

India-Singapore Relations

The close ties between India and Singapore have a history rooted in strong commercial, cultural and people-to-people links across a millennium. 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 later became a crown colony and governed from Kolkata till 1867. The colonial connection is reflected in institutions and practices, usage of English and presence of a large Indian community. India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore in 1965.

2. 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 PM Modi and on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

3. 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-2 June and his second visit on 14-15 November for attending the ASEAN-India and related 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 2018 ASEAN India Commemorative Summit (AICS).

4. PM Lee and Emeritus Senior Minister (ESM) Goh Chok Tong extended congratulations in their letters to PM Modi on his election victory on 23 May 2019. Both PMs met on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Osaka in June and East Asia Summit in Bangkok in November 2019. PM Lee was one of the six world leaders invited by PM Modi to speak at a special event at UN in New York on 24 September 2019 to celebrate 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Exchange of Visits

5. 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.

6. 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 (JWG) on Fintech. PM witnessed the first international launch of India's financial products - RuPay Card, BHIM-UPI App and UPI-based cross-border remittance App. PM witnessed several agreements between Nanyang Technological University and leading Indian institutions for cooperation in areas like new technologies (AI, Machine Learning, Blockchain) and space technology.

7. 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.
8. PM Modi became the first Indian PM to deliver 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.
9. When PM Modi visited in 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. 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.
10. 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 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.
11. PM Lee visited New Delhi on 25-26 January 2018 to participate in the Republic Day Celebrations and to co-chair the AICS, 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".
12. 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 in December 2012 for AICS celebrating 20th anniversary.
13. External Affairs Minister Dr. S Jaishankar; Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh; and, MoS (Independent Charge) for Housing and Urban Affairs, Civil Aviation and MoS, Commerce & industry Shri Hardeep Singh Puri and then MoS for Home Affairs Shri Kiren Rijju visited Singapore in 2019. EAM co-chaired the 6th meeting of Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) with Foreign Minister Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan on 9 September 2019. RM co-chaired the annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue with Defence Minister Dr. Ng Eng Hen on 20 November 2019.

14. In addition, Chief Minister of Puducherry and state delegations from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Odisha, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand visited for meetings with Businesses and Government and to conduct trade promotion activities including in fintech, tourism. A large number of delegations comprising MPs, Secretaries, senior officials and representatives of various national and regional trade & commerce chambers from India also visited Singapore.

15. From Singapore, Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Finance Minister Mr. Heng Swee Keat paid his first visit in capacity of DPM in October 2019. During the visit, DPM Heng met PM Modi and senior Ministers, co-chaired the India Economic Summit (IES) of World Economic Forum (WEF) and paid tribute to Mahtma Gandhi at Rajghat on 02 October. DPM Heng's delegation included Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development Mr. Desmond Lee, and MoS, Ministry of National Development and Ministry of Manpower, Mr. Zaqy Mohamad.

16. In addition, MOS for Foreign Affairs and Manpower Mr Sam Tan and Senior MoS, Ministry of Defence Foreign Affairs, Dr Maliki in January; Minister for Communications and Information & Minister-in-Charge of Trade Relations, S. Iswaran visited in June and October; Minister for Home Affairs and Law Mr. K Shanmugam, Senior Minister of State for Ministries of Health and Law Mr. Edwin Tong visited in August and Education Minister Mr. Ong Ye Kung in June and September 2019 visited New Delhi and other cities in India.

17. Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for Social Policies Mr. Tharman Shanmugaratnam visited New Delhi and Mumbai in January 2020 where he called on PM, met senior ministers, CM of Maharashtra and delivered a lecture in Mumbai at the invitation of RBI.

Framework of the Bilateral Relationship

18. 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).

19. 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), Agreement for Conduct of Joint Army Training and Exercises (renewed in 2019). There is a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), chaired by EAM and Foreign Minister of Singapore and Foreign Office Consultations (FoC) at the Secretary level.

Defence and Security Cooperation

20. 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 (10th edition in 2019) every year; annual exercises including India's longest uninterrupted naval exercise with any other country (26th edition in 2019); 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.

21. New developments include the inaugural Trilateral Maritime Exercise between India, Singapore and Thailand (SITMEX), announced by PM Modi in his Keynote address at the 2018 Shangri La Dialogue in September 2019 in Andaman Sea with the intention to conduct it annual at alternative locations. Indian Naval Ship Sagardhwani visited Singapore in August 2019 to promote scientific collaboration between Indian agencies including DRDO and Singaporean agencies. During the Defence Ministers Dialogue, India conveyed its readiness to allow Singapore to conduct missile test firing at Chandipur Integrated Test Range. The two sides agreed to enhance maritime information exchange, intensify HADR cooperation, explore cooperation in areas like geo-spatial data, cyber security and setting up of Joint Test Facilities under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme of India.

22. 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 and operational exchanges are ongoing. Seven rounds of the India- Singapore Security Dialogue (ISSD) at Deputy NSA of India and Permanent Secretary, National Security & Intelligence Coordination have been held so far.

Science & Technology Cooperation

23. 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.

Trade, Economic and Development Cooperation

24. Five areas of cooperation were agreed in 2014 at the beginning of the first term of PM Modi led Government - (i) Scale up Trade & Investment; (ii) Speed up Connectivity; (iii) Smart Cities & Urban Rejuvenation; (iv) Skill development; and (v) State focus. In 2018, FinTech & Innovation was recognized as the new driver of bilateral relationship.

25. **Scale up Trade & Investment:** Singapore is India's largest trade partner in ASEAN. It is the leading source of Foreign Direct Investment, among the largest sources of External Commercial Borrowings and Foreign Portfolio Investment. Bilateral trade expanded after the conclusion of CECA from USD 6.7 billion in FY 2004-05 to USD 27.85 billion in 2018-19. Our imports from Singapore in FY 18-19 were USD 16.28 billion and exports from India USD 11.57 billion. Bilateral trade in FY 2019-20 (till December 2019) was USD 17.9 billion with exports to Singapore constituting USD 7.1 billion.

26. In 2018-19, FDI inflows from Singapore amounted to USD 16.23 billion out of total FDI receipts in India of USD 44.37 billion. **In the fiscal 2019-20, total inflow until September 2019 was USD 8.01 billion while Cumulative FDI from Singapore into India (April 2000- September 2019) is USD 91.02 billion, accounting for 20% of total inflows into India. The outward Indian FDI to Singapore was US\$ 67.64 billion (January 2008 - December 2019) out of which about US\$ 2.22 billion in FY 2019-20 till December 2019,** making Singapore one of the top destinations for Indian investments.

27. More than 80 % of listed offshore bonds by Indian issuers are listed on Singapore Stock Exchange (SGX). Singapore-based investors have Assets Under Management (AUM) valued at over US\$ 100 billion in India. Temasek Holding, a Singapore Government Fund, has invested USD 400 million in National Infrastructure Investment Fund of India in 2018, following the announcement during PM's 2018 visit.

28. About 9000 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. DBS Bank announced the launch of its locally incorporated subsidiary, DBS Bank India (DBIL) in March 2019.

29. In the second term of PM Modi led Government, The Mission organised region's first international business & innovation summit on India in the Government's second term on 09-10 September 2019, "India- Singapore : the Next Phase." The event drew over 4500 registered participants. The Ministerial Plenaries featured EAM, MoS (I/C) Shri Puri, Senior Minister Teo Chee Hean, Foreign Minister of Singapore Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Senior Minister of State for Trade & Industry and Education Mr. Chee Hong Tat. 90 speakers from government, business and technology sectors from India and Singapore spoke in 25 Sessions on subjects covering trade, investment, finance, technology and innovation. State Governments of Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Punjab and Uttarakhand also participated in the event.

30. **Speed up connectivity:** The Air Services Agreement was revised in 2005 and MoU on bilateral air services arrangements was signed in 2013. Singapore is now directly connected to 15 Indian cities by 8 airlines with more than 500 weekly flights both ways. Vistara- a JV between Singapore Airlines and Tata Group - launched their first ever international flights from Singapore to Delhi and Mumbai in August 2019, while GoAir started their services from Bengaluru and Kolkata to Singapore in October 2019. In 2018, about 1.27 million Indian tourists visited Singapore, making India the third largest source in tourism for Singapore.

31. **Smart cities:** While the contract to develop a part of the Amaravati Capital City Project by Singapore consortium stands cancelled, Singaporean companies continue to participate in a number of smart city, urban planning, logistics and infrastructure projects. Singapore is working with Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra in preparing Master Plans for townships. 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. In November 2019, a Singaporean company won award to develop 15000 homes in 4 cities of Gujarat while in April 2019, Singapore Sovereign fund GIC and Tata Group jointly entered India's airports sector with a total of INR 8,000 crore investment in GMR Airports Ltd.

32. **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. North East Skill Centre was inaugurated in Guwahati in March 2019. Similar initiatives are being taken in Haryana, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. During the visit of PM Modi in May-June 2018, five agreements on skill development were concluded, including for future skills, and to set up first ever Indian Institute on Skills, as well as a string of National Trainers and Assessors Academies in India.

33. **State focus:** State governments are working with Singapore in the Smart Cities & Urban Rejuvenation as well as Skills Development initiatives. Singapore has established a Joint Committees with Maharashtra. There are regular visits of state delegations at various levels to Singapore. Ministers from Singapore also visit states.

34. **FinTech & Innovation:** Cooperation in the areas of technology, innovation, fintech and startups have grown. In 2019. A Pilot demo of BHIM UPI QR based payments was launched in Singapore on 13 November during the 2019 Fintech Festival. Commercial and technical arrangements have also been worked out for the acceptance of RuPay domestic card in Singapore, in addition to the RuPay International Card, launched in June 2018. Under the JWG on Fintech, the two sides are making progress on a Global Stack, based on India Stack, and developing an international MSME digital platform, Business Sans Border.

35. There is ongoing cooperation between leading Indian and Singaporean institutions in Innovation. The 3rd edition of High Commission's startup engagement platform, "India-Singapore Entrepreneurship Bridge (InSpreneur)" was held along with India - Singapore: The Next Phase- Business & Innovation Summit. It featured discussion on innovation themes and an exhibition of 85 startups from India and Singapore. 120 university students from India and Singapore grouped into 20 teams participated in the second Joint Hackathon held in Chennai in September 2019 to develop solutions to challenges in education, healthcare, and green energy over 36 hours. Singapore's Education Minister Mr. Ong Ye Kung visited India to participate in the awards ceremony presided over by PM Modi.

Cultural Cooperation

36. Cultural exchanges include performing arts, theatre, museum exchanges, art, languages, and youth exchanges. Inter-governmental cooperation in culture is governed by a 1993 MoU and Executive Programmes for specified periods. Singapore's large Indian diaspora through a number of cultural societies and Singapore's official support, sustained a high level of cultural activity in Singapore, supported by ICCR and the Mission. **Recently in January 2020, a concert with support of Misison brought together Singapore Chinese Orchestra and Sarod Maestro Amjad Ali Khan.** Regional and community based organizations are also active in promoting language teaching, yoga and arts. Two young Singaporean cricketers participated in a month-long training camp in Bengaluru in October that featured 58 young players from various Commonwealth countries. National Cadet Corps (NCC) cadets of India visited Singapore in November and Singapore NCC team to India in October 2019 and January.

37. The 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in June 2019 through 200 yoga sessions and attended by app. 8500 people. Seminars on traditional Indian medicine are being organised since last 4 years with participation of experts from India and Singapore. Mission organised various events to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev ji, 70th Anniversary of adoption of Constitution of India, anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's historic speech at World Parliament of Religions and Hindi Divas. The India-Singapore Track 1.5 Strategic Dialogue took place in Delhi in July 2019. The 2nd Hindustan Times Leadership Summit took place in September 2019, in which EAM also participated.

Indian Community

38. 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 lakh Indian migrant workers in Singapore. Singapore, however does not feature in the ECR 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.

39. **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" and showcasing ASEAN Indian diaspora talent and expertise. The 16 thematic sessions covering business, technology, connectivity to culture, youth and diaspora attracted average of 3000 participants at any given time at the venue. In addition, there were side events on literature, cinema, art exhibition, Yoga and Ayurveda conference. The competitions for youth on essays, poetry (English, Hindi, Tamil), classical dance and music, photo competitions and online Grand Challenge around PM's flagship initiatives received enthusiastic response.

40. Singapore was one of the 8 cities where members of diaspora was given opportunity to ask questions to EAM in his **Global Video Conference** on the occasion of **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 09 January 2020.**

Useful Resources

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Fortnightly E-Newsletter 'India Focus':

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

January 2020