

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]. The year 2019 thus marks the completion of seventy years of diplomatic relations between the two nations.

Relations between the two countries have been friendly and problem free. It would be fair to say though that despite historical shared values and commonalities, such as anti-colonialism, South-South cooperation, a strong democratic polity, an independent judiciary and press, and the wide use of the English language, the full potential of the relationship between the two countries is yet far from attainment and is reflective of a lack of informed knowledge about one another.

When India launched her Look East Policy and intensified partnership with ASEAN in 1992, this also resulted in intensified 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, tourism, health, agriculture, people-to-people relations and culture. Furthermore, strengthened ASEAN-India relations have had a positive impact on bilateral relations, especially with accelerated impetus being given to trade and investment.

Political, Security and Defence: High level visits and interactions between India and the Philippines have seen intensification especially since the initiation of ASEAN-India Summit level partnership and establishment of East Asia Summit, of which India is a founding member. The year 2017, in particular, was marked by unprecedented high level exchanges culminating in the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the Philippines to attend the 31st ASEAN and EAS Summits in Manila from November 12-14, 2017. This was followed by a back to back visit when President Duterte visited India from Jan 24-26, 2018 to attend the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit and Republic Day celebrations. During his visit to Manila, Prime Minister Modi had extensive engagements including attending the Gala dinner and the opening ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of ASEAN/EAS, RCEP and India-ASEAN Summit. Apart from multilateral engagements, Prime Minister had a significant bilateral meeting with President Duterte where all aspects of the bilateral relationship were discussed and followed by signing of five MoU's on Defence Industry and Logistics Cooperation, MoU between ICWA and FSI, MoU on Cooperation on Agriculture, MoU on MSME and MoU between ICCR and Univ of Philippines for setting up a chair of India studies. Prime Minister also visited the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) and the Mahaveer Philippines Foundation Inc (MPFI), an NGO dealing with

artificial prosthetics (Jaipur foot) and announced a grant of US \$ 200,000 for upgradation of its equipment as well as free distribution to 250 needy Filipino beneficiaries. Prime Minister Modi also engaged the business community by delivering the key note address at the ASEAN Business and Investment Summit (ABIS). Prime Minister also interacted with a 1300 strong representative audience of the growing Indian diaspora in the Philippines.

President Duterte led a high level delegation of eight Cabinet Ministers when he visited India for the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit and Republic Day Celebrations from Jan 24-26, 2018. During the visit, he had an extensive bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi followed by signing of an MoU between Invest India and Board of Investments for promotion of bilateral investments. During his visit, President Duterte also interacted with the business community. The two bilateral meetings in quick succession have reinvigorated the relationship.

The Government of India conferred the prestigious Padma Shri Award to Mr. Joey Concepcion, the Presidential Advisor for Entrepreneurship and Chairman of ASEAN Business Advisory Council in the Philippines for his contribution in the field of Trade and Industry. He received the award from the President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind on 2 April 2018 at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

The annual ASEAN/EAS Summits have provided an excellent platform for regular meetings between leaders from both countries in the past. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a bilateral meeting with President Aquino of Philippines in November 2014 in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar during the ASEAN-India/EAS summit. Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh visited Cebu, Philippines in 2007 for the ASEAN-India and the East Asia Summits. The Vice President of the Philippines Mr. Jejomar C. Binay led a high-powered delegation, which included Secretary, DFA (Department of Foreign Affairs) of the Philippines Mr. Del Rosario, to India in December 2012, for the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi.

Following the visits of the Philippines Vice President Diosdado Macapagal to India in 1961 and the Indian 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] and by 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.

Three meetings of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC), the highest formalised dialogue mechanism at the level of Foreign Ministers have been held - the last one in October 2015 in New Delhi. Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines Albert F. del Rosario visited India on 14 October 2015 for the 3rd JCBC. During the visit, he called on the Vice-President of India and also delivered the 2nd Nehru-Rizal Lecture. External Affairs Minister Sh. Salman Khurshid visited Manila from 21-23 October

2013 for the 2nd JCBC meeting and delivered the inaugural 'Rizal-Nehru Memorial lecture' at the Foreign Service Institute of Department of Foreign Affairs. Foreign Policy Consultations and Security Dialogue meetings between the two countries have been taking place regularly and the 12th Policy Consultations/3rd Strategic Dialogue was held in New Delhi on February 2017 where the entire gamut of India-Philippine relationship was discussed. The Indian side was led by Ms. Preeti Saran, Secretary (East) and from the Philippine side by Enrique Manalo, Undersecretary, Policy. Former Commerce and Industry Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman visited Cebu, Philippines for the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Inter-Sessional Ministerial Meeting on 3-4 November 2016. As Raksha Mantri (Defence Minister), she visited Clark, Pampanga to attend the 4th ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus from 23-25 October, 2017. Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri. Suresh Prabhu visited Manila to attend the ASEAN-India Economic Ministers' Meeting from September 7-11, 2017 during which he also had a bilateral meeting with Secretary for Trade and Industry Ramon Lopez. Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen (Retd) V.K. Singh visited Manila from 6-9, August 2017 to attend the ASEAN India/7th East Asia Summit/24th ASEAN Regional Forum/10th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation meeting. During the meeting, he had a fruitful bilateral meeting with his counterpart from the Philippines. Dr. Nasim Zaidi, Chief Election Commissioner visited Manila from 19-21, March, 2017 to participate in the Executive Board Meeting and the General Assembly of the Association of Asian Election Authorities. On 3rd August 2018 (MOS VKS) met Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Alan Peter Cayetano on the sidelines of the 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting at Singapore. Chief Election Commissioner of India Mr. O.P. Rawat visited Manila on 7-10 October 2018 for an executive board meeting of the Association of Asian Election Authorities (AAEA) and to attend a forum on the independence of election management bodies (EMBs) and election security.

The Philippines supported India's candidature for the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the term 2011-12 and 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 Foreign Service Institute in India.

The mainstay of bilateral defence cooperation continue to be capacity building and training, exchange visits of delegations and naval and coast guard ship visits. Secretary, National Defense, Delfin Lorenzana visited India with a five member delegation for the first ever bilateral defence minister level visit from 8-11 March 2018. Apart from bilateral interactions with his counterpart, he also visited defence establishments and defence equipment production centres in India. Philippines also participated in the Def-Expo in April 2018. Indian Navy and coast guard ships regularly visit the Philippines and hold consultations with their counterparts. Recently, ICGS Shaunak visited Manila on 1st February 2019 on the occasion of Indian Coast Guard Day. Indian Navy Vessel, INS Rana (D52) visited Manila from 23-26 October 2018. ICGS Shaurya visited Manila from December 1-5, 2017, INS Satpura and INS Kadmatt visited Manila from 3-6 October 2017,

Indian Coast guard Ship ICGS Samarth visited Manila from 7-10 January 2017, INS Sahyadri and INS Sakthi visited Manila on a goodwill visit to Subic Bay from 30 May -2 June 2016; INS Sahyadri visited Manila from 1-4 November 2015; and from 20-23 August 2014; ICGS Samudra Paheredar visited Manila from 19-22 September 2014; a flotilla of four Indian ships from the Eastern Fleet, namely INS Shakti, INS Satupura, INS Ranjit and INS Kirch visited Manila on a goodwill visit from 12-16 June, 2013. The participation of officers of the armed forces of both countries in various specialized training courses in each other's countries has intensified, as have visits by National Defence College (NDC) delegations, including the first ever NDC visit from the Philippines to India. A delegation from the College of Defence Management of India visited Philippines from 23-31 October 2015 and again in October, 2018; a delegation from Army High Command Course of India visited the Philippines from 10-14 November 2014. INTELLEX meetings have contributed towards sharing and exchanging information on a range of sensitive issues; the last INTELLEX meeting took place in Manila in January 2015 with the previous one being held in New Delhi in February 2013. In recognition of the need to further strengthen defence cooperation, the Joint Defence Cooperation Committee was constituted and had its first meeting in Manila in January 2012 followed by the 2nd meeting in New Delhi on 24 March 2017. On 21 October 2018, a 21 member delegation from the College of Defense Management (CDM) Secunderabad visited Manila. The visit was a part of the International Strategic Management tour of the higher defense management course-14 of CDM Secunderabad.

Government of India sent an Indian Air Force flight with relief material for the victims of super typhoon 'Haiyan, which struck Philippines on 7-8 November 2013. 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 announced an 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 on May 23, 2017 after armed terrorists belonging to the Maute group owing allegiance to ISIS took over the city.

Trade and Commerce: Economic relations between the two countries have grown rapidly in recent years although still modest given the potential that exists. India-Philippines trade in 2018-19 has been at around US \$ 2.32 billion (Exports from India to Philippines-US \$ 1743 million and Imports from Philippines by India- US \$ 581 million). In 2017-18 bilateral trade grew by nearly 25% to US\$ 2.45 billion with imports from the Philippines rising sharply to US \$ 764 million and India's exports growing to U.S \$ 1.69 billion. A number of growth drivers suggest a major and sustained growth in two-way trade and investment in future, helped by the conclusion of the India-ASEAN Trade in Services and Investment Agreements. Indian investment in the Philippines is mainly in the areas of textiles, IT&ITES, Infrastructure (airports), chemicals, automobiles and pharmaceuticals.

The earliest major Indian investment in the Philippines was the Aditya Birla Group in textiles & Chemicals (Indo Phil Group). A recent major entrant has been the GMR group Ltd, who in collaboration with a local company Megawide, won the bid in April 2014 for upgrading and operation of the Cebu-Mactan airport project for the next 25 years. The airport was inaugurated and has commenced operations in 2018. GMR-Megawide have also won the bid for Clark International airport expansion. Tata Motors and Mahindra have made their presence felt in the Automobile sector. Collaboration in the BPO sector has grown exponentially in the last ten years or so. Several Indian IT companies have already set up BPO operations in the Philippines and these include companies like WIPRO, TCS, L&T Infotech, Innodata, IL&FS Genpact, Infosys, HGS, Tech Mahindra etc. This close partnership in IT & BPO has become a win-win situation for both countries. Similarly Indian companies have a strong presence in Pharma (Generics) where Pharma majors like Dabur Pharma, Lupin, Torrent, ZydusCadilla, and Claris Life sciences have set up liaison office to promote their products. Lupin has also acquired a stake in a local company. Recently Wipro consumer products division has acquired a local personal care line called Splash at an estimated cost US\$ 200 million. Estimated Indian investments in the Philippines are valued at more than US \$ 900 million. During the last few years, Indian companies have successfully executed some small and medium sized projects in the Philippines. Kalpataru and Kamani Engineering Corporation are presently engaged in executing transmission line projects in the Mindanao regions of the Philippines. Other engineering firms have been repairing and setting up sugar plants for Philippine companies.

Various Joint Working Groups [JWG] have been set up and their meetings, particularly the JWG on Trade and Investment, on Agriculture, on Health, on Tourism and on Renewable Energy are expected to identify new growth and partnership areas between government and industry in both countries and contribute towards enhanced two-way growth in trade and investment. Recently, the 3rd JWG on Health and 2nd JWG on Agriculture took place in Manila in April and May 2018 respectively. Also the India-Philippines 'Air-Consultation Talks' were held on 11-12 July 2018. This meeting arrived at an agreement on a new revised and updated Air Services Agreement. Additionally, consultations on science and technology, defence, and other areas are also expected to have their flow-on impact. The Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) for the first time held its flagship Technology Expo INDEE-2018 in Manila which around 75 Indian companies participated. A 23 member delegation from Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL) visited the Philippines from 16-18 January, 2019. The main highlight of the visit was the "India Biz Connect: Pharma Edition" on 18 January 2019, which was organized in association with Philippine-India Business Council (PIBC) and the Mission.

AG&P of the Philippines has plans to invest up to US\$ 1.4 billion in LNG plants in the East Coast of India as well as in the 12 city gas grids in India that they have won in open bidding in 2019.

Culture & People to People Relations: Philippines is one of the beneficiary countries of programmes under ITEC and Colombo Plan. During 2018-19, Philippines utilised as many as 90 civilian training slots under ITEC and Colombo Plan. Similarly, about 35 slots are allotted for defence personnel out of which the majority were utilised. To date almost a thousand Filipino nationals have benefited from training and exposure under these schemes, covering a wide range of technical courses, such as rural development, agriculture, renewable energy, small scale industries, banking, finance and management, quality control and marketing, planning and public administration, textiles, parliamentary studies and legislative practices, computer software, water resources management, defence, etc.

There exists a Cultural Exchange Programme between the two countries and an Executive Programme on Cultural Exchanges (2016-18) was signed between the two sides in October 2015. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in November 2017, an MoU between ICCR and University of the Philippines Diliman (UP) was signed for the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies at the Asian Center, UP. A five-member group sponsored by ICCR of renowned Dhrupad vocalists, Gundecha Brothers, visited the Philippines from 29 September to 2 October, 2013. An 8-member cultural troupe, Rondalla Ensemble participated from the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) of Philippines in the Grand Finale of IIC Experience organised by the India International Centre in New Delhi from 17-24 October 2013. The University of Philippines staged a musical adaptation of Indian epic, 'Mahabharata' in their theatre in February-March 2014 and buoyed by the success, this was staged again in July 2014. An Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsored 6-member Odissi dance troupe led by Ms. Nandini Ghosal visited Philippines in June 2015 and performed at the Asia Pacific College, Makati, Manila on 27 June 2015; and at the Davao Medical School Foundation Auditorium on 28 June 2015; a 5-member musical troupe Krosswindz visited the Philippines from 19-22 November 2015 and performed in Manila. T.M. Krishna, Carnatic vocal artiste performed in Manila on 1 September 2016. An ICCR sponsored 7 member delegation led by Ms. Jayaprabha Menon visited the Philippines from May 8-11, 2017 to participate in the Dance Xchange Festival. Embassy of India sponsored the visit of a Ramayana dance troupe from Mindanao to India in 2018 that performed in Kolkata and new Delhi to great acclaim.

There are regular Indian cultural events in Manila and other parts of the Philippines on events such as National Days (Republic Day & Independence Day), Indian Festivals (Holi, Diwali etc.) and other important events (Rashtriya Ekta Diwas, Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, International Yoga Day etc.). There also exist local Indian clubs and organisations, who organize cultural events in the Philippines, including a Flute Concert by Shashank in March 2014 and by vocalist Ashwini Bhide Deshpande in October 2014. As mentioned earlier, an Indian community reception was held during the visit of Prime Minister Modi on 13 November 2017 and another was held during MoS (VKS) to Manila from August 6-9, 2017. As part of the Embassy's effort to promote culinary diplomacy, an Indian Food Festival was organized from September 11-17 in collaboration with the Sofitel Hotel,

Manila. The Indian cuisine was also showcased during the Taste of the World Festival at the Adamson University on 6 December, 2017. The Embassy of India has also participated in the DFA's year-end diplomatic reception and fashion show, "Colours of Asia Pacific" on 13 December, 2017.

This year, as part of the celebrations of the 70 years of diplomatic relations between India and the Philippines, which started in 1949, the Embassy of India in Manila organized various events including a concert of Indian classical dance and an Indian Food Festival. Ms. Amrita Lahiri, a highly renowned Indian Classical (Kuchipudi) Dance exponent empanelled with ICCR, performed in the Philippines from January 20-28, 2019. She had various performances in Metro Manila and Davao City which were highly appreciated. Ms. Amrita Lahiri also delivered a performance in praise of Lord Shiva, Lord of Dance and Goddess Durga during the 70th Republic Day of India Reception held on 28 January 2019. On the other hand, the Embassy in association with India Tourism Office, Singapore (Ministry of Tourism, India) organized an Indian Food Festival from 26-29 January 2019 in Manila. ITO Singapore sponsored chefs, Chef Harmeet Singh and Chef Prasanta Mondal from Leela Ambience Convention Hotel from India participated in the events. The renowned Indian chefs had a live kitchen demonstration and headed the food preparation during the 70th Republic Day Reception at Makati Shangri-La Hotel at 28 January 2019. The Indian Food Festival 2019 presented cuisines from various parts of India including Punjab, Rajasthan, Awadh and South India. The Embassy organized, along with Music in Manila, a concert 'Sangeet Prayag' incorporating Carnatic and Hindustani music on March 3, 2019. To commemorate the first ever ICCR Foundation Day, the Embassy of India, Manila in collaboration with 'Bharati', the Expatriate Indian Women's Association in the Philippines, organized Sahitya Sangam-Literature Festival, a celebration of Indian and shared languages and literature on 26 April, 2019 at Forbes Park, Makati. The event featured ten languages, namely Sanskrit, Sindhi, Hindi, Urdu, Kannada, Gujarati, Tamil, Bengali, Punjabi and Marathi through prose, poetry, song and dance.

To commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Embassy of India organized various events in Manila in October 2018. The Mission in association with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), organized a press conference on 2nd October, 2018 in the Taguig City. The commemorative postage stamps and online quiz competition (Bapu@150) were officially launched during the event. In addition, there was also a LED projection of a 4 minute film at the facade of TCS Building which highlighted the various lessons from Mahatma Gandhi's life. In addition, the Embassy in association with Bharati Club (The Expat Indian Women's Association in the Philippines) organized a panel discussion/documentary screening on October 5, 2018. The panel discussion focused on Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of education, his impact on Filipino students, his views on economic development and caste system in India. A blood donation camp was also organized by the Embassy in association with Philippine Blood Centre of the Department of Health-Philippines. Filipinos and members of the Indian Community participated in the activity with great enthusiasm. The 15th century Gujarati bhajan and Mahatma Gandhi's favourite prayer was rendered by famous Filipino singer Ms. Grace Nono.

The Embassy of India in Manila in partnership with the Quezon City Local Government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) of the Philippines, the National Bicycle Organization and other local partners successfully organized a bicycling event in celebration of the World Bicycle Day and the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 02 June 2019 at Quezon City Memorial Circle, Philippines. Around 2,000 cyclists from different parts of Metro Manila participated in the 20 km bike parade which spreads the positive message of "Bicycling for Sustainable Living". A vegetarian Indian food festival was also enjoyed and appreciated by the participants and guests. The Embassy of India in Manila in partnership with the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) celebrated the World Environment Day as a part of commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary Year of Mahatma Gandhi on 07 June 2019 at Havener Auditorium, IRRI, Los Baños, Laguna.

To commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the Embassy of India, Manila in collaboration with the Philippine Red Cross and the local Sikh Temples (Gurudwaras) of Manila, San Pablo, Biñan, Batangas, Marikina, Tarlac, Cauayan, Isabela, Angeles, Baguio, and Cebu hosted a Simultaneous Blood Drive and Langar in the Philippines on 11 August 2019 in keeping with the teachings of Sikhism – Sacrifice and service for the well-being of others. More than 500 successful donors, both from local and Indian community, successfully donated blood at various locations all over the Philippines.

There has been significant increase in people-to-people links between India and the Philippines. The Philippines participated in the 9th Delhi Dialogue with the theme "ASEAN-India Relations: Charting the Course for the Next 25 years" from 04-05 July 2017. A 10-member youth delegation from National Youth Commission of the Philippines attended the first-ever ASEAN-India Youth Summit with the theme "Shared Values, Common Destiny." The Youth Summit was organized by the India Foundation, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and State of Madhya Pradesh to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from August 14 to 18, 2018. The 3rd Annual Indian Independence Friendship Cup (Golf Tournament) was organized on 15 August, 2018 by HGS with the support of the Embassy of India. A Filipino artist, Mr. Dennis Gonzales participated in the ASEAN-India Artists' Camp held in Udaipur from 20-29 September 2017, also a seven member music band named Ransom Collective participated in ASEAN-India Music Festival in New Delhi from 6-8 October 2017, both the events were organized by MEA in collaboration with SEHER. In addition, Mr. Paul Andrew C. Orpiada of the Philippines was awarded the Achiever Corporate Social Responsibility Award during the ASEAN-India Youth Awards Ceremony which was held in New Delhi on 23 January 2018. A 9 member delegation from the Philippines participated in the 2nd ASEAN-India Youth Summit held from 03-05 February 2019 at Guwahati. Also, Dean of the Asian Center of the University of the Philippines, Prof. Joefe B. Santarita participated in the Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj, 2019 from 21-23 February.

Under the ASEAN-India rubric, journalists from the Philippines have been regularly visiting India, the latest being in January 2018 when two journalists from the Philippines namely Mr. Edu Punay (Philippine Star) and Ms. Jeannette Andrade (Philippine Daily Inquirer) visited India for the ASEAN-India Media Exchange Programme. Indian journalists have also visited the Philippines. In addition, every year 25 Philippine students in the 17-28 age group visit India, the latest being in 14-23 January 2018, under the ASEAN-India Students Exchange Programme; and 3 school children visit India to participate in the National Children Science Congress. Shri Yashovardhan Azad, Central Information Commissioner of India delivered lectures in the Philippines on 1-2 December 2014 under the ASEAN-India Eminent Persons Lecture Series and Undersecretary for Policy in the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Philippines, Mr. Evan P. Garcia visited India under the same programme from 15-17 July 2015. In addition, we have regular interaction between the parliamentarians, think tanks, farmers, and diplomats. A student of the University of Philippines, Ms. Irene Belplotena has been selected for a scholarship named 'propagation of Hindi abroad' administered by the Ministry of Human Resource Development to study Hindi language at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan in Agra. As in the past three years, this year also International Day of Yoga was celebrated in the Philippines with great zest and fervour. This time the celebration was held at various venues in Manila, Baguio and Davao with the collaboration of various Filipino government offices like the National Youth Commission, Department of Health, Philippine National Police, City Government of City of Taguig and Muntinlupa along with local Yoga teachers and Yoga enthusiasts.

The number of Indian tourists visiting the Philippines has shown a rapid growth in the past few years and now numbers about 120,000 annually. This figure is likely to increase rapidly with direct flights between the two countries being imminent.

As a part of the commemoration of ASEAN-India Year of Tourism the Embassy of India, Manila with the India Tourism Office, Singapore organized the Incredible India Roadshow at Shangri-la Hotel, Makati on 27 August 2019,. The Indian delegation headed by Mr. Gyan Bhushan, Economic Advisor to the Ministry of Tourism was composed of members from Tourism Department of the States of Maharashtra and Rajasthan as well as Indian tour and airlines operators.

Indian Community:The Indian community in the Philippines, according to the Bureau of Immigration, is estimated to be about 1, 30,000. Around 5,000 persons of Indian origin have acquired Filipino citizenship. Punjabis and Sindhis, constitute the bulk of the community. The past ten years has seen a growing number of professionals, and their families estimated in the range of about five to six thousand, who are working in the Philippines, for Indian companies, organizations such as the Asian Development Bank, International Rice Research Institute, UN agencies, as also in multinational corporations, BPOs and with local Filipino companies.

The Philippines is also beginning to emerge as a destination for Indian students. There are more than 12,000 Indian students pursuing medical courses in various universities in the

Philippines. The prestigious Asian Institute of Management in Manila has traditionally had many students from India. Flight training schools are also attractive as instructions are in English and costs are comparatively inexpensive. Several universities in the Philippines, such as the University of Santo Tomas, the University of the Philippines, the University of the Visayas, Adamson University, the University of Mindanao and others have opened special 'India chapters' in their prestigious libraries, which houses collection of books on India [gifted through the Public Diplomacy division of the Ministry of External Affairs]. A bust of Mother Teresa has been installed at the University of Santo Tomas, gifted by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations.

The resident Indian community is active in celebration of Indian festivals and various social events. They also undertake social welfare activities and come to the assistance of people in distress during natural calamities. The major association is the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines. The Philippines-India Business Council, a sub-Committee of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, helps organize business networking meetings for visiting Indian business delegations. There are several places of religious worship, such as 28 Sikh Gurudwaras including Khalsa Diwan and several Hindu Temples. A number of other associations also exist such as Indian Ladies Club, Bharati Indian Expats Women's Association and spiritual organisations such as Sri Satya Sai Organization, Art of Living, Chinmaya Ashram, Brahma Kumaris, Siddhi Yoga and Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity.

September 2019