

BRIEF ON SIERRA LEONE

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1.	Name & Capital :	Republic of Sierra Leone, FREETOWN
2.	Names of Provinces & Provincial Capitals	There are Four Provinces and One Area, viz : EASTERN PROVINCE NORTHERN PROVINCE SOUTHERN PROVINCE WESTERN AREA
3.	Population	6.2 million (July 2005)
4.	Currency/Exchange Rate	Leone (SLL) US\$ 1 = 2680 (Aug 2005) Rs. 1 = 66.103
5.	Languages spoken	English (Official language) and Tribal Languages/Dialects (Temme, Krio, etc.)
6.	Latitude, Longitude and Time Zone details of country, Capital.	Between latitude 8 30 (Degrees) N, and Longitude 11 30 (Degrees) W
7.	Time Hours +/- GMT Daylight saving Time, if any.	Local Time is GMT
8.	Name of HOS/HOG/Foreign/ Finance/Defence/ Commerce/Industry Ministers.	Head of State : President Mr Ahmad Tejan Kabbah Foreign Minister : Mr Mamadou Koroma Finance Minister: Mr J.B. Dauda Defence Minister: President Kabbah himself Trade & Industry Minister : Dr (Mrs) K.A. Sesay

9..	Official Website Links for HOS/HOG/ Foreign/Commerce Ministry	HOS/HOG: www.Statehouse-sl.org Foreign Ministry : www.Mofaic-sl.org
10.	Name/Address & Contact details of country's Central Bank	Bank of Sierra Leone, Siaka Steven St. Freetown, Western Area Tel : 232-22-226501, FAX 232-22-224764 Email : info@bankofsierraleone-central-bank.org
11.	Basic Foreign International Trade, etc Policies	Follows Commonwealth and AU line in foreign policy issues. Open trade policies.
12.	Membership of major Multilateral and Regional Organisations:	ACP, AFDB, AU, ECOWAS, FAO, G-77, IAEA, IBRD, ICAO, IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, ILO, IMF, MIGA, NAM, OIC, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, WHO, WIPO, WTO.
13.	Major Industries, Global companies	Diamond Mining, Oil Refining, Ship Repair
14.	Significant Economic Activities	Alluvial Diamond mining is the largest source of foreign exchange earning.
15.	Global Trade & Investment	\$ 351 million (2004) Less than 100 million (2004)
16.	Total Imports with Major Exporting countries	\$ 297 million Germany, UK, Cote d'Ivoire, USA, Ukraine, China
17.	Total Exports with major Destinations of Exports	\$ 54 million Belgium, Germany, USA
18.	Investment Highlights	Most of the FDI went into retail trading and food processing sectors in 2004
19.	Major Universities/Scientific Institutions	University of Sierra Leone, Freetown, Fourth Bay College, Freetown, Njala University College, Freetown
20.	Important think-tanks on Foreign Policy related issues	-----
21.	Major Tourist Attractions:	Outamba-Kilimi National Park, Northern Sierra Leone Sakanbiarwa Orchid and Plant Reserve Old Creole villages of Leicester, Gloucester and Regent, Freetown Bunce Island on Rocket River, Freetown
22.	Major Art Forms/Cultural Traditions and Venues/Museums, etc	Freetown Museum King Jimmy Market for Liberian Handicrafts Freetown
23.	Major Newspapers/Magazines/TV Channels with Contact details	<u>Newspapers :</u> Afrotimes (Independent) Concord Times -do- Independent Observer -do- The Herald Guardian -do-

		The Telegraph -do-
		The New Pioneer -do-
		The New Citizen -do-
		The Mirror -do-
		Sierra News (State owned)
		Daily Mail (Govt controlled)

INDIA–SIERRA LEONE BILATERAL RELATIONS

Introduction

India and Sierra Leone share close and friendly relations. The level of bilateral interaction between the two countries, both being members of the Commonwealth, has declined following the 2001 withdrawal of Indian troops to UNAMSIL and due to lack of exchange of high level visits, bilateral consultations and depletion of the Indian community numbers in the civil war ravaged country.

1 Political

1.1. India's peacekeeping role

Successful participation of Indian military leadership of the UN Observer Mission and UN Peacekeeping Mission (UNAMSIL) with appointment of Brig. Joshi as Head of the UN Observer Mission in May 1998 and Maj. Gen. Jetley as Commander of the UN Forces in Sierra Leone (2001-2001) carries goodwill and political impact among the present political leadership of the country. Indian troops were phased out in January, 2001.

1.2. Bilateral visits

Though high level visits and consultations have stayed limited, major visits include visit of former Raksha Mantri, George Fernandes in July 2000; visit of Sierra Leonean Minister of Industry and Transport A.E. Bangura to New Delhi in November 1998; visit of a two member Parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker of the Sierra Leone Parliament to New Delhi in January 2003 and the visit of the Foreign Minister Alhaji Momodu Koroma and Trade and Industry Minister Dr. Kadi Sesay to New Delhi from 6-9 November 2005 to participate in the CII Africa Conclave.

1.3. Support to Indian candidature and other issues

Sierra Leone has supported India's candidature to various Commonwealth, UN and other multilateral fora. It has supported India's candidature for the permanent membership of UNSC and India's position on Kashmir issue.

2. Commercial and Trade Relations

2.1. Indo-Sierra Leonean trade turnover during the recent years are as follows :

In US\$million				
Year	Exports from India	Imports from Sierra Leone	Total	Balance of Trade
2003-2004	12.75	6.62	19.37	+6.13
2004-2005	2.32	13.39	15.71	-10.91
2005-2006	3.58	19.61	23.19	-16.03

2.2. Indian export basket mostly included drugs and pharmaceuticals, textile, steel and steel products and machine tools and major items of imports from Sierra Leone were woodpulp, waste paper and inorganic chemicals.

2.3. There are about 20 Indian NRI/PIO trading companies operating in Sierra Leone who manage the biggest departmental store in the country, run biscuit, candle making and agro-processing units and procure and supply food products and consumer durables in the country. During 2006, three mining concessions for tantalium, bauxite and iron ore has been awarded to an Indian firm. An MoU has been signed for rehabilitation of the Sierra Leonean national telephone company with UTL.

2.3. Potential exist for Indian participation in the sectors for generation of power, mining, agro-industries, diamonds and supply of drugs, pharmaceuticals, food products, etc.

3. Indian Assistance

3.1. Government of India's decision to gift 400 barracks to the Sierra Leone Army at a total cost of US\$ 795,000/- in Benguema, Wilberforce (Freetown) and Murraytown has been appreciated by the President. The construction and handing over of the project will take place by May 2007.

3.2. Under ITEC/SCAAP programme, 10 slots are provided to trainees, experts and students from Sierra Leone. These are fully utilized every year by the country. IT, journalism and entrepreneurship are the popular courses for the trainees.

3.3. The Government of Sierra Leone has requested for inclusion of the country in the TEAM-9 Initiative. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation H.E. Mr. Koroma had written to the then Minister of State for External Affairs seeking Indian assistance for a number of projects which is under consideration. Sierra Leone seeks active Indian aid and assistance package for training, development of its energy and infrastructure facilities and humanitarian assistance in the form of medicines, transformers etc.

4. Defence Cooperation

A proposal for visit of a 3-member defence delegation led by Deputy Minister of Defence (President holds the charge of Defence Ministry) to visit India for identifying areas of long term cooperation including training projects of armaments etc. is under our consideration.

5. Indian community and Honorary Consulate General

5.1. Following the 1999 exodus of Indians, there are about 1500 Indian community members residing in Sierra Leone, most from Sindhi community dealing in trading activity. There is a functional Hindu temple in Freetown and a charity hospital run by the Choitram Trust which is used by the UN and diplomatic personnel and local government officials.

5.2. Since 1993, Shri K.H. Azad is functioning as India's Honorary Consul General in Freetown.

6. Issues relating to Commonwealth

Former Foreign Secretary, Shri K. Srinivasan, is the Commonwealth consultant to the country for preparing a study for setting up a professional diplomatic service in the country. The report is under preparation. Sierra Leone may seek India's assistance.

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As on 1st November 2006