chemicals in chemical sector; Shri Ram Group (insurance) and others. Philippine investments in India have been modest in the past and mainly comprised companies like V. Merida (processing of waste), Ayala (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:

Financial Technology (Fintech) is one of the focused sectors identified by the leaders of both the countries. MOU for constitution of JWG on Cooperation in Financial Technology was signed on 19 June, 2023. This would facilitate partnership between India and Philippines in the fields of digital payments, financial inclusion, fintech and related areas. Further, to enhance Development Cooperation, both countries signed an Agreement on Quick Impact Projects(QIP) on 7 Feb 2023, which would open, for the first time a regular grant funding window for the Philippines.

(d) **Agriculture:**

Agriculture is another focused sector identified by the leaders of both the countries. Revised 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 during which discussions on agriculture and blue economy were held. On request of Philippines side, training session was organised 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.

(e) **Health and Medicine:**

Health and Medicine is another focused sector identified by the leaders for bilateral engagement. The Philippines recognises India as a global leader in terms of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies. Philippines was the first ASEAN Member State to grant Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Bharat Biotech's Covaxin. Presently, Philippines account for nearly 20% of total Indian pharma exports to the ASEAN region and India continues to be the largest supplier of pharma products to 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. A AYUSH delegation from National Institute of Ayurveda (NIA), Jaipur visited Manila on 13-15 June, 2023. The delegation held extensive discussions with Philippine Institute of Traditional and Alternative Healthcare (PITAHC), 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. The 1st meeting of India-Philippines JWG on Tourism was held on 8 October, 2020 which covered various issues to enhance two-way tourist flow. Discussions were held on expanding tourism flows, including direct air connectivity, links between travel bodies, ease of visa access for Indian nationals and synergies in promotional events. The new Air Services Agreement, which was signed on 27 September 2021 (ratified in June 2023), is expected to facilitate direct air connectivity between India and Philippines. Sh. Arvind Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism met Ms Bernadette Romulo-Puyat, Secretary, Department of Tourism, Philippines in April 2022 on the sidelines of World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)'s Global Summit held from 20-22 April, 2022 in Manila. On 26 Jan, 2023 President Marcos announced that the Philippines would extend e-visa for travelers from India, Korea, China and Taiwan. On 4 Feb, 2023 Tourism Secretary Christina Frasco attended 10th meeting of ASEAN-India Tourism Ministers wherein she complimented India for allowing 100% foreign direct investment in tourism sector,

signing of air service agreement and agreement on tourism between India and Philippines in terms of encouraging better development in connectivity, hospitality and sustainability.

(g) Science & Technology

Bilateral Programme of Cooperation (POC) in Science and Technology, for the period 2019-2022 was signed in October 2019 outlining five broad areas of cooperation, namely agricultural biotechnology; health, pharmaceutical & medical sciences; Information and Communication Technology (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. Virology; Applications of Artificial Intelligence in diverse areas such as agriculture, health and smart cities; Block chain technologies on Government services/processes; and Additive manufacturing of new materials (metal and ceramics) were identified as key research areas. Subsequently, 3 JRP proposals have been identified for implementation covering areas of (i) Virology (ii) Artificial Intelligence and (iii) Additive manufacturing of new materials. Looking at the successful implementation of POC, both sides have agreed to enhance the scope of cooperation areas under the renewed POC for next three years i.e. 2023-2026.

(h) Consular:

The Joint Consular Consultations(JCC) has met three times so far. The 3rd round of JCC was held on 28 February 2017 in New Delhi. Both countries have signed Extradition Treaty on 12 March 2004. India and Philippines are also working on signing of Treaties on Transfer of Sentenced Persons(TTSP) and Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters(MLAT). Negotiations on MLAT and TTSP were held in Manila from 23-25 Aug 2023. Significant progress was made towards finalizing the texts.

(i) Other areas:

A new area of engagement is Space Cooperation. 3 senior scientists from Philippine Space Agency (PhilSA) participated in the 7th Edition of Bengaluru Space Expo in September 2022 which was jointly organised by CII in association with the ISRO, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe) and New Space India Limited (NSIL). Further, 2 candidates from PhilSA also attended ISRO's UNNATI Training programme for nanosatellite building in October, 2022. On 8 June 2023, Department of Space and ISRO had a preliminary interaction with PhilSA to ascertain the areas of interest of the Philippines. Phase-wise space collaboration starting with capacity building courses based on the specific requirements of the Philippines was agreed.

An Agreement on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters, signed on 24 April 2022 and ratified in June 2023, would facilitate trade. In addition, India and Philippines are also exploring cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and Renewable Energy.

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 availed of courses offered. ITEC Day is celebrated every year by the Embassy that brings together ITEC alumni across the Philippines. During the COVID-19 pandemic, 17 and 108 Filipino professionals, in the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 respectively, participated in several e-ITEC courses. Courses on Electoral Technology, Environmental Impact Assessment, Renewable Energy, Natural Resource Management and Public Health Management Development and Introduction to Ayurveda were among the popular courses in the Philippines. On the defence side, personnel from both the countries now participate in each other's flagship training programmes. 6 Philippines defence personnel participated in defence ITEC courses held in India in the year 2020-2021, while 13 defence personnel participated in the year 2021-2022. In the FY 2022-2023, 42 Filipino participated in ITEC Regular courses; 17 in e-ITEC courses and 22 defence personnel participated in ITEC defence courses. In current FY 2023-24, 17 slots have been offered to Philippine Navy; 8 slots to Philippine Coast Guard; 5 slots to Philippine Air Force and 10 slots to Philippine Army. So far 4 Regular and 11 defence personnel have participated in the ITEC courses this year.

India also offers scholarships, tuition fee waivers to students from the Philippines under its 'Doctoral Fellowship for India in ASEAN' programme and the 'Study in India' programme. In terms of education collaboration, in May 2021, an MoU was signed between Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai and Ateneo De Manila University, Manila to promote exchanges in the field of Disaster Studies. Further, to enhance Blue Economy and Maritime cooperation in the academic domain MoU between the Indian Maritime University and Batangas State University was signed on 11 November 2022.

5. Culture:

The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the two countries was renewed for the period 2019-2023 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, Indian festivals (Holi, Diwali etc.) and other important days such as Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Consitution Day, Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, etc. In May 2022, "Kwentong Jatataka" podcast was launched which comprised of 12 short and engaging stories from the Indian Jataka Tales translated into Filipino language. Further, 4 selected Indian folk songs with the signature chorale rendition by the Philippine Madrigal Singers was successfully produced and launched in Aug/Sep 2022 in collaboration with Philippine National Commission for Culture of the Arts to mark Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) celebration in the Philippines. In the past, to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, several events such as blood donation camps, tree plantation, bicycle rallies were organised in the Philippines. International Day of Yoga, Ayurveda Day are celebrated every year in the Philippines. Since March 2021, the Embassy has been organising a series of activities to mark AKAM-75 Years of India's Independence.

6. Diaspora:

The Indian community in the Philippines is estimated to be around 1,50,000. Punjabis and Sindhis constitute the bulk of the community. While the Sindhis are primarily engaged in trading, especially in the retail sector and also some manufacturing, the Punjabis, mostly from rural background are predominantly involved in micro-financing.

Since the last ten years, there are a growing number of professionals, estimated in the range of about 1500 persons, who are working in the Philippines, in multilateral organizations as also in multinational corporations, BPOs and Indian joint ventures in the country. Together with dependents, their number is estimated at around 4000.

The major Indian business associations in the Philippines are the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Philippines (FICCI-Philippines) and Indian Business Forum (IBF). The Philippines-India Business Council, a sub-Committee of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce & Industry, helps organize business networking meetings for visiting Indian business delegations. A recent addition to the Indian diaspora business organizations has been the launch of Indian Women in Enterprise (I-WE) Philippines, an organization bringing together women professionals and MSME women entrepreneurs.

There have been a number of Indian students coming to the Philippines for medical studies in recent years. With English being widely spoken in the Philippines, it has attracted students in the past also for Management (Asian Institute of Management has Indian students), Information Technology, Nursing, Christian Theology & Divinity, Church Music and Pilot training courses among others. It is estimated that there are more than 16000 students currently, with the majority of them pursuing pre medicine/ medicine.

The resident Indian community is fairly active and they celebrate Indian festivals and organize various social events. There are cultural associations such as Indian Ladies Club, Bharati Indian Expats women's Association (comprising spouses of expats) and spiritual organisations such as Chinmaya Mission, Sri Satya Sai Organization, Art of Living, Mahaveer Foundation, Brahma Kumaris, etc. in the Philippines. There are several places of religious worship, such as Sikh Gurudwaras including Khalsa Diwan and Hindu Temples like ISKCON across the country.

12 October, 2023