

India-Myanmar - Bilateral Brief

- India shares a long land border of over 1643kms 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 spiritual, historical, 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.
- A state of emergency was imposed in Myanmar on 1 February, 2021 and the state power were taken over by the State Administrative Council, headed by the Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Armed Forces Senior General Min AungHlaing who is the current Prime Minister of the Provisional Government.

Bilateral 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 19th Foreign Office Consultations were held on 1st October, 2020 in virtual mode.
- 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 at Nay Pyi Taw.
- 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 from 9-11 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. The 7th JTC Meeting was held on 24 November, 2020 in a virtual mode.

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.
- Former 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.
- Hon'ble Rashtrapati ji 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 the then President of Myanmar, U Win Myint and the then State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.
- Former 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 the then 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.
- Former 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 in areas like implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs); projects under Rakhine State Development Program; Prevention of Trafficking in Persons; and cooperation in areas like petroleum, communication and health research were signed.
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and former State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had a telephonic conversation on 30 April 2020 on the evolving COVID19 scenario.
- Other notable recent visits were those by Myanmar Minister of Agriculture to India in September 2022, Myanmar Minister of Law to India in September 2022 and Myanmar

Minister of Commerce to India in October 2022. Foreign Secretary of India visited Myanmar in November 2022.

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 has been involved in Myanmar include 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; (iii) 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; (iv) Rakhine State Development Programme; (v) Border Area Development Programme; (vi) Restoration and conservation of Ananda Temple in Bagan (completed in 2018); (vii) the repair and conservation of 92 earthquake damaged pagodas etc.
- A Line of Credit for US \$ 500 million is available to Myanmar for undertaking various projects. Previously, multiple projects like laying of optical fibre link between Moreh and Mandalay; railway rehabilitation in Myanmar; renovation of Thanlyin oil refinery etc. have been completed under Indian LoC and some projects have already been approved and are under various stages of implementation.
- In September 2022, India and Myanmar signed a Project Agreement for Construction of a Modern Integrated Checkpost at Tamu in Myanmar.

Capacity Building

- India has been offering avenues of capacity building to Myanmar under various schemes like Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Indian Council for Cultural Affairs (ICCR) Scholarships and other training programs.
- With the recent disruption in international travel, the ITEC courses have moved to an online mode of learning and in the FY 2021-22, 267 participants have participated in 112 e-ITEC courses in diverse areas like English language, Data Analytics, Gender Inclusive Governance, courses for educational administrators, Buddhism, Covid related areas etc.
- Myanmar students have also availed scholarships to Indian universities under ICCR scholarships and PhD fellowships for ASEAN students. In the launch year (2020), 10 IIT scholarships were offered to Myanmar students in various Indian Institutes of

Technology under the “1000 Integrated PhD Fellowships for ASEAN students”. 12 students were selected for ICCR scholarships till date in FY 2020-2021, out of an annual allotment of 20 seats. In FY 2021-22, one student was selected from Myanmar for ICCR scholarship.

Defense Cooperation

- Defense cooperation has been a strong pillar of bilateral relations between the two countries. 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 Defense Secretary, Shri Sanjay Mitra visited Myanmar in May 2019 and Senior General Min AungHlaing, Commander-in-Chief of the Defense 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. RakshaMantriShriRajnath Singh met Commander-in-Chief of Defence Services Senior General Min AungHlaing (**Sr. Gen.MAH**) on 24 June 2020 on the sidelines of Russia’s Victory Day Parade in Moscow. Chief of Army Staff General M MNaravane visited Myanmar in October 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. India is the fourth largest trading partner of Myanmar.
- India is the fifth-largest trading partner of Myanmar. The bilateral trade stood at US\$ 1.03 billion in 2021-22. The growth is, however, not commensurate with the potential. The bilateral trade has risen from US\$328 million in 1997-98 to US\$921.19 million in 2006-07; US\$2.18 Billion in 2013-14 and US\$2.17 Billion in 2016-17. Bilateral trade however witnessed a decline of 14.15% in 2020-21 over the 2019-20 before increasing again in 2021-22 on account of increased import of pulses. India’s imports from Myanmar increased by 55%, and India’s export to Myanmar witnessed an increase of 45% during 2021-22 over the previous year’s trade figures. India-Myanmar bilateral trade is conducted under ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA) and India’s Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) scheme.

- In terms of investment, India stands at 11th position with an approved investment of US\$ 773.038 million by 34 Indian enterprises as on 31 January 2022. 13 Indian Public Sector Undertakings have a presence in Myanmar in different sectors, with a concentration in oil and gas.
- Myanmar is potentially an important partner in the energy sector as future offshore gas finds can be piped to India. The then MOS for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, visited Myanmar from Feb 20-24, 2017. India currently has a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Oil and Gas, a Joint Steering Committee (JSC) & a Joint Working Group (JWG) on Power cooperation and a Joint Working Group (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 in the process of donating Bhabhatron-II machine to Myanmar.
- 1st meeting of the JWG under New Program of Cooperation (2018-21) in the field of Science and Technology was held in September 2019 in New Delhi.
- Other important meetings conducted during 2022 include Joint Steering Committee Meeting/ Joint Working Group Meeting on Power in September 2022.
- An MoU between India and Myanmar for cooperation in the area of pulses was signed in June 2021.
- Myanmar's Minister of Commerce Pwint San participated in India-ASEAN Business Summit in October 2021 in virtual mode.

Connectivity

- Daily flights between Yangon and Kolkata by Indigo Airlines 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 Northeastern 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.

- Since the outbreak of Covid-19, all the routine flight connectivity as well as land-border connectivity was suspended. Mission successfully conducted 18 VBM flights (Air India) during the past year (1 April 2021 to 31st March 2022) providing much needed connectivity between the two countries.
- With the recent relaxation in COVID related restrictions by Myanmar from 17 April 2022, there are weekly two flights each between Delhi-Yangon and Kolkata-Yangon being operated by Myanmar Airways International, in addition to a bi-weekly flight between Delhi-Yangon by Air India.

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.
- India provided support to Myanmar in its fight against COVID-19 through supply of medicines, medical equipment and vaccines through 2021 and 2022. Towards this end, an oxygen plant was supplied to Myanmar in January 2022. In total, India supplied more than 20 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine to Myanmar, including both gift and commercial supplies.

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.
- Cultural interactions between India and Myanmar include regular visits of cultural troupes from both the countries.
- The Embassy of India in Yangon has a full fledged Cultural Centre named Swami Vivekanand Cultural Centre that conducts regular events like yoga, cultural competitions, dance classes, seminars and talks. Yoga and Hindi classes are also conducted by the Embassy.
- Cultural exchange between India and Myanmar had been adversely affected by the loss of connectivity during the pandemic. However, cultural connections were maintained

during the period by leveraging communication technology by conducting online workshops for people in Myanmar in areas of interest like painting and Indian dance forms.

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/>
