

**Embassy of India
Vientiane**

INDIA-LAO People's Democratic Republic (PDR) Bilateral Relations

India and Lao PDR share long-standing religious, cultural, and people-to-people linkages going back long into history. India was Chairman of the International Commission for Supervision and Control (ICSC) on Indo-China. Lao PDR has been supportive on major issues of regional and international concern to India, in particular, the legitimate concerns of developing countries.

Lao PDR is a part of India's extended neighbourhood as only one country, namely Myanmar, separates Lao PDR from India's North East. The distance from the Lao border with Myanmar in the North to Manipur border in India is less than 2,000 kms. Lao PDR is thus important for India's Act East Policy.

Political Relations

After establishment of political relations in February 1956, the following high-level visits between the two countries have added momentum to the relationship:

High Level Visits from India

- **President:**
 1. Dr. Rajendra Prasad - 1956
 2. Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil – Sept. 2010
- **Vice President:**

Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari – Sept. 2015
- **Prime Minister:**
 1. Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru – 1954
 2. Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee - 2002
 3. Dr. Manmohan Singh – 2004
 4. Shri Narendra Modi – Sept. 2016 to attend ASEAN Summit

High Level Visits from Lao PDR

- **President:**
 - Mr. Choummaly Sayasone, President of Lao PDR - August 2008
- **Prime Minister:**
 - Mr. Thongsing Thammavong , Prime Minister of Lao PDR – Dec.2012
 - Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of Lao PDR – Jan. 2018 to attend ASEAN Commemorative Summit

Prince Souphanouvong, commonly known as the Red Prince visited India in 1975.

Cooperation during Challenge of COVID-19 Pandemic

Telephonic Conversation between Indian and Lao PM :

On 12 June 2020, Honourable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi spoke on phone with Dr. Thongloun Sisoulith, the then Honourable Prime Minister of Lao PDR. The two leaders exchanged views on the health and economic challenges posed by the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister commended the effective measures undertaken by the Government of Lao PDR to contain the spread of the pandemic in Lao PDR. Both leaders agreed on the need for international cooperation, and for sharing of best-practices and experiences, in order to prepare for the post-COVID world.

PM highlighted India's historic and cultural links with Lao PDR and expressed satisfaction at being involved in the restoration of the World Heritage Site at Vat Phou. Lao PM thanked Prime Minister for India's support for Lao PDR's development programmes, in capacity building and for scholarships.

PM reiterated India's commitment to continue its development partnership with Lao PDR, a valued partner in India's extended neighbourhood.

Medicines gifted to Lao PDR

On 04 August 2020, a consignment of medicines and medical supplies gifted by India to Lao PDR was handed over to the Honourable Minister of Health of Lao PDR to support the fight of Lao PDR against the COVID-19 pandemic.

COVID-19 Vaccines to Lao PDR

India gifted 132,000 doses of Made in India COVID-19 vaccines to Lao PDR under COVAX programme of GAVI.

Recent Visits

- Mr. Thongphane Savanphet, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs together with 4-member delegation participated in the 10th edition of Delhi Dialogue from 19-20 July, 2018.
- Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce visited India in December 2019 to attend 11th Edition of Delhi Dialogue.
- Mr. Phongsavanh Sisoulath, DG ASEAN Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and Mr. Viengoudom Chanthavong, Deputy Director of External Relations Division, ASEAN Department, MFA participated in the Workshop on Blue Economy held on the sidelines of Delhi Dialogue-X.

Ayurveda Day

H.E. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Bounkong Syhavong, Minister of Health of Lao PDR conveyed his wishes in a recorded message on the occasion of celebration of 5th Ayurveda Day by the Embassy of India on 13 Nov. 2020.

International Day of Yoga

H.E. Associate Prof. Dr. Phout Simmalavong, Minister of Education and Sports participated in the celebrations of 7th International Day of Yoga in Vientiane on 26 June 2021.

ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021

H.E. Associate Prof. Dr. Phout Simmalavong, then Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao PDR delivered his remarks during Award ceremony of ASEAN-India Hackathon 2021.

Consultative Mechanisms with Lao PDR

➤ Institutional consultative mechanisms with Lao PDR include Foreign Office Consultations and Joint Commission Meeting.

Bilateral Agreements/MoUs

Agreements signed between the two countries are in the area of Culture, Trade, Economic and Scientific Cooperation, Defence Cooperation, Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Science & Technology, Grant Assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs), Air Services Agreement, Cooperation between training institutions, etc.

Lines of Credit

Indian Lines of Credit (LOCs) offered to Lao PDR in recent past include:

- 115 KV Transmission Line from Ban-Na in Champassak Province to Attapeu completed in 2006.
- LOC for (a) Equipment for rural electrification, (b) Pakson-Jaingxai- Bangyo Transmission Line and (c) Nam Song 7.5 MW Hydropower Project completed in 2009, 2010 and 2012 respectively.
- LOC for Irrigation schemes in Champassak Province: comprising 3 components: (a) Conversion of diesel to electric driven pump sets & improvement of 3 pumping stations, (b) installation of ten large pump sets and (c) six large irrigation schemes (2009) – completed in 2015.
- LoC extended to Lao PDR in 2010 for (a) 230 KV Double Circuit Transmission Line from Nabong to Thabok and substations has been completed (b) Balance part of LoC for Improvement and Expansion of 22KV Distribution Line in Vientiane Capital City Branches Project - discussions are underway for implementation.
- LOC for irrigation projects – One component i.e. conversion and commissioning of diesel driven pumps into electric pumps completed in August 2019. Other components are under discussion with Government of Lao PDR.

Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)

India is providing assistance to Lao PDR on three projects, (i) Establishment of Fertilizer Analysis Laboratory, (ii) Promotion of Goat Raising and (iii) Promoting Green Cardamom Cultivation. The project related to establishment of Fertilizer Analysis Laboratory is complete, other two projects are under process of implementation.

Defence Cooperation

Under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, a two-member Indian Army Training Team (IATT) conducts training for Lao defence personnel in English, Computers and Basic Tactics. An event to celebrate the 25th Anniversary of establishment of IATT in Lao PDR was held on 18 September 2020. Indian Army had also conducted three training capsules on Unexploded Ordnances and De-Mining in Lao PDR in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Under ITEC programme, 7 officers from Lao PDR medical military department also participated in the first Cambodia Lao PDR Myanmar Vietnam e-ITEC defence medical course on COVID-19 organised from 06 - 09 July 2020.

Commercial & Economic Relations

Bilateral Trade

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<i>Indian exports to Lao PDR</i>	51.533	24.010	23.644	37.447	29.280	27.74
<i>Indian imports from Lao PDR</i>	145.129	171.911	248.610	17.229	2.613	2.08
TOTAL TRADE	196.663	195.922	272.254	54.676	31.893	29.82
<i>Balance of Trade</i>	-93.596	-147.901	-224.965	20.217	26.667	25.66

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India. (Figures in US \$ million)

Top 5 Exports from India to Lao PDR (2020)		Top 5 Imports from Lao PDR to India (2020)	
Item	Value	Item	Value
Electrical Machinery And Equipment And Parts Thereof; Sound Recorders And Reproducers, Television Image And Sound Recorders And Reproducers and Parts.	11.89	Mineral Fuels, Mineral Oils And Products Of Their Distillation; Bituminous Substances; Mineral Waxes.	1.05
Pharmaceutical Products	5.86	Wood And Articles Of Wood; Wood Charcoal.	0.51
Nuclear Reactors, Boilers, Machinery And Mechanical Appliances; Parts Thereof.	4.55	Man-Made Staple Fibre.	0.13
Vehicles other than Railway or Tramway Rolling Stock, and Parts and Accessories Thereof.	2.11	Other Base Metals; Cermets; Articles thereof.	0.12
Articles of Iron or Steel	0.6	Oil Seeds And Olea. Fruits; Misc. Grains, Seeds And Fruit; Industrial Or Medicinal Plants; Straw And Fodder.	0.08

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India. (Figures in US \$ million)

Main products India export to Lao PDR are machinery/equipment, pharmaceutical products and automobiles. In recent years, export of generic medicine and other pharma products has also increased.

Lao PDR being a resource rich country, primarily export bulk mineral and ore (copper, gold) or wood products like veneer, plywood to India.

As per records of Government of Lao PDR, there are 51 Indian companies registered with an approximate investment of US \$ 48 million. Majority of these companies are in Vientiane Capital.

The ASEAN India Business Council (AIBC) based in Malaysia has a Chapter in Lao PDR.

Human Resource Development

The Government of India has been providing scholarships annually to Lao nationals under various schemes. Under ITEC, Govt. of India provides short-term and a few long-term training courses in various areas to Lao nationals (government officials/nominees); so far about 1500 Lao nationals have been trained under ITEC. Fully-funded scholarships to Lao students for pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D degrees are also awarded by Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

The LIEDC (Lao-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre) set up in November 2004, trains Lao entrepreneurs for setting up small and medium scale business. It has so far trained more than 15000 individuals.

The LICELT [Lao India Centre for English Language Training] set up in National University of Lao PDR, Vientiane is one of assistance projects in human resource development.

India set up an IT centre in Vientiane in November 2004, as well as a National Data Centre in May 2006. Ten Rural Telecommunication Centres have been set up.

The Centre for Excellence in Software Development and Training (CESDT) was inaugurated in Vientiane in November, 2018. So far, CESDT has imparted training to around 100 participants in different courses from different organizations of Lao PDR including government officials.

Heritage Conservation

Archaeological Survey of India has been working on the restoration of the UNESCO world heritage site at Vat Phou an ancient Shiva Temple, which was later converted into a Buddhist temple. Phase I of the project is complete, second phase of the project is ongoing and is likely to be complete in 2028.

Indian Diaspora

The 500-strong Indian community has grown in profile over the years. It is engaged in jewellery trade, restaurant and hotel industry, manufacturing, garments, mining, plantations and agarwood. A few members work for international organizations & private businesses.

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