

India-Singapore Relations

The close ties between India and Singapore have a history rooted in strong commercial, cultural and people-to-people links. India's connection with Singapore dates back to the Cholas. The more modern relationship is attributed to Sir Stamford Raffles who, in 1819, established a trading station in Singapore on the route of the Straits of Malacca which became a colony under British India, governed from Kolkata (1830-1867). The colonial connection is reflected in a similarity of institutions and practices, usage of English and the presence of a large Indian community. India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore in 1965.

Following the conclusion of Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) of 2005, this robust relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership in 2015 during the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

India and Singapore added new momentum and direction in their Strategic Partnership in 2018, anchored in the Official visit of PM Modi to Singapore from 31 May to 2 June 2018 and his second visit on 14-15 November 2018 for attending the ASEAN-India, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and East Asia Summits. Prime Minister of Singapore Mr. Lee Hsien Loong also visited India on 25-26 January 2018 to participate in the Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi and co-chair the ASEAN India Commemorative Summit (AICS) 2018.

Exchange of Visits

PM Modi visited Singapore twice in 2018. His Official Visit in May-June 2018 witnessed over 35 concrete outcomes in the forms of MoUs, agreements and new initiatives. These included the Implementing Arrangement for Mutual Coordination of Logistics and Services Support to further boost bilateral naval cooperation; on the economic side, completion of the second review of the CECA pending since 2010 and signing of the associated Mutual Recognition Agreement on Nursing. There were several MoUs in areas like skills development, including one for collaboration in setting up the first Indian Institute of Skills; public administration and governance; urban planning and development, including in waste management and water recycling; trade and investment promotion; and, logistics and infrastructure.

Science and technology and innovation, startups and fintech emerged as new areas of bilateral engagement during this visit. The two governments signed an agreement to set up a Joint Working Group on Fintech, which already had its first meeting. PM witnessed the first international launch of India's financial products - RuPay Card, BHIM-UPI App and UPI-based cross-border remittance App. Niti Ayog and professional Indian diaspora associations (including alumni associations of IITs and IIMs) signed a MoU to support digitalization and innovation in India. PM witnessed several agreements between Nanyang Technological University and leading Indian institutions for cooperation in areas like new technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain), academic research and space technology.

As an innovative mechanism for promoting Indian handicrafts abroad and support rural livelihood, PM unveiled a platform at the Indian Heritage Centre (IHC) to bring Indian artisans to Singapore on a regular basis. Ahead of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, PM unveiled a plaque at the site of the immersion of a portion

of Gandhiji's ashes in Singapore in 1948. In a historic visit to Changi Naval Base, PM boarded a Singapore and an Indian naval ship and interacted with naval personnel.

PM Modi became the first Indian PM to deliver the keynote address at the annual Shangri La Dialogue on 01 June 2018. He outlined India's vision of the Indo-Pacific region and reflected India's commitment to promoting peace and stability in the region.

When PM Modi visited in 14-15 November 2018 to participate in the multilateral Summits, he also became the first Head of Government to deliver the keynote address at the Singapore Fintech Festival, world's largest Fintech event with nearly 40000 participants. He projected India's success in financial inclusion & digitalization as a means for economic progress & empowerment. He launched a global digital platform, APIX, to connect fintech companies and banks, starting with India and ASEAN.

PM Modi had earlier visited Singapore twice in 2015. He visited on 29 March to attend the State Funeral of Founder of Singapore and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew. PM's participation in the funeral along with the declaration of the funeral day as a day of mourning in India with our flags flying half-mast, was deeply appreciated by Singapore. PM Modi paid an Official visit on 23-24 November 2015 where nine bilateral documents were concluded and a Joint Statement was issued. He paid homage to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at the INA Memorial Marker, delivered the 37th Singapore Lecture titled '*India's Singapore Story*', visited the Institute of Technical Education along with PM Lee, addressed the business community at the India-Singapore Economic Convention and the Indian community in Singapore.

PM Lee visited New Delhi on 25-26 January 2018 to participate in the Republic Day Celebrations and the ASEAN India Commemorative Summit (AICS), which held to mark the culmination of the 25th Anniversary celebrations of India-ASEAN Dialogue Partnership. Singapore being the ASEAN Chair for 2018, PM Lee co-chaired the AICS with PM Modi. The theme for the Summit was "Shared Values, Common Destiny".

PM Lee had earlier made a Working Visit to India from 3-7 October 2016, accompanied by 3 senior Ministers. Three MoUs on collaboration in the field of technical & vocational education, training and cooperation in industrial property were signed. PM Lee visited Udaipur to inaugurate a Centre of Excellence for Tourism Management. He had paid State Visits to India in June 2005, July 2012 and for AICS to celebrate 20th anniversary of ASEAN- Indian Dialogue Partnership in December 2012.

There was a high level of bilateral visits as a result of deepening cooperation across the full spectrum of relationship and Singapore's role as Chair of ASEAN in 2018. High level **visits from India** include visit by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Smt. Sushma Swaraj; Minister for Shipping, Road Transport and Highways and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari; Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu; Minister for Shipping, Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari; Defence Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. (Retd.) Dr. V.K Singh; Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Shri Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry Shri C r Chaudhary; Chief Minister of

Assam Shri Sarbananda Sonowal; Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri Chandrababu Naidu ; Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Shri Trivendra Singh Rawat; and state delegations from Gujarat, Punjab, Kerala , Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Apart from these, more than 150 delegations comprising MPs, Secretaries and senior officials from India visited Singapore.

From **Singapore**, Minister for Finance Mr. Heng Swee Keat, Minister of Communications and Information and Trade Relations Mr. S. Iswaran, Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan , Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen, National Development Minister Mr. Lawrence Wong; Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development Mr. Desmond Lee, Senior Minister of State for Defence & Foreign Affairs Dr. Md. Maliki Bin Osman, Senior Minister of State for Transport and Health Dr. Lam Pin Min and Minister for Home Affairs and Law Mr. K Shanmugam visited to attend various meetings and events in New Delhi as well as in states.

Framework of the Bilateral Relationship

India-Singapore relations are based on shared values and approaches, economic opportunities and convergence of interests on key issues. Political engagement is regular. Defence relations are particularly strong. Economic and technological ties are extensive and growing. Cultural and human links are very vibrant. There are more than 20 regular bilateral mechanisms, dialogues and exercises. There is great convergence on a broad range of international issues and both are members of a number of forums, including East Asia Summit, G20, Commonwealth, IORA (Indian Ocean Rim Association) and IONS (Indian Ocean Naval Symposium).

Agreements concluded between India and Singapore reflect the growing overall cooperation, which provides a larger framework for activities between the two Governments, commercial and people-to-people exchanges. Key agreements include the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (2005) and its Second Review (2018), Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (1994, Protocols signed in 2011), Bilateral Air Services Agreement (1968, revised in 2013), Defence Cooperation Agreement (2003, enhanced Agreement signed in 2015), MOU on Foreign Office Consultations (1994), Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2005), Mutual Recognition Agreement on Nursing (2018) and cooperation in Fintech (2018). There is a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), chaired by EAM and Foreign Minister of Singapore and Foreign Office Consultations (FoC) held between Secretary (East), MEA and Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Singapore.

Defence and Security Cooperation

In the area of defence, India and Singapore have a longstanding and comprehensive partnership, which includes, Annual Ministerial and Secretary level dialogues; Staff level talks between three wings of Armed forces; training of Singapore Army and Air force in India every year; annual exercises including India's longest uninterrupted naval exercise with any other country; ship visits from Navy and Coast Guard. Singapore's participates in IONS and multilateral Exercise MILAN hosted by Indian Navy. Singapore's membership of IORA and India's membership of ADDM+ (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting - Plus) provides platform for both countries to coordinate positions on regional issues of mutual concern.

In 2018, two sides maintained the momentum of institutional exchanges as well as army, navy and air force exercises. 12 Indian Navy and Coast Guard ships visited Singapore and 07 Singapore Navy ships visited India. 25th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX), was held over two weeks in November in the Bay of Bengal/Andaman Sea area. More than 20 ships, aircraft and submarines from both Navies participated. Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen attended SIMBEX and co-chaired Defence Ministers' Dialogue (DMD) in November. The Bilateral Agreement for Conduct of Joint Training and Exercises in India was renewed in DMD.

India and Singapore share similar concerns about the challenges posed by terrorism and extremism and have found it mutually beneficial to evolve a broad framework of security cooperation. The areas of security cooperation also include cyber security, combating drug trafficking, bilateral MoUs for these were renewed in Pm Modi's May-June 2018 visit. Six rounds of the India- Singapore Security Dialogue (ISSD), have been held so far. It is co-chaired by Deputy NSA of India and Permanent Secretary, National Security & Intelligence Coordination of Singapore.

Science & Technology Cooperation

ISRO launched Singapore's first indigenously built micro-satellite in 2011; 2 more in 2014 and 6 in 2015. During PM's visit to Singapore in June 2018, six MoUs were concluded by NTU for research & exchange partnership with NITI Aayog in the area of artificial intelligence, machine learning, cognitive computing and big data analytics to improve healthcare, cybersecurity, automation, mobility, smart energy systems and e-governance, joint PhD and research with IITs and IISc Bengaluru, space research with Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) and establishment of endowment for Indian research scholars coming to Singapore.

5 S of Trade, Economic and Development Cooperation

Five areas of cooperation - referred to as **5-S Plank**- were agreed during the visit of EAM to Singapore in August 2014 to enhance and direct bilateral relationship towards- (i) **Scale up Trade & Investment**; (ii) **Speed up Connectivity**; (iii) **Smart Cities and Urban Rejuvenation**; (iv) **Skill development**; and (v) **State focus**.

Scale up Trade and Investment: Singapore is India's 2nd largest trade partner among ASEAN countries. Bilateral trade expanded after the conclusion of CECA from US\$ 6.7 billion in FY 2004-05 to reach US\$ 17.67 billion in 2017-18. In 2017-18, our imports from Singapore were US\$ 7.47 billion and exports from India totaled US\$ 10.20 billion. In FY 2018- 19, the bilateral trade reached US\$ 15.4 billion till October.

Total Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) from Singapore into India was US\$ 73.3 billion (till June 2018) which was 19% of total FDI inflow. The FDI from Singapore in the period April 2017 – March 2018 was US\$ 12.2 billion. The outward Indian FDI to Singapore was US\$ 62.9 billion (till August 2018), making Singapore one of the top destinations for Indian investments. The sectors which attracted investments include Information Technology, real estate, manufacturing, construction, renewable energy and pharmaceuticals. More than 80 % of listed offshore bonds by Indian issuers are listed on Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX). SGX has also hosted several high profile *Masala* Bonds. Singapore-based investors have Assets Under Management

(AUM) valued at over US\$ 100 billion in India. Temasek Holding, a Singapore Government Fund, has invested US\$ 400 million in National Infrastructure Investment Fund of India in 2018, following the announcement during PM's visit in May-June 2018.

About 8000 Indian companies are registered in Singapore. 6 PSUs, 9 banks, India Tourism, CII, FICCI, Air India, Jet Airways have their offices in Singapore. More than 440 companies from Singapore are registered in India. 2 banks, Enterprise Singapore (ES), Economic Development Board (EDB) and Singapore Tourism Board have their offices in India. The India-Singapore CEO Forum was launched in November 2018.

In 2018, High Commission of India also launched a startup engagement platform, India-Singapore Entrepreneurship Bridge (InSprenneur), which had two well attended conferences in January and May 2018. The second edition of InSprenneur featured an exhibition of 31 startups from India and Singapore, which also had the opportunity to interact with the two Prime Ministers. A Private Initiative, "New India Innovation hub" that offers 50,000 sq ft free rental space in Singapore for Indian startups looking to enter Singapore and ASEAN was announced in the May- June visit of PM Modi.

Speed up connectivity: The Air Services Agreement was revised in 2005 and MoU on bilateral air services arrangements was signed in 2013. Singapore is directly connected to 18 Indian cities by 8 airlines. There are now 308 weekly services (616 weekly flights) by Indian and Singaporean airlines. Singapore Airlines holds a 49 % stake in Vistara, a JV with Tata Group. In 2017, about 1.27 million Indian tourists visited Singapore, making India the third largest source in tourism for Singapore.

Smart cities: A consortium of Singapore companies is developing Amaravati, new capital city of Andhra Pradesh. Singapore is also working with Rajasthan in preparing Concept Plans for townships in Udaipur and Jodhpur; with Himachal Pradesh for developing an integrated township of Greater Shimla; and with Maharashtra for development of Orange Smart City and master planning of Pune Metropolitan Region. There is also cooperation in capacity building in urban planning sector. During PM Modi's visit in May-June 2018, 3 MoUs in the areas of urban and rural development were signed by private and public sector institutions including NITI Aayog.

Skill development: Singapore is working with the Central and state Governments as well as Government organisations to establish skill development centres in various sectors. A World Class Skill Centre (WCSC) has been set in Delhi in 2013. During PM Lee's visit in October 2016, MoUs on collaboration in fields of skill development and vocational Training were signed. A Centre of Excellence for Tourism Management was inaugurated in Udaipur during PM Lee's visit. A Skill Centre for North East is being established in Guwahati. Similar initiatives are being taken in Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal. During the visit of PM Modi in May-June 2018, five agreements on skill development were concluded, including setting up of first Indian Institute on Skills, and a chain of National Trainers and Assessors Academies in India as well as in the area of future skills.

State focus: State governments are working with Singapore in the Smart Cities & Urban Rejuvenation as well as Skills Development initiatives. Singapore has

established Joint Committees with Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. There are regular visits of state delegations at various levels to Singapore. Ministers from Singapore also visit states. Minister of Communications and Information and Trade Relations Mr. S. Iswaran was the only minister from a foreign country to attend the inaugural 'Destination Uttarakhand: Investors Summit in October 2018.

Cultural Cooperation

Cultural exchanges include performing arts, theatre, museum exchanges, art, languages, and youth exchanges. Singapore's large Indian diaspora through a number of cultural societies and Singapore's official support, including through the IHC, sustained a high level of cultural activity in Singapore, supported by ICCR and the Mission. Regional and community based organizations are also active in promoting language teaching, yoga and arts. The 4th International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated through 173 yoga sessions and attended by app. 8000 people, while the hashtag #IDYSG2018 created more than 76 million impressions. Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary celebrations were launched with a projection of Gandhiji's video on the world's largest HD video screen at Suntec Convention Centre and an inter-school quiz competition. The Mission marked the 125th year of the historic speech by Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of World's Religions and Dr. Ambedkar Birth Anniversary by organizing well attended seminars. The inaugural edition of Hindustan Times (HT)-MINT Asia Leadership Summit was held in Singapore in April 2018. India- Singapore Dialogue, a track II initiative was held in August 2018. Inter-governmental cooperation in culture is governed by a 1993 MoU and Executive Programmes agreed upon for specified periods, the latest of which is for the period 2015-18.

Indian Community

Ethnic Indians constitute about 9.1 % or around 3.5 lakhs of the resident population of 3.9 million in Singapore. In addition, among the 1.6 million foreigners residing in Singapore, about 21 % or around 3.5 lakhs are Indian expatriates holding Indian passports, mostly serving in financial services, IT, students, construction and marine sectors. Singapore has the highest concentration of IIT and IIM alumni in any one city outside India. There are about 1.5 lakh Indian migrant workers in Singapore. Singapore, however does not feature in the 'Emigration Clearance Required' category. Tamil is one of the four official languages of Singapore. Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi are also taught in schools. Welfare and well-being of the Indian nationals, including Indian workers feature prominently in consular responsibilities of the Mission.

ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was held in Singapore on 6-7 January 2018 as part of commemoration of 25 years of ASEAN-India Partnership, with the theme, "Ancient Route, New Journey." Held at iconic marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, the event attracted 5300 registrations with an average of 3000 participants at any given time at the venue. There were 16 thematic sessions covering business, technology, connectivity to culture, youth and diaspora. In addition, there were writers' festival, cinema festival, art exhibition, Yoga corner and Ayurveda conference all showcasing ASEAN Indian diaspora talent and expertise. In the run up, competitions for youth on essays, poetry (English, Hindi, Tamil), classical dance and music, photo competitions and Grand Challenge –an online competition was organised around PM's flagship initiatives such as Swachh Bharat, Health for

all, Smart Cities Program, AMRUT, PM Jan Dhan Yojana for which close to 1000 entries were received.

Useful Resources

Website: www.hcisingapore.gov.in

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Fortnightly E-Newsletter 'India Focus':

https://www.hcisingapore.gov.in/news_letter.php?nid=all

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