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# Cambodia welcomes two Indian naval vessels on goodwill mission

Nop Sreymao / Khmer Times



The 'ICGS Veera' which along with the 'INS Sujata' docked at Sihanoukville Autonomous Port on Friday. KT/Nop Sreymao

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Cambodia welcomed two naval ships from India's First Training Squadron (1TS) to its Sihanoukville Autonomous Port for a four-day visit aimed at strengthening the cooperation and military ties of the two nations.



The INS Sujata and ICGS Veera, led by the commanders Rear Admiral Arjun Sekhar, and Rear Admiral Ramesh V Talke respectively, arrived on Friday morning and the Indian naval delegation was warmly welcomed by Lieutenant Commander Mean Savooun, Deputy Commander of the Ream Naval Base, and several other naval officers.

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The INS Sujata (P56) has a deadweight of 2,260 tonnes, a length of 102 metres, a width of 11.5 metres, a draught of 5 metres, and a speed of 15 knots. Meanwhile, the ICG Veera No. 35, an OPV type, has a deadweight of 3,000 tonnes, a length of 99 metres, a width of 14.9 metres, a draught of 4.7 metres, and a speed of 26 knots.

Coming from Singapore to Cambodia, with the next destinations being Vietnam and Thailand, the four-day visit of the two navy ships aims to strengthen cooperation, increase relations, and tighten the bonds of friendship and solidarity between the two countries.

Speaking during the press conference on Friday at the port, Captain Anshul Kishore, senior officer of the First Training Squadron, noted that the visit is in furtherance of the long-standing relationship between the maritime forces of the two nations, aimed at exposing the trainees to the maritime neighbourhood and fostering bridges of friendship between the two countries.

“Cambodia has been an important partner of India amongst ASEAN nations. We aim to revitalise our training exchanges, enhancing operational readiness and camaraderie between our forces.

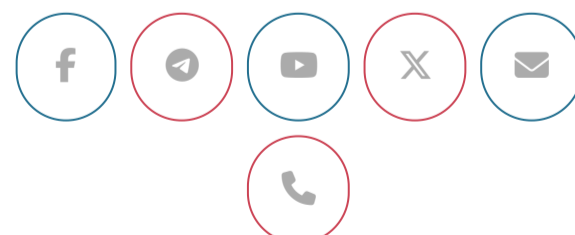
Our presence here today stands as a testament to the growing defence and maritime ties between our two nations,” he said. “The defence cooperation between the two nations and structured periodic exercises have played a crucial role in enhancing operational synergy between the Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Cambodian Navy (RCN).”

The MILAN exercise at Visakhapatnam, India, witnessed participation from the RCN with invitations extended for upcoming editions, further solidifying the defence relation, he added.

“During the present deployment, the ships would be participating in PASSEX with the Cambodian Navy,” said Capt Kishore. “Our combined efforts are critical as we confront the evolving threats of piracy, terrorism, and illegal maritime activities.”

“As we gather on the deck of this warship, we are reminded of our collective responsibility to safeguard the maritime domain, highlighting the growing significance of India-Cambodia maritime relations and reaffirming India’s commitment to promoting “Security And Growth for All in the Region” (SAGAR) and a preferred security partner in the region,” he added.

Lieutenant General Chan Sopheaktra, Secretary of State of the Ministry of National Defence, stated during an onboard reception that Cambodian-Indian military cooperation has recently made remarkable progress with the exchange of senior official visits and dialogue, and India has been supportive in developing Cambodian human resources and capacity building by generously providing numerous scholarships to the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces, enabling them to pursue studies and training since the establishment of bilateral relations.



“To guarantee the continual and steadfast cooperation, the Ministry of National Defence of the Kingdom of Cambodia has agreed with the request from the Indian Ministry of National Defence to establish the Defence Attache Office attached to the Embassy of India in Phnom Penh, which would enable stronger bonds, solidarity, and prosperity between our two armies and people,” he noted.

Vanlalvawna Bawitlung, Ambassador of India to Cambodia, noted on Friday that “Maritime engagements such as this are an essential pillar of our relations with Cambodia, a country with whom we share deep historical and civilisational ties,” he noted. “They reinforce our commitment to regional security and serve as a platform for fostering interoperability, professional exchanges, and capacity-building initiatives between our navies.”

These exchanges bolster maritime security, improve maritime domain awareness, and protect freedom of navigation. They promote a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, a vision that India steadfastly stands for, he added.

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