

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 which later became a crown colony. India was one of the first countries to recognize Singapore in 1965.

Political relations

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. 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. PM of Singapore Mr. Lee Hsien Loong 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.

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 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 - PM Modi Official Visit in May-June 2018 witnessed over 35 concrete outcomes in the areas of defence, trade & economic, logistics and infrastructure, skills development, public administration, urban – rural development. PM Modi became the first Indian PM to deliver keynote address at the annual Shangri La Dialogue. In a historic visit to Changi Naval Base, PM boarded a Singapore and an Indian naval ship.

PM Modi became the first Head of Government to deliver the keynote address at the Singapore Fintech Festival- world's largest Fintech event when he visited in November 2018. He also launched a global digital platform, APIX, to connect fintech companies and banks.

PM Modi had earlier visited Singapore twice in 2015. In March to attend the State Funeral of Founder of Singapore and Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew and an Official visit in November 2015. PM Lee had visited earlier in October 2016, July and December 2012 and June 2005.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S Jaishankar; Raksha Mantri (RM) 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. Balakrishnan on 9 September 2019. RM co-chaired the annual Defence Ministers' Dialogue with Defence Minister Dr. Ng on 20 November 2019. 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 also visited Singapore.

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 Mahatma 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.

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 January, 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.

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 and a number of inter-Governmental Agreements facilitating defence, political, commercial and people-to-people exchanges. There is great convergence on a broad range of international issues and both are members of a number of forums, including EAS, G20, Commonwealth, IORA, ADMM+ and IONS.

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 (10th edition in 2019) in India every year; annual exercises including India's longest uninterrupted naval exercise with any other country (26th edition in 2019); Navy and Coast Guard ship visits. Singapore's participates in IONS and multilateral Exercise MILAN by Indian Navy. The inaugural Trilateral Maritime Exercise between India, Singapore and Thailand was held in September.

India and Singapore also 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 including cyber security, combating drug trafficking.

Trade, Economic and Development Cooperation

Five areas of cooperation were agreed in August 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. In the second term of PM Modi led Government, Mission

organised region's first international business & innovation summit on India on 09-10 September 2019, titled "India- Singapore : the Next Phase."

Scale up Trade & Investment: About 9000 Indian companies are registered in Singapore. More than 440 companies from Singapore are registered in India. The India-Singapore CEO Forum was launched in November 2018. 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. Bilateral trade in FY 2019-20 (till October 2019) was USD14.8 billion with exports to Singapore constituting USD 6 billion (growth of 0.4 %) while USD 8.7 billion of imports (decline of 6.4%). 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. The outward Indian FDI to Singapore was USD 66.93 billion (April 2000 - October 2019) out of which about USD 2 billion in FY 2019-20 till October 2019. 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.

Speed up connectivity: Singapore is now directly connected to 15 Indian cities by 8 airlines with more than 500 weekly flights both ways. In 2018, about 1.27 million Indian tourists visited Singapore, making India the third largest source in tourism for Singapore.

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.

Skill development: Singapore is working with the Central and state Governments as well as Government organisations to establish skill development centres in various sectors. 3 international level skill centres have been established in New Delhi, Udaipur and Guwahati.

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 to Singapore and vice-versa.

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. In 2018, Mission launched a startup engagement platform, India-Singapore Entrepreneurship Bridge (InSprenneur), which had three well attended conferences in January, May 2018 and

September 2019. University students from India and Singapore have participated in two Joint Hackathons since announced by both PMs in June 2018, the latest one at September 2019 in Chennai.

Science & Technology Cooperation - ISRO has so far launched 9 of Singapore's satellites. There is ongoing collaboration including R & D between Government institutions, universities, private sector in the area including Industry 4.0. , AI, machine learning, big data analytics, cybersecurity, mobility, smart energy and space.

Cultural Cooperation

Cultural exchanges including performing arts, theatre, museum exchanges, languages, youth exchanges are sustained through support of Government institutions of both sides and through a number of cultural societies of Indian diaspora. As an innovative mechanism for promoting Indian handicrafts, PM unveiled a platform to bring Indian artisans to Singapore on a regular basis.

The 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in June 2019 through 200 yoga sessions. 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 and anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's historic speech at World Parliament of Religions. 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

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 ECR category. Tamil is one of the four official languages of Singapore. Hindi, Gujarati, Urdu, Bengali and Punjabi are also taught in schools.

ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was held at iconic marina Bay Sands Convention Centre in January 2018 with the theme, "Ancient Route, New Journey." It featured 16 thematic sessions covering business, technology, connectivity to culture, youth and diaspora with an average of 3000 participants at any given time at the venue. In addition, there were many parallel festival and conference as well as literary competitions and technological grand challenges in the run up.

Useful Resources

More details on [bilateral relations](#) on [Website](#) , [Facebook](#) ; [Twitter](#) and Fortnightly E-Newsletter '[India Focus](#)':

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