

India - Thailand Relations

India and Thailand, located in each other's extended neighborhood, share a maritime boundary in the Andaman Sea. India's bilateral relations with Thailand are rooted in history, age-old social and cultural interactions and extensive people to people contacts. The shared link of Buddhism is reflected in regular pilgrimages to places of Buddhist interest in India by a large number of Thai people. Hindu elements can be found among those reflected in Thai architecture, arts, sculpture, dance, drama and literature. The Thai language incorporates Pali and Sanskrit influences. A large Indian Diaspora living and working in Thailand is another important bond.

In the past two decades, with regular political exchanges, growing trade and investment, India's ties with Thailand have now evolved into a comprehensive partnership. India's 'Act East' policy has been complemented by Thailand's 'Act West' policy in bringing the two countries closer. Both countries are important regional partners linking South and Southeast Asia. They cooperate closely in the ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS) and BIMSTEC groupings as also Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). The India-ASEAN Agreement on Trade in Goods was implemented in January 2010 and the India-ASEAN FTA in Services and Investments was signed in September 2014 and came into force in July 2015.

Exchange of High Level Visits Dignitary

Dignitary visiting Thailand	Period
PM Narendra Modi	10 Nov 2016 (To pay homage to HM King)
PM Dr. Manmohan Singh	July 2004, Oct 2009, 30-31 May 2013
PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee	Nov 2002 (transit), Oct 2003
PM P. V. NarasimhaRao	April 1993
PM Rajiv Gandhi	Oct 1986
President V. V. Giri	1972
Vice President Dr. Zakir Hussain	1966
Dignitary visiting India	Period
PM Gen. Prayut Chan-o-cha	16-18 June, 2016
HRH Princess Chulabhorn.	February 2013, Feb 2015
PM Yingluck Shinawatra	24-26 Jan 2012, 20-21 Dec 2012
HRH Princess Bajrakitiyabha	November 2011, June 2015
PM AbhisitVejjajiva	April 2011
HRH Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn	December 1998, Nov 2010
PM SomchaiWongsawat	Nov 2008
PM SurayudChulanont	June 2007
HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn	1987, 1996, 2001, 2004, March 2005, Nov 2005, March 2007, Aug 2007, March 2008, Feb 2009, Aug 2009, March 2011, Oct 2011, Feb 2014, July 2014, Nov 2016; Mar 2017;

PM Thaksin Shinawatra	Nov 2001, Feb 2002, June 2005
PM Gen Chatchai Choonhavan	March 1989

High level visits and meetings have taken place on a regular basis from both sides. On November 10, 2016, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Bangkok to pay his tributes to the departed King of Thailand, HRH Bhumibol Adulyadej. In 2016, Prime Minister General Prayut Chan-o-cha accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Industry Minister and Culture Minister paid a state visit to India from 16-18 June, 2016. He called on Vice president and had a restricted meeting and delegation level talks with PM on 17 June in New Delhi. EAM called on General Prayut. Thai PM met Indian businessmen from the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Confederation of Indian Industry, and Associated Chambers of Commerce of India and gave a keynote address on 17 June at a joint business event. He also offered prayers at the Mahabodhi Temple and the Thai Buddhist Temple in Bodhgaya, on 18 June.

Vice President, Shri M. Hamid Ansari, accompanied by a high level delegation, paid an official visit to Thailand from 3-5 February 2016. The Vice President had an audience with Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and held extensive bilateral discussions with PM General Prayut Chan-o-cha. The Vice President delivered an address at Chulalongkorn University in Bangkok, interacted with academicians/ Indologists and addressed the Indian community in Thailand.

Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn has visited India about 17 times. She was awarded the first World Sanskrit Award by the Vice President of India on 21 November, 2016. She also called on President of India. She visited India again on March 30, 2017 to receive Padma Bhushan from the President of India.

CIM Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman visited Bangkok from 3-5 August to participate in India-ASEAN Expo & Forum.

A delegation led by Gen. Tanasak Pratimapragorn, Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand in charge of culture and tourism visited Mumbai from 6-8 March 2016. DPM Thanasak and the delegation met with Chief Minister of Maharashtra on 8 March. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defense of Thailand Gen. Prawit Wongsuwan visited India from 16-18 March 2016. Gen. Prawit met the Vice President, Defence Minister and the National Security Advisor.

During 2015, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, Minister of External Affairs (EAM) visited Thailand to co-chair the 7th Meeting of India-Thailand Joint Commission and to attend the 16th World Sanskrit Conference in Bangkok from 27-29 June 2015. EAM called on HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn and Gen Prem Tinsulanonda, President of the Privy Council of Thailand. EAM and the then DPM & Minister of Foreign Affairs Gen Tanasak Pratimapragorn held delegation level talks. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (I/C) for Commerce and Industry visited Thailand to attend the 71st Commission

Session of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) on 28-29 May 2015. The Minister called on M. R. PridiyathornDevakula, former Deputy Prime Minister of Thailand and General ChatchaiSarikulya, former Minister of Commerce of Thailand and addressed the business event organized by the Embassy. Shri AjitDoval, National Security Advisor visited Thailand on 1-2 April 2015. He called on PM Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, DPM & Defence Minister PrawitWongsuwan, DPM& FM Gen TanasakPatimapragorn and met Mr. AnusitKunakorn, Secretary General of the National Security Council of Thailand.

Former DPM and Minister of Foreign Affairs General TanasakPatimapragorn visited India on 10-11 March 2015. He attended Delhi Dialogue VII, called on Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar and held delegation level talks with EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj. Commerce Minister ChatchaiSarikalya visited India from 24-26 Feb 2015.

During 2014, PM Narendra Modi discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest with PM General Prayut Chan-o-cha on the sidelines of ASEAN Summit in Nay Pyi Taw on 12 November 2014. Shri KirenRijju, MoS for Home Affairs participated in the first Ministerial Conference on Civil Registration and Vital Statistics in Asia and the Pacific on 27 & 28 November 2014 in Bangkok. Mrs. Maneka Gandhi, Minister of Women and Child Development visited Bangkok to attend Asian and Pacific Conference on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Beijing + 20 Review" on 19-20 November 2014. Earlier, KirenRijju, Minister of State for Home Affairs participated in the 6th Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangkok from 23- 26 June 2014. General TanasakPatimaprakorn, Chief of Defence Forces, Royal Thai Armed Forces led a Thai delegation on an official visit to India from 28-30 June 2014. General Tanasak called on Arun Jaitley, Defence and FM and met General Bikram Singh, Chief of Army Staff in New Delhi.

PM Dr. Manmohan Singh accompanied by EAM Salman Khurshid and senior officials paid an official visit to Thailand at the invitation of PM Yingluck Shinawatra on 30-31 May 2013. He presented a sapling of Bodhi Tree in Bodh Gaya as a special gift to His Majesty King BhumibolAdulyadej as a symbol of the shared cultural heritage. PM held wide-ranging talks with PM Yingluck Shinawatra on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. During the visit, six agreements/MoUs were signed and a joint statement was released. PM Yingluck Shinawatrapaid a State visit to India from 24-26 January 2012 as the Chief Guest for India's Republic Day celebrations. Six agreements/ MoUs were signed during the visit - the 2nd Protocol to amend bilateral Framework Agreement for FTA, MoU on Defence, Programme of Cooperation in Science & Technology, Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons, Cultural Exchange.

Programme 2012-14 and an MoU for ICCR to establish a Chair at India Studies Centre in Chulalongkorn University. Thai PM met PM on sidelines of the 10th India-ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November 2012. PM Yingluck Shinawatra visited India again to

participate in the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi in December 2012. She visited Mahabodhi temple in Bodhgaya en route to New Delhi.

Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms :Joint Commission Meeting (JCM): India-Thailand JCM is at Foreign Ministers level. EAM and DPM & FM Gen Tanasak co-chaired the 7th session of India-Thailand JCM on 29 June 2015. Wide-ranging discussions were held in the areas of economic and commercial cooperation, culture, S & T,ICT, education, agriculture ,legal and consular matters. The 6thJCM was held in New Delhi in December 2011.

Foreign office Consultations (FOC): The 4th India-Thailand Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi, on 4 August 2016, co-chaired by Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand.. Earlier FOC were held in New Delhi on 8 September, 2014 and in Bangkok on 10 August, 2012.

Defence Exchanges:: The MoU on Defence Cooperation between India and Thailand was signed on 25 Jan 2012. The 5th Defence Dialogue was held at New Delhi from 15-16 Dec 16. Gen ChatudomTitthasiri, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Defence was the Co-chair from the Thai side along with Mr. Ravikant, Additional Secretary, IndianMoD. India participated in Ex-Cobra Gold in ‘Observer Plus’ category for the first time ever in 2015. Since then, India fields its Engineer, Observer and Medical Delegations in Ex Cobra Gold exercises in Thailand. Bilateral exercises are held annually between the armies and air forces of both countries. The other ongoing defence cooperation initiatives comprises of bi-annual joint maritime patrolling by the navies and training of officers at each other’s institutions. Thailand participated in International Fleet Review - 2016 by sending its Frigate, HTMS Saiburi to Vishakhapatnam from 04-09 Feb 16. The ASEAN IFR was held from 17-21 Nov 17. The Indian Navy send one Kamrota class ASW Corvette, INS Kadmatt and one Shivalik class frigate, INS Satpura to the event. The Chief of Naval Staff, Indian Navy was represented by Vice Admiral Karambir Singh AVSM, FOC-in-C, Eastern Naval Command.

Economic & Commercial Partnership

Bilateral Trade: Bilateral Trade has multiplied eight times since 2000 to reach US\$ 7.72 billion in 2016. Trade figures between the two countries are as under:

(amount in billion USD)

Year	Total trade	Thai Export to India	Thai Import from India
2010	6.64	4.39	2.25
2011	8.19	5.18	3.01
2012	8.87	5.47	3.40
2013	8.69	5.19	3.50
2014	8.66	5.62	3.04
2015	7.92	5.30	2.62
2016	7.72	5.15	2.57

Major Indian companies in Thailand include Tata group – Tata Motors (Thailand), Tata Steel Thailand and Tata Consultancy Services, The Aditya Birla Group, Mahindra Satyam, Ranbaxy, Dabur, Lupin, NIIT, KirloskarBorthers Ltd, Punj Lloyd Group, Polyplex (Thailand) Public Co. Ltd, Precious Shipping PCL and Usha Siam Steel Industries PCL.

Major Thai companies active in India are - Charoen Pokphand (India) Private Limited, C P Aquaculture (India) Ltd., Ital Thai Development Pcl., The Thai Union Frozen Products PCL , Stanley Electric Engineering India Pvt. Ltd., Thai Summit Neel Auto Pvt. Ltd., Thai Airways International Pcl., Krung Thai Bank Pcl., Rockworth Public Company Limited and Precious Shipping (PSL) of Thailand, Dusit Group (Hotel & Hospitality Industry), Delta Electronics (Thailand) PCL, Pruksa Real Estate PCL (Real Estate business), SirithaiSuperware PCL (Melamine tableware manufacturing), ONYX Hospitality Group, Thai Airways ,Siam Cement Group (SCG) etc.

Connectivity: Air connectivity between India and Thailand is growing with around 270 flights per week reflecting a rapidly growing traffic of tourist and businesspersons between the two countries. About one million Indian tourists visited Thailand in 2016. The number of Thai tourists to India was close to 120,000 (mainly to Buddhist pilgrimage sites).. All major airlines of India operate between the two countries : Air India, Jet Airways, Thai Airways, Bangkok Airways, Air Asia, IndiGo and Spicejet. India and Thailand are cooperating closely on improving regional connectivity through initiatives such as India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Asian Highway Network (under UNESCAP), BTILS under BIMSTEC framework. The 2nd bilateral JWG on Infrastructure and Connectivity and 7th Task Force Meeting on the Trilateral Transport Linkage Project were held in Bangkok on 29 & 30 September 2014. Secretaries of Transport of India, Myanmar and Thailand met in Chennai (April 2015); Bengaluru (June 2015) and Bangkok (July 2015) to finalize the Trilateral Motor Vehicles Agreement

Culture:

Cultural exchanges take place under the framework of a Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between the two governments. An Indian Cultural Centre was opened in Bangkok in September 2009. Cultural Agreement Programme for 2016-19 had been signed during the visit of Thai PM in June 2016. A number of India Studies Centers are operational in prestigious Thai Universities. Regular visits of Indian cultural troupes are organized, in addition to Indian film and food festivals etc. Embassy in collaboration with Ministry of Culture and several local partners organized Festival of India in Thailand in March 2014, the 2nd edition in February-May 2015.

Festival of India in Thailand: The year 2017 marked the 70th anniversary of India-Thailand diplomatic relations. On this occasion, the Festival of India in Thailand is going on

since August, 2017 onwards. The decision to hold this Festival was taken during the visit of General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand to India in June 2016. Over 6000 people participated in the 3rd International Yoga Day celebrations at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok on 18 June, 2017 and in various parts of Thailand.

Sawasdee India Quiz Contest(SIQC) on Facebook : Embassy of India conducted the Contest (twice) – First SIQC from 9 Jan – 5 Mar, 2017 & Second SIQC from 15 May- 15 June, 2017. Questions, with images, on various aspects of India were posed with the contestants offering a lot of prizes including Air tickets to India. This Contest generated significant interest among youth in Thailand.

Chitrakarma India Drawing Contest(CIDC) : The Embassy of India held this Contest from 15 March, 2017 till 31 May, 2017 targeting school children in the age range of 10-15 years. The theme of drawing was India and India-Thailand Friendship. The enthusiasm shown by young participants from different provinces of the Kingdom of Thailand was very heartwarming, and drew a lot of artworks altogether. 100 shortlisted drawings/paintings(out of 170 paintings received) were displayed in the form of an Exhibition for one in Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok. Winner was awarded three air tickets to India and others were also financially rewarded. This event gained popularity and 170 paintings were finally received from children studying in all regions, many from remote areas, of Thailand.

Education

An MoU on Cooperation in the field of Education was signed in 2005. During 2017-18, Government of India offered 82 scholarships to Thai students under its various schemes (ITEC – 40, TCS of Colombo Plan – 5, ICCR sponsored schemes – 24 and Hindi Scholarship – 13). A large number of Thai students are also studying on self-financing basis. Ministry of Human Resource Development provides for secondment of 8 professors every semester for the Asian Institute of Technology (AIT), Bangkok for the duration of 16 weeks.

Government of India contributed Rupees 1.25 crores (Thai Baht 10 million) in 2008 towards construction of a new building for the Sanskrit Studies Centre at Silpakorn University, Bangkok and has deputed a Sanskrit professor. An India Studies Centre is functioning at the Thammasat University of Bangkok since April 1993. In 2013 during the VVIP Visit, ICCR and PridiBanomyong International College of Thammasat University signed the MOU for establishment of Hindi Chair for BA Programme in Indian Studies which has been launched by the College. In 2008, Mahidol University of Bangkok started a Masters of Arts course on Indian studies. Subsequently, in 2010, the University established Centre for Bharat Studies. A Chair in Chulalongkorn University's India Study Centre was inaugurated by HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn on March 6, 2012. Ministry of AYUSH and Rangsit University signed an MOU on establishing a Chair on Ayurveda at Rangsit University on 29 June 2015. Since 2012, the Government of India has provided funds for Thai students for short term Hindi Course at Mahatma Gandhi International Hindi University, Wardha, Maharashtra. “

Indian Diaspora in Thailand:

Indian Diaspora in Thailand: It is estimated that there are around 250,000 people of Indian origin in Thailand. Many of them have lived here for several generations over the past century and hold Thai nationality. The Indian community mainly comprises Sikhs and Hindus from Punjab, Sindhis, Gujaratis, people from eastern Uttar Pradesh & Bihar and Tamils. Three persons of Indian origin from Thailand have been bestowed with the prestigious 'PravasiBhartiyaSamman in 2006, 2010 and 2017.

Embassies/Consulates: Besides the Embassy in Bangkok, India has a Consulate in the northern Thai city of Chiang Mai. Thailand has consulates in Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai besides its Embassy in New Delhi.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Bangkok Website: <http://www.indianembassy.in.th>;
Facebook: Indian Embassy Bangkok; Twitter: @IndiainThailand

November, 2017