

INDIA-SINGAPORE RELATIONS

Background

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 Calcutta (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. India's economic reforms in 1990s and the Look East Policy provided opportunities to recreate a new framework for cooperation, which included the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement of 2005.

Strategic Partnership

This robust relationship was elevated to a Strategic Partnership during the visit of Prime Minister Modi who signed a Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership with Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on 24 November 2015 on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

During Prime Minister Modi's visit in November 2015, nine bilateral documents were signed/exchanged in areas of defence, maritime security, cyber security, narcotics trafficking, urban planning, civil aviation, and culture and a Joint Statement was issued which outlined areas of cooperation and mutual interest. Joint commemorative stamps depicting the Presidential Buildings of the two countries were released by the two Prime Ministers to commemorate the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. Prime Minister paid homage to Netaji at the INA Memorial Marker, delivered the 37th Singapore Lecture titled '*India's Singapore Story*', visited the Institute of Technical Education (ITE) and addressed the business community at the India-Singapore Economic Convention and the Indian community in Singapore at a gathering of around 20,000 people.

Exchange of Visits

PM Modi had visited Singapore earlier in 2015 to attend the State Funeral of Lee Kuan Yew on 29 March. 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 Government.

Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong made a Working Visit to India from 3-7 October 2016. He was accompanied by Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry) S. Iswaran, acting Minister for Education (Higher Education and Skills) and Senior of State for Defence Ong Ye Kung, Senior Minister of State (Defence) and (Foreign Affairs) Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman and Members of Parliament. PM Lee called on the President, met with PM, who hosted a banquet. He also met with EAM. The two Prime Ministers held wide-ranging discussions on bilateral, regional and

multilateral issues in a warm, cordial and friendly atmosphere wherein they reviewed the bilateral relationship since the signing of the Joint Declaration on a Strategic Partnership on 24 November 2015. PM Lee also visit Udipur (5-6 Oct). During the visit, three agreements were signed.

An active calendar of visits from both sides have added momentum to bilateral relations. Recent visits **from India** include Shri Nitin Gadkari and Shri M.J. Akbar on 1-2 September 2016 for Indian Ocean Conference; Shri Manohar Parrikar, Defence Minister on 3-5 June 2016 for the inaugural Defence Ministers' Dialogue and the Shangri-La Dialogue; Minister of State(IC) for Power, Coal & NRE, Shri Piyush Goyal on 23 May 2016; Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan, in Jan 2016; Minister of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu, on 20-21 October 2015 to participate as a key speaker at the Infrastructure Finance Summit 2015 organised by the World Bank and Government of Singapore; Minister for Finance and Minister for Corporate Affairs and Information & Broadcasting, Shri Arun Jaitley, on 18-19 September 2015; Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, Shri Anant Geete, for the National Day Celebrations on 9 August 2015 on the occasion of Singapore's 50th year of Independence; Minister of State for Tourism (IC), Culture (IC) and Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma, on 17-18 June 2015 to inaugurate a Buddhist Art Exhibition; and Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Shri C Naidu in connection with the new capital city of Andhra Pradesh.

Visits to India from Singapore have been by Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister and Coordinating Minister for Economic and Social Policies, Tharman Shanmugaratnam to attend the inaugural NITI Lecure Series in Delhi on 26 August 2016 and the Growth Net Summit in Delhi on 7 April 2016; Minister for Home Affairs and Minister for Law, K Shanmugam on 17 – 20 November 2015 leading a business delegation to the Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit in Jaipur in which Singapore participated as a 'Partner Country'; Senior Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Ministry of Transport Josephine Teo to New Delhi on 28 - 30 October 2015 to attend the Third India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS) where Singapore was a "Special Invitee", Minister for Trade and Industry (Industry), S Iswaran attended the foundation stone laying ceremony at Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh's new capital city, on 22 October 2015, on behalf of Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong; S Iswaran when he was Minister PMO & Second Minister for Trade & Industry on 20 July 2015 and on 25 May 2015 in connection with the new capital city of Andhra Pradesh, Amaravati, for which the Master Plan was developed by a Singapore consortium; former Foreign Minister K Shanmugam to Tamil Nadu in July 2015, Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh in February 2015; and current Foreign Minister Dr Vivian Balakrishnan to attend the 4th Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) Meeting in Delhi on 12 October 2015.

Political

India-Singapore relations are based on shared values and approaches, economic opportunities and convergence of interests on key issues.

Framework of the Relationship: Agreements concluded between India and Singapore reflect the growing breadth of our cooperation and provide a larger framework for activities between the two Governments, the business community, and people-to-people exchanges. Key agreements include the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (2005), Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (1994,

Protocols signed in 2011), Bilateral Air Services Agreement (1968, revised in April 2013), Defence Cooperation Agreement (2003, enhanced Agreement signed in Nov 2015), MOU on Foreign Office Consultations (1994) and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2005). There is a Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC), chaired by External Affairs Minister and Singapore Foreign Minister.

The 5-S Plank

India and Singapore are building relations focused on the 5-S plank which was agreed to by both countries in August 2014.

5S-I - Scale up trade and investments: India is currently Singapore's 10th largest trading partner, up from 12th and 11th in the last two years, with a share of 2.55% in Singapore's overall global trade of USD 631.5 billion in 2015. Bilateral trade with Singapore amounted to USD 15 billion in 2015-16, a decline of 11.2% compared to 2014-15. Exports to Singapore stood at USD 7.7 billion, a decline of 21.2% in year on year terms. Imports from Singapore stood at USD 7.3 billion, recording a growth of 2.6 % in year on year terms.

Total foreign direct investments from Singapore into India was USD 45.89 billion (till March 2016) which was 16% of total FDI inflow. The FDI from Singapore in the period April 2015 – March 2016 was US\$ 13.7 billion. The sectors which attracted investments include Information Technology, real estate, manufacturing, construction, renewable energy and pharmaceuticals. The outward Indian FDI to Singapore was US\$ 5.27 billion in the period Jan-Dec 2015, the total (till September 2016) being USD 44.90 billion.

5S-II - Speed up connectivity: The Air Services Agreement of 1968 was revised in 2002 and 2005. With increased economic activity, an MOU on bilateral air services arrangements was signed in April 2013. Directly connected to 15 Indian cities, there are 238 weekly services (476 weekly flights) between Singapore and India. Singapore also has access to 18 additional Indian points open to ASEAN countries. Singapore Airlines (SIA) holds a 49 per cent stake in Vistara, a joint venture with the Tata Group. Vistara commenced domestic operations in India from 9 January 2015.

5S-III - Smart cities: Singapore has developed the master plan of the new Andhra capital Amaravati and is in discussion with the State Government for further cooperation. Minister S. Iswaran represented Prime Minister of Singapore at the foundation ceremony of Amaravati by PM Modi on 22 October 2015. Singapore is also working with Government of Rajasthan in preparing Concept Plans for townships in Udaipur and Jodhpur. There is also cooperation in capacity building in urban planning.

5S-IV - Skill development: A Memorandum of Understanding between Delhi Government and Singapore ITE Education Services (ITEES) was signed on 11 July 2012 to provide the necessary framework for collaboration in setting up of a Green Field World Class Skill Centre (WCSC). It started functioning from a temporary campus in 2013. Singapore is working with the Rajasthan Government in developing the Centre of Excellence for Tourism Training in ITI Udaipur.

5S-V - State focus: The Chief Ministers of West Bengal, Telangana, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh have visited Singapore since 2014.

Delegations from Assam, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, and Gujarat, have also visited Singapore. Singapore's Minister for Home Affairs and for Law K Shanmugam attended the Resurgent Rajasthan Partnership Summit (Nov 2015) of which Singapore was a Partner country. Singapore was a Partner Country of the 7th Vibrant Gujarat Summit (Jan 2015). Singapore is Minister for Trade & Industry S Iswaran has visited Andhra Pradesh several times in connection with the new capital city, Amaravati. Singapore is also working with Rajasthan Government in water management and conservation.

Defence Cooperation

Defence Cooperation Agreement (DCA), signed in October 2003, and the enhanced DCA signed in November 2015, provide the overarching framework for bilateral defence cooperation. Defence interactions, under the framework of the Agreement, include policy dialogues, working groups, staff talks, exercises, training activities, exhibitions and conferences.

Cultural Activities

Inter-governmental cooperation in culture is governed by a 1993 MOU for Cooperation in the fields of Arts, Archives and Heritage. Executive Programmes (EP) on cultural cooperation are agreed upon for specified periods, the latest for the period 2015-18 was signed during Prime Minister's visit to Singapore in November 2015. ICCR and the National University of Singapore (NUS) have signed an MOU in March 2010 establishing a short-term Chair on Indian Studies at the South Asian Studies Programme, NUS. Indian cultural activities are held regularly in Singapore by various community organizations. A number of cultural societies, such as the Temple of Fine Arts, Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society (SIFAS), Apsara Arts, among others, promote Indian classical dance and arts. Regional and community based organizations are active in promoting language teaching, yoga and arts.

Indian Community

Singapore's total population is 5.54 million (June 2015), which includes 3.9 million Singaporeans and 1.6 million foreigners. Indians constitute about 9.1 per cent or around 3.5 lakhs of the resident population. In addition, among the 1.6 million foreigners in Singapore, an estimated 3.5 lakh are Indian expatriates, serving in financial services, IT, students, and workers mainly in the construction and marine sectors. Tamil is one of the four official languages of Singapore. Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi are also taught in schools. About two-thirds of the community are Tamil. Punjabis, Malayalis and Sindhis are the other major communities.

Consular Matters

Welfare and well-being of the Indian nationals, including of Indian workers feature prominently in consular responsibilities. It is estimated that about 1.5 lakhs Indians are working in Singapore, mainly in construction and marine sectors. Singapore does not fall in the "Emigration Clearance Required" category.

Useful Resources

High Commission of India, Singapore website: <https://www.hcisingapore.gov.in>

Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInSingapore>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/IndiaInSingapore>

Fortnightly Biz E-News Letter “India Focus:
<https://www.hcisingapore.gov.in/index.php>

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