

India pledges \$1 mn for Khmer Rouge trial

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PHNOM PENH: India pledged on Friday to donate one million US dollars to Cambodia to fund the kingdom's share of the bill for a planned trial of surviving Khmer Rouge leaders, the government said.

"The government of India has today announced a contribution of one million US dollars to the Cambodian government side of the budget for the forthcoming Khmer Rouge trials," said a statement released by the government's secretariat of the task force for the Khmer Rouge trials.

India's ambassador Alope Sen announced the contribution during a meeting with Sok An, who heads the government task force for the trials on Friday, the statement said.

Sean Visoth, the task force's executive secretary, welcomed the donation and said "we hope that others will follow this example." ..

Cambodia has said it cannot cover an 11.8-million-dollar shortfall in its share of the 56-million-dollar trial aimed at securing justice for two million Cambodians who died under the Khmer Rouge regime.

Since March donor nations have pledged more than 40 million dollars towards the cost of the three-year proceedings to try surviving leaders of the ultra-Maoist regime about three million short of the UN's portion of the 56-million-dollar budget.

The kingdom and the United Nations agreed in 2003 that the tribunal would be organized for three years of operations and actual contributions for the first year were received.

The United Nations announced in April that enough money had been raised on its side for staffing to begin for the tribunal. But no senior appointments appear to have been made and wrangling on the Cambodian side has dragged on...

The trial is expected to target at least six former Khmer Rouge leaders mostly aged in their 70s. The ultra-Maoist regime, which ruled from 1975-79, was headed by tyrant Pol Pot, who died in 1998.