

## **INDIA-BRUNEI BILATERAL BRIEF**

### **Political**

The Contacts between India and Brunei have historical and cultural roots as extension of India's relations with peninsular Malaysia and the Indonesian Island.

The diplomatic relations between India and Brunei were established in May 1984. The interest in upgrading bilateral relations started in friendly meetings between late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and the Sultan of Brunei at CHOGM meetings, etc. In response to Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's invitation, the Sultan of Brunei paid a State visit to India in September 1992 and Indian resident diplomatic mission was opened in Brunei on 18 May 1993. Brunei set up its High Commission in India in 12 August 1992. By virtue of their common membership of UN, NAM, Commonwealth and ARF etc and as developing countries with strong traditional and cultural ties, Brunei and India enjoy a fair degree of commonality in their perceptions on major international issues. Brunei has been supportive of India's 'Look East Policy and has welcomed 'Act East' policy and expansion and deepening of cooperation with ASEAN. Brunei took over as India-ASEAN Coordinator from July 2012 for three years.

The visit of the Sultan of Brunei to India in May 2008 was a landmark in India-Brunei relations. Five MoUs/Agreements were signed during the visit on BIPA, ICT, Culture, Trade and Space.

Visit of Hon'ble Vice President of India to Brunei from 1-3 February 2016: Hon'ble Vice President Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Brunei from 1-3 February 2016. This was the highest-level bilateral visit from India to Brunei. During the visit, Hon'ble Vice President called on HM, the Sultan, and the Crown Prince. The Speaker of the Legislative Council of Brunei called on him. Three MOUs viz. on Defence Cooperation, Cooperation in Health Sector and on Cooperation in Youth Affairs and Sports were signed. Hon'ble Vice President delivered a lecture at the University of Brunei Darussalam (UBD) on the topic: "India and Brunei: Partners in Peace and Prosperity". Members of the Brunei India Friendship Association (BIFA) as well as Indian Chamber of Commerce also called on the Hon'ble Vice President.

Since 2009, the Ministerial visits from India to Brunei were: Shri Vyalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs in December 2009; Shri Sultan Ahmed, Minister of State for Tourism, in January 2010 to attend the ASEAN Tourism Forum (ATF) 2010; Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs and Shri RPN Singh, Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas, in September 2011. Shri SM Krishna, External Affairs Minister (EAM), visited Brunei on 19-20 October 2012. This was the first time that EAM visited Brunei on a bilateral visit. Shri Salman Khurshid, EAM visited Brunei from 28 June-2 July 2013 to participate in the ASEAN-India Post-Ministerial Conference/20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and 3<sup>rd</sup> East Asia Summit (EAS) Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Shri Anand Sharma, Commerce & Industry Minister, led an Indian delegation to 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Economic Ministers' meeting in Brunei on 17-21 August 2013. The delegates participated in Prep ASEAN-India TNC & SEOM preparatory meeting also. Shri Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Defence and Youth Affairs and Sports (IC), attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus in Brunei on 28-29 August 2013. Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Communications & IT and Law and Justice accompanied by a high-level delegation visited Brunei to attend the Asia Pacific Tele-community ICT Ministerial Meeting held in Brunei on 10-11 September 2014.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh led the Indian delegation to the 11<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit and 8<sup>th</sup> EAS Summit held in Brunei on 9-10 October 2013. This was the first-ever visit of Prime Minister of India to Brunei.

Shri Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), paid a visit for Consultations meetings held with Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MOFAT) in Brunei Darussalam on 7-8 March 2015.

Defence cooperation: India participated at the BRIDEX (the Brunei Darussalam International Defence Exhibition & Conference) in 2009 and 2011. Indian Navy Ships INS Ranvir and INS Jyoti visited Brunei in May 2011 on goodwill visits. Indian Coast Guard Ship, Sagar, the first by a coast guard vessel, visited Brunei on 27-30 June 2011 while INS Airavat visited Brunei on 4-9 July 2011 to participate in the first-ever Brunei International Fleet Review to mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Royal Brunei Armed Forces. A Bruneian ship – ‘KDB Darulaman’ - participated in MILAN 2012 (Andaman). This is notable as it is the first time a Bruneian naval ship ventured out of the South China Sea. Bruneian Deputy Minister of Defence visited India in 2010 and 2012 to participate in the DEFEXO exhibitions and called on Raksha Mantri and Deputy Defence Minister. INS Gharial participated in the ASEAN Plus Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief and Medical Mission Exercise (HADR & MM Ex) in Brunei on 10-22 June 2013. Vice Admiral Anil Chopra, FOC (Eastern Naval Command) also paid a visit to Brunei in connection with the HADR & MM Exercise. ICGS Sagar visited Brunei again on 9-12 March 2014 on goodwill visit. Indian Naval Supply Ship ‘INS-Shakti’ paid a goodwill visit to Brunei on 8-11 August 2014, Vice Admiral Satish Soni, FOC Eastern Command, Indian Navy visited Brunei to coincide with the visit.

A 35-member Command and Staff Course 2015 (CSC 5) delegation from the Defence Academy, Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF), visited India as a part of their annual study tour from 10-17 May 2015.

A delegation comprising of 16 senior officers from the National Defence College (NDC) of India headed by Shri A. Tripathi, IAS, Senior Directing Staff (SDS) including four officers from Bhutan, Japan, Myanmar and Tanzania visited Brunei Darussalam from 18-21 May 2015.

Six personnel from the Royal Brunei Armed Forces (RBAF) participated in the ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) Humanitarian Mine Action and Peacekeeping Operations Joint Field Training Exercise in Pune from 2-8 March 2016.

A three member delegation led by Deputy Minister of Defence, First Admiral (Rtd) Dato Seri Pahlawan Abdul Aziz attended the Defexpo India 2016 held at Goa from 28-31 March 2016. The Indian Naval Ship (INS) Airavat led by Commander Jayant Mahadik participated in the ADMM Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus) Exercise on Maritime Security and Counter Terrorism (Ex MS & CT) in Brunei from 01-05 May 2016.

First Admiral Dato Abdul Aziz, Deputy Minister for Defence along with two officials attended the Aero India 2017 on 14-15 February in Bengaluru.

A 16-member delegation, which included participants from US, France, Afghanistan and Uganda, led by Major General Sunil Srivastava from the National Defence College (NDC) was on study tour to Brunei from 21 to 26 May. During their visit, they called on Minister of Education, Deputy Defence Minister, Commander of RBAF, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Permanent Secretary (Technical and Professional), Ministry of Development.

## Recent visits from Brunei

1. His Royal Highness Prince Sufri Bolkiaah, in his capacity as President of National Football Association of Brunei Darussalm attended the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Extraordinary Congress 2016 on 27 September 2016 in Goa.
2. His Excellency, Pehin Dato Abu Bakar Apong, Minister of Home Affairs accompanied by a high level delegation attended the First Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction at New Delhi from 3-5 November 2016.
3. A high level delegation comprising His Excellency, Pehin Dato Seri Setia Lim Jock Seng, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II and Minister at the PMO, His Excellency Pehin (Dr) Hj Mohammad Yasmin, Minister of Energy and Industry at the PMO and His Excellency Dato Paduka Dr. Hj Mohd Amin Liew Abdullah, Deputy Minister of Finance visited Mumbai and New Delhi from 9-12 November 2016. During their visit to Mumbai, they met the Indian business leaders and in New Delhi met Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (Retd) V.K. Singh and discussed matters of bilateral, regional and multilateral interest. They discussed possible cooperation in the energy sector with the Minister of State for Power, Coal and New and Renewable Energy Shri Piyush Goel. They also addressed the private and public sector representatives from the Energy sector at the FICCI.
4. An officer from Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade attended the 62<sup>nd</sup> Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) from 27 July-26 August 2016.
5. Two officers from the Ministry of Health, President of the Brunei Medical Association and Executive Director of JPMC Hospital, attended the FICCI Advantage Health Care India (AHCI) Summit at Greater Noida from 3-5 October 2016.
6. Two officers from the Ministry of Education, Director of Technology, University Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA); Director, International Relations, University of Technology of Brunei (UTB); and Head of Global Services from Politeknik Brunei participated in the FICCI Higher Education Summit 2016 from 10-12 November 2016 in New Delhi.
7. Two tour operators attended the International Travel Mart 2016 at Imphal from 23-25 November 2016.
8. Mr Zakaria Serudin, Permanent Secretary; Ms Siti Ajar Haji Yusop, Acting Assistant Director; and Ms Rosmah Hj Mohamad Shah, Senior Medicinal Chemist in the Ministry of Health attended the Indian Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare Expo Exhibition (IPHEX), Hyderabad, from 27 to 29 April 2017.
9. Two Bruneians, Mr Abdullatif Chu Chu and Mr Hj Nor Smi Bin Mohammad Yassin from Federation of Brunei Malay Entrepreneurs, attended the India Steel 2017 which was jointly organized by the Ministry of Steel, Government of India and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) at Mumbai from 19 to 21 April 2017.

## India- ASEAN:

1. To mark the 20<sup>th</sup> year of ASEAN-India Dialogue and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-India Summit, a Manipuri Dance recital featuring Priti Patel and Anjika Group performed in Brunei on 30 November 2012. An ASEAN-India Art Exhibition '*Merging Metaphors*' exhibiting art works of artists from ASEAN and India was organized at Waterfront Gallery, Bandar Seri Begawan on 6-13 December 2012.
2. The Sultan participated in the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit held in New Delhi on 20-21 December 2012. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation, which included the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II and Minister of Finance II at Prime

- Minister's Office. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II Pehin Lim Jock Seng led the Bruneian delegation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> India-ASEAN Business Fair in New Delhi.
3. Dato Erywan, Permanent Secretary (ASEAN) at Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade represented Brunei at Delhi Dialogue VI held in New Delhi on 6-7 March 2014.
  4. HRH Prince Mohamed Bolkiah then Foreign Minister met Smt Sushma Swaraj External Affairs Minister on the side-lines of 47<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers at Nay Pyi Taw on 9 August 2014.
  5. The Sultan met the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi on the side-lines of 25<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit at Nay Pyi Taw on 12 November 2014.
  6. HRH Prince Mohammed Bolkiah, then Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade co-chaired the ASEAN-India Post Ministerial Conference with MOS (VKS) at Kuala Lumpur on 05 August 2015 on the side-lines of the 48<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting.
  7. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (Retd) V.K. Singh met Hon'ble Pehin Lim Jock Seng, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade II on 24 July 2016 on the margins of the India-ASEAN Ministerial Meeting in Vientiane.
  8. His Majesty the Sultan attended the 14<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit at Vientiane on 8 September 2016 and expressed happiness with the implementation of new Plan of Action. He expressed confidence that the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ASEAN-India in 2017 would deepen mutual understanding and friendship amongst the people.
  9. 25 students from Brunei visited India under the ASEAN-India Student Exchange Programme on 9-18 November 2014 and visited Agra, Mumbai, Hyderabad and New Delhi.
  10. Two journalists from Brunei participated in the familiarization Programme for Journalists under the ASEAN- India Media Exchange Programme 2016 during the Delhi Dialogue VIII from 16-23 February 2016.
  11. Four students from Brunei participated in the ASEAN- India Students Exchange Programme organized by CII at Mumbai from 20-29 November 2016.
  12. An Engineering Officer from Brunei Ministry of Defence attended the Short Course on "Satellite Engineering and Small Satellite" from 21 November-2 December 2016 under the ASEAN- India Space Cooperation Programme at Bengaluru.
  13. Dato Erywan, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade attended the Delhi Dialogue IX in New Delhi on 4-5 July. During his visit, he met Gen V K Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs, on 4 July.
  14. India participated at the ASEAN @ 50 celebrations hosted by the Government of Brunei Darussalam on 12-13 August 2017 in Brunei. The Indian stall showcased some of the important India-ASEAN initiatives of cooperation and Summit level meetings. Mr John Mathew of Aptech gave a well-attended lecture on Vocational Educational Opportunities in India. The High Commission also participated in the ASEAN- Makan (food) fair and screened a movie – Stanley Ka Dabba.
  15. A delegation of 9 young Bruneians from diverse fields participated in the India-ASEAN Youth Summit held in Bhopal from 14 to 19 August 2017.

**Commercial:**

Trends in Bilateral trade and investment: (Source: Department of Economic Planning and Development, Government of Brunei Darussalam)

(i) Bilateral Trade

(US \$ million)

Jan to Dec 2015				Jan to Dec 2016				
<u>Brunei's trade</u>	<u>Export</u>	<u>Import</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Export</u>	<u>Import</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Growth % of Export</u>	<u>Growth % of Import</u>
With India	574.08	37.40	611.48	455.93	39.61	495.54	-20.2	6.4
Globally	6371.92	3251.84	9623.76	4904.62	2686.16	7590.89	-22.71	-17.06

Jan-Apr 2016				Jan-Apr 2017				
<u>Brunei's trade</u>	<u>Export</u>	<u>Import</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Export</u>	<u>Import</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Growth % of Export</u>	<u>Growth % of Import</u>
With India	177.94	62.01	239.94	329.17	264.12	504.06	85	326
Globally	1831.27	937.75	2769.02	1988.14	951.45	2939.59	8.57	1.46

Six reputed pharmaceutical companies visited Brunei in July-August 2016 and held discussions with the Bruneian authorities for supply of pharmaceutical products etc to Brunei.

India Investrade: A 3-day multi-sector exhibition and Buyer Seller Meet (BSM) organized by the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Kolkata was held Brunei from 15-17 September 2016. 23 Indian companies from diverse sectors including engineering goods, electronics, education consultancies, home décor, textiles, handwoven shawls and handicraft items participated in the exhibition.

**Cultural:**

**Negara Brunei Darussalam**, i.e., “State of Brunei - Abode of Peace”, or “Brunei Darussalam”, or just “Brunei”, is one of the oldest continuing monarchies in the world and one of the few executive ones. Its earliest known history dates back to 6<sup>th</sup> century, when Brunei was called “Puni” (possibly a distortion of the Sanskrit “Baruni”), or “Poli”. Brunei, then a Hindu-Buddhist kingdom, had linkages with the famed Sri Vijaya and Majapahit empires of the region, as well as with China. In the late 14<sup>th</sup> century, Brunei converted into an Islamic Sultanate when its ruler, Awang Alak Betatar, married a Muslim Johore princess from Malacca, and embraced Islam to become Brunei’s first Sultan – Mohammed Shah. Malay customs, rituals, and culture have many linkages with Indian culture. Bollywood film stars, movies, and film music are also very popular.

The High Commission organized an “Essay Contest” commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> Birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. The Mission also celebrated the Second International Day of Yoga on 19 June 2016 at the India House which was attended by about 150 people. Live webcast of Prime Minister Speech on the launching of Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra was organized on 2 October 2016. The ITEC Day 2016 was celebrated at India House on 27 October 2016. The High Commission celebrated 141<sup>st</sup> birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Chancery premises on 11 November 2016.

An exhibition of two collections- Monuments of India and Islamic Monuments from 1-14 December 2016 was inaugurated by the Brunei Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports on 1 December 2016 at the Malay Technology Museum.

A 10-member Kathak dance group led by Pt. Jai Kishan Maharaj participated in the Republic Day Celebrations on 26 January 2017. They also made a public performance on 27 January 2017 at the Jerudong International School Auditorium.

A friendly Exhibition Polo Match was played between the 61 Cavalry Indian Army Polo team and Brunei Polo team on Friday, March 10, 2017 in the presence of His Majesty the Sultan of Brunei Darussalam. The match and the visit of the Indian Cavalry team were in honour of His Majesty's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Brunei Darussalam on 18 June 2017. A group practice session of Yoga was held in the premises of Embassy Residence which was attended by around 150 people.

Pt Vikash Maharaj, sarod maestro, along with 3 musicians, participated in the India @ 70 Celebration on 15 August 2017 at Empire Hotel. The troupe also made a public performance on 16 August 2017 at the International Convention Centre.

### **Indian Community:**

The discovery of oil in Brunei in 1929 brought a number of Indians to Brunei to work in the hydrocarbon sector and allied services. Indian associations in Brunei Darussalam have been very active and are regularly organising Indian cultural events. Majority of the doctors in Brunei are from India. Other professionals include engineers, IT professionals, bankers, teachers etc. Indians have a considerable presence in textile business. There are approximately 11,500 Indian nationals living and working in Brunei.

***Useful Resources:*** For more information, please visit the following links:

*Mission's website at [www.hcindiabrunei.org.bn](http://www.hcindiabrunei.org.bn)*

*Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/HCI BrunEI?ref=hl>*

*Twitter: <https://twitter.com/hicomindBrunei>*

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*High Commission of India, Brunei Darussalam  
August 2017*