

India-Myanmar - Bilateral Brief

- India shares a long land border of over 1643 kms with Myanmar as well as a maritime boundary in the Bay of Bengal. Four northeastern states, viz., Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram, have a boundary with Myanmar.
- India shares religious, linguistic and ethnic ties with Myanmar. It is the only ASEAN country adjoining India and, therefore, is a gateway to South East Asia. India is seeking to enhance its cooperation with Myanmar in line with our 'Act East' and 'Neighborhood First' Policies.

Institutional Mechanisms

- India and Myanmar have several institutional mechanisms to ensure regular consultations between the two governments. The Foreign Office Consultations is led by Foreign Secretary and Permanent Secretary of Myanmar. The 18th Foreign Office Consultations were held on 6 December, 2019 in New Delhi.
- The National Level Meeting (NLM) at Home Secretary/ Dy. Home Minister-level is the main forum to discuss security cooperation, consular issues, drug trafficking and liaison between agencies. The 22nd meeting was held on 25-26 October, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The NLM is supplemented by a Joint Secretary-level / Sectoral Level Meeting (SLM), also led by Ministry of Home Affairs. The 24th SLM was held on 23-24 September, 2019
- The main forum for the representatives of the armed forces to discuss counter insurgency and border security is the Regional Border Committee Meeting (RBCs). The 15th RBC was held in Manipur, India in December 2019.
- Boundary matters are discussed by Joint Boundary Working Group (JBWG) led by Joint Secretary (BM), MEA. The 3rd JBWG meeting was held on 26-27 August, 2018 in Yangon.
- Commercial issues are discussed in the Joint Trade Committee (JTC) held at Commerce Minister-level.

High-level Visits:

- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the 12th ASEAN-India Summit and 9th East Asia Summit in Myanmar (11-13 November, 2014, Nay Pyi Taw).
- Prime Minister also visited Myanmar in 2017 (5-7 September, 2017), when 12 MoUs in various sectors on strengthening our bilateral cooperation was signed.

- State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi undertook a State Visit to India on 17- 19 October, 2016 after participating in the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit on 16 October, in Goa. She also visited India for the 25th India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit in January 2018, and held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister.
- Former External Affairs Minister of India, Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Myanmar on 10-11 May, 2018 and 22 August, 2016. National Security Advisor visited Myanmar on 16 June, 2016 as Special Envoy of Prime Minister.
- Other notable visits during this period were the visits of Indian Commerce Minister, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, MoS for Railways, MoS for Agriculture to Myanmar etc. Several Myanmar Ministers handling portfolios of International Cooperation, Health & Sports, Transport & Communication, Natural Resources & Environmental Conservation, Commerce, Energy and Chief Ministers from Chin State, Mon State, Mandalay Region have visited India for various conferences and meetings.
- Hon'ble Rashtrapathiji visited Myanmar from 10-14 December 2018. During the visit two MoUs, one on S&T cooperation and the other on Judicial Training was signed between the two sides. President of India held bilateral meetings with President of Myanmar, U Win Myint and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- President of Myanmar, U Win Myint visited India for the swearing in ceremony of Prime Minister in May 2019.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a meeting with State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on the sidelines of the 16th ASEAN-India Summit on 3 November, 2019 in Bangkok.
- Deputy National Security Advisor visited Myanmar on 17 January 2020.
- President of Myanmar, U Win Myint and First Lady Daw Cho Cho paid a State Visit to India from 27-29 February 2020 during which 10 MoUs/agreements were signed. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had a telephonic conversation on 30 April 2020 on the evolving COVID19 scenario.

Development Cooperation

- India's development assistance portfolio in Myanmar is now over US \$1.75 billion. The bulk of this assistance is grant-funded.

- The projects in which India is involved in Myanmar includes the (i) Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project; (ii) the Trilateral Highway Project, which is an East-West corridor connecting our Northeast with Myanmar and Thailand; assistance in setting up institutions for higher learning and research, namely Myanmar Institute of Information Technology, Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education, Myanmar-India Centre for Enhancement of IT Skills, India-Myanmar Industrial Training Centres; capacity assistance in public health by supporting upgradation of Yangon Children's Hospital and Sittwe General Hospital and the construction of a 200-bed women's hospital at Monywa; the Rakhine State Development Programme; restoration and conservation of Ananda Temple in Bagan and the repair and conservation of 92 earthquake damaged pagodas; reconstruction of Yamethin Women Police Training Centre, etc.
- India under the MoU on Rakhine State Development Program has committed to giving US \$25 million of assistance to Myanmar over a period of 5 years. The first phase was the completion of 250 pre-fabricated house in Rakhine state, which was handed over to the Government of Myanmar on 9 July 2019. India handed over 20,000 bags of relief material to Myanmar's Rakhine state on 22 January 2020.

Defence Cooperation

- Defence cooperation between the two countries continues to strengthen. High-level visits, enhanced training, capacity building and support in provision of specific equipment and technologies have led to a more wholesome relationship and better understanding of mutual security concerns.
- Then Defence Secretary, Shri Sanjay Mitra visited Myanmar in May 2019 and Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces of Myanmar visited India in July 2019. Vice Chief of Naval Staff, Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar visited Myanmar in October 2019. Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Karambir Singh visited Myanmar from 17-20 February 2020. Vice-Senior General Soe Win, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services visited India in February 2020 to attend DefExpo 2020.

Commercial Cooperation

- Since the signing of the India-Myanmar trade agreement in 1970, bilateral trade has grown steadily, albeit with a slight decline in the 80's. Bilateral trade has witnessed a 7.53% growth in 2018-19 and current trade figures stand at US \$ 1.7 Billion, while India's imports from Myanmar saw a decline of 18.47%, India's export to Myanmar witnessed 24.74% growth during the same period. India is the fifth largest trading partner of Myanmar.
- Myanmar is potentially an important partner in the energy sector as future offshore gas finds can be piped to India. Then MOS for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri

Dharmendra Pradhan, visited Myanmar from Feb 20-24, 2017. India currently has a JWG on Oil and Gas, JSC & JWG on Power cooperation and JWG on Renewable Energy.

- 1st JWG on Health Cooperation held on 25 April, 2019. Govt. of India has donated 10,000 vials of anti-rabies vaccines to Govt. of Myanmar in September 2019. India is also planning to donate Bhabhatron-II machine to Myanmar.
- 1st meeting of JWG under New Program of Cooperation (2018-21) in the field of Science and Technology was held in September 2019 in New Delhi.
- In terms of investment, India stands at 11th position with an approved investment of US\$ 771.838 million by 34 Indian enterprises as of March 2020. Myanmar's investment in India is US\$ 8.97 Million. 14 Indian Public Sector Undertakings have presence in Myanmar in different sectors. Exports of pharmaceuticals, which enjoys a good reputation in Myanmar, has grown from about US\$ 50 million in 2010 to US\$ 199.67 Million in 2018-19 which is about 40% of market share in Myanmar.
- In 2019, 27 Indian companies participated at COMPLAST, 74 Indian companies at MYANFOOD and around 40 companies at MEDEX 2019. 38062 Indian tourists visited Myanmar from January to October 2019.

Enhancing Connectivity

- Daily flights between Yangon and Kolkata since September 2019 had led to an improvement in connectivity between the two countries. Both countries are also working to enhance connectivity between Mandalay and North Eastern Indian States through air and road.
- In August 2018, two international entry/ exit points were inaugurated at Tamu-Moreh and Rih-Zowkhawthar. Measures to fully operationalize these two land border points are underway. Negotiations on a Motor Vehicle Agreement is also ongoing.

Disaster Relief

- India has responded promptly and effectively in rendering assistance following natural calamities in Myanmar like Cyclone Mora (2017), Komen (2015), earthquake in Shan State (2010), Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the outbreak of influenza virus in Yangon in July-August 2017. In the wake of COVID-19 epidemic India handed over medical equipment, medicines and other supplies worth USD 900,000 to Myanmar on 6 May 2020.

Culture

- India and Myanmar share close cultural ties and a sense of deep kinship, given India's Buddhist heritage. Building on this shared heritage, India is undertaking some key initiatives in the restoration of the Ananda Temple in Bagan and the repair and conservation of a large number of damaged pagodas. India has also completed work on restoring and renovating two historic temples in Bodh Gaya built by Myanmar rulers King Mindon and King Baygyidaw.
- Events such as the International Yoga Day, 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, Constitution Day, ICCR Foundation Day, celebration of commemorative days, informative lectures are regularly organized by the Embassy in Yangon. A full-fledged cultural centre is likely to be functional by the end of 2020.

Indian Diaspora

- There are varying estimates of 1.5-2.0 million people of Indian origin living and working in various parts of Myanmar. A large number of the Indian community (nearly 150,000) live in Bago (Zeyawaddy and Kuayktaga) and Tanintharyi Region and Mon State, primarily engaged in farming.

Useful Resources

- Website: <https://embassyofindiayangon.gov.in/>
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInMyanmar/>
- Twitter: <https://twitter.com/indiainmyanmar/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiainmyanmar/>

May 2020