

Chapter – 3

India's Political Relations with ASEAN

In the post-Cold War scenario, as a result of disintegration of USSR and changed political scenario, India and ASEAN both came closer to each other. There had been doubts in Southeast Asian countries about India's position due to its policies towards Afghanistan and Cambodia, but in 1979, after the return of forces of Vietnam from Cambodia and in 1988, after the return of military forces of Russia from Afghanistan, the obstacles were removed from their way.¹ In early 1990s India marched towards new approach in foreign policy matters with advent of 'Look East Policy'. In its 'Look East Policy' India tried to take first step to improve relations with Asia-Pacific countries in general and with major emphasis on ASEAN countries.² The real turning point in India-ASEAN relations came with economic liberalization in 1991, the end of the Cold War and the enunciation of India's "Look East" policy by Prime Minister P.V. Narsimha Rao. As a publication of the Indian ministry of External Affairs that time observed:

"There was a confluence of interests. A new world order, the economic reforms in India along with its "Look East" policy, coincided with ASEAN's "Look West" and region allocation drive."³

India's Look East and ASEAN's Look West

Under the "Look East" policy India pursued increased trade and investment cooperation with Asia-Pacific countries in general and Southeast Asia in particular. Apart from extending India's enduring relations with Vietnam, the policy also pursued greater economic relations with Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. India became a

'Sectoral Dialogue Partner' of ASEAN at the ASEAN's Singapore Summit in 1992, and a 'Full Dialogue Partner' at the Bangkok Summit in 1995.⁴ In February 1995 the ASEAN – India Business Council was set up. India was invited to the meeting of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in July 1996. At this it was decided the ARF would only admit as participant's countries that have a direct influence on the peace and security of the East Asia and Pacific region⁵.

Commenting on these decisions of the ASEAN, Mr. Gujral remarked at the Jakarta PMC:

*"The ASEAN decision to make India a Full Dialogue Partner is based on your farsighted assessment about the political and strategic convergence, acceleration of economic relations and their future potential, and complementarities in areas that were hitherto not evident or remained unexploited. A key objective of India and ASEAN to move from derivative to direct relationship so that there are no distortions, no misperceptions, no ignorance and no intermediation."*⁶

There has been a doubling of trade between India and ASEAN countries in the 1990s and a marked increase in joint ventures and foreign direct investment between the two. Sections VI and VII provide a comprehensive account of India-ASEAN trade and investment relations. Suffice it to say, that ASEAN has emerged as the third largest foreign investor in India, after the United States and European Union. The recent economic and financial crisis in some of the ASEAN countries has slowed down the momentum of India-ASEAN trade and investment flows. However, once countries like Malaysia and Thailand cross the hump, perhaps by year 2000, this

growth momentum is likely to gather pace once again. India has set itself for the ambitious target of increasing India-ASEAN trade to US\$ 100 billion by year 2015.⁷

There are two dimensions to India's new relationship with ASEAN. First the trade and investment dimension and second is the foreign policy and strategic dimension. Neither of these relations has equal value to all ASEAN countries. Clearly, India's economic relations with some are more developed than with other. Similarly, India's political and strategic relations with some are more developed than with others. Suffice it to say that in no case is the relationship purely uni-dimensional.⁸

The economic relationship is stronger with countries like Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand-which have emerged as important trading and investment partners for India. Singapore is in many ways the hub of the India-ASEAN relationship and played a key role in ASEAN's decision to designate India as a "Full Dialogue Partner". Singapore has major investment plans for Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. There are now direct flights from Singapore to Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad, apart from Delhi, Bombay and Kolkatta. Malaysia is expected to invest in road and port development in Andhra Pradesh and Orissa. Thailand's relations with India have been further strengthened with the creation of another regional economic grouping, the Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand Economic Cooperation group, BIMSTEC.⁹

On the political way, India has traditionally had very good relations with Vietnam and now this relationship has been deepened with increased Indian investment in Vietnam and growing two way trade. India's defence relationship with Indonesia and Malaysia has also been an important dimension of its relations with this

region. This aspect of India-ASEAN relations has acquired higher profile with the emergence of China as a new global 'superpower' and an Asian economic giant.¹⁰

China looms large over the region and in the new 'balance of Power' which all ASEAN members countries are trying to help shape, India, Japan and the United States will be increasingly viewed as checks and balances against growing Chinese economic and military power in the region. All ASEAN member countries are committed to developing friendly and profitable relations with China and are equally committed to good relations with other major power in the region, including India. The Indonesia strategic policy thinker Djiwandono notes, for example: "China and India, despite its bilateral problems, are now both ASEAN dialogue partners and participants of ARF. Indeed, in terms of power politics, the engagement of the two largest nations in the world, along with the US, Japan and Russia, might help create a regional balance of power in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific region as part of the global balance that includes the European Union."¹¹

Djiwandono goes on to add: "In fact, with the establishment of ARF, ASEAN strives to engage and bring the major power into a regional structure. In that way, they may play their proper roles commensurate with their respective potential capabilities so as to maintain regional peace, security and stability." Thus, the comprehensive scope of India-ASEAN relations should not be lost sight of in any evaluation of purely economic benefits and costs. India-ASEAN dialogue and relationship is wide-ranging and will be long enduring. It is as much interested in building an economic relationship as in improving political and social understating.¹²

India's 'Look East' policy has not only strengthened India's relationship with ASEAN as a whole but also provided a complementary institutional framework and a

catalyst for India's bilateral ties with Individual ASEAN countries. Singapore has been the Principal shepherd for India in ASEAN and played a critical role in bringing about the India-ASEAN engagement at the summit level as well as India's membership of the EAS. In keeping with its policy of staying ahead of the curve, it took a strategic view of India in the early 1990s at a time when not many countries were looking at India seriously.¹³

In this process, Indo-Chinese relations also found a new way and there was improvement in economic and political relation with Japan. But in context of relations with ASEAN countries, India got tremendous success. Developments in India's political relations with individual ASEAN countries are presented as follows:

India-Singapore Relations

With the end of the Cold War and the subsequent collapse of the USSR in 1991, bilateral ties between India and Singapore became warmer in early 1990s. India's 'Look East Policy' coincided with Singapore's desire to balance its engagement with China, by helping to bring India into Southeast Asia. In 1994, Singapore's PM Goh Chok Tong launched the aptly named "India Fever" and his visit to India in 1994 as the chief guest of India's Republic Day celebrations marked the beginning of this ongoing era of warmer relations. A reciprocal visit by PM Shri Narsimha Rao took place in September 1994. Memorandum of Understanding on Foreign Office Consultations was signed in 1994 and there have been regular foreign office consultations since 1999. Singapore helped India to upgrade its partial dialogue with ASEAN into a full dialogue in 1995, to join the ASEAN Regional Forum in 1996, and later to join in the ASEAN plus 3 processes. Singapore has always been an ardent advocate of India's greater geo-strategic presence in the ASEAN region and

supporter of India's permanent membership of the UN Security Council.¹⁴ India also fully appreciates Singapore's help in such matters, as PM Vajpayee himself stated in his speech during his visit to Singapore in April 2002. During same visit a Joint Study Group to discuss Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement was set up. Singapore President S.R. Nathan visited India in January 2003. His visit culminated into signing of Defence cooperation agreement and a MoU concerning a third country training program.¹⁵ Goh Chok Tong was awarded the Jawahar Lal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 2004. Based on the recommendations of India-Singapore Joint Study Group, which was set up in 2002, the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation. Agreement was signed in June 2005 during the visit of PM Lee Hsien Loong to India. CECA came into force in June 2005 after 13 rounds of negotiations spanning two years (May 2003-June 2005). The CECA prescribes immediate tariff elimination for 506 goods under the Early Harvest Programme (EHP) and phased tariff elimination for more than 4500 items between 2005 and 2009. An India-Singapore Parliamentary Forum was set up in June 2005 under the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI). Singapore-India Partnership Foundation has also been set up with the support from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the Singapore Business Federation to promote commercial and economic exchanges.¹⁶ The Prime Minister of India, Dr. Man Mohan Singh, visited Singapore in November 2007 to attend 6th India-ASEAN Summit and East Asia Summit. In his speech on the occasion Prime Minister thanked warm welcome, the friendly atmosphere and generous hospitality. He said that he is very happy to be here in Singapore, a country that epitomizes the qualities of courage, strength and excellence.¹⁷ "India Show" was organized in Singapore on January 14-16, 2011. Shri Anand Sharma, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, inaugurated the "India

Show” in Singapore in the presence of his Singaporean counterpart Mr. Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade & Industry at the Sundeck International Convention and Exhibition Centre. ‘India Show’ is an initiative of the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India to promote “Brand India” and the Indian industry in potential markets for Indian products, technologies and services. More than 90 companies have participated in the Show notable among them being Tata Group, ISRO, Exim Bank, Amul, TVS Logistics, Sula Vineyards, Usha International, Emaar-MGF Land, Mahindra World City and Tea Board. Tata Nano car has been exhibited in Singapore for the first time. The “India Show” from 14-16 January 2011 is being organized jointly, by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Confederation of Indian Industry. Prior to the inauguration, Shri Sharma met Mr. Lim Hng Kiang, Minister for Trade & Industry, Singapore to discuss bilateral issues including India-Singapore CECA. Both sides are currently undertaking a review of CECA which is likely to be concluded in 2011. Shri Sharma held a lunch meeting with Mr. George Yeo, Foreign Affairs Minister of Singapore and discussed a varied range of matters. They particularly deliberated upon the future regional integration initiatives with ASEAN such as the ASEAN+6 architecture which envisage Comprehensive Economic Partnership in East Asia (CEPEA). Noting that Singapore now is the second largest source of FDI into India, Shri Sharma recounted the enormous opportunities the Indian infrastructure sector provides for Singaporean funds and encouraged Singapore to invest in India especially in the iconic Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC).¹⁸ A look at the agreement signed between India and Singapore reveal progress in their bilateral relations.¹⁹

Bilateral Agreements signed between India and Singapore:

Bilateral Air Service Agreement	1968
MoU on Foreign Office Consultations	1994
Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DATT)	1994
Executive Programme on Cooperation in the Arts, Heritage	2000
Archives and the Library Memorandum of Understanding on Telecommunications	2002
Defence Cooperation Agreement	2003
Memorandum of Understanding Concerning a Third Country Training Programme	2003
Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement	2005
Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	2005
Memorandum of Understanding for Army-to-Army Exercises	2005

- Free Trade Agreement, in goods and services, and investment;
- A bilateral agreement on investment promotion, protection, and cooperation;
- An improved Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement;
- A more liberal Air Services Agreement, and Open Skies for Charter Flights; and

- A work programme of cooperation in a number of areas including health care, education, media, tourism, and the creation of an India-Singapore Fund, with a target of US\$ 1 billion.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the growth of industry in India, partnering industry and government alike through advisory and consultative processes. CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry led and industry managed organization, playing a proactive role in India's development process. Founded over 108 years ago, it is India's premier business association, with a direct membership of over 5100 companies from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs and indirect membership of over 50,000 companies from 283 national and regional. Coinciding with the government of India's "Look East Policy", the CII Southeast Asia Regional Representative Office was established in Singapore in September 1994, to broaden the relationship between ASEAN and India by encouraging and supporting contacts and assisting both Indian industry and businesses in Singapore and through Singapore, in ASEAN. The focus of this office has been to work both with corporate and governments in the ASEAN region—to devise a strategy which promotes an enduring and mutually beneficial economic relationship spanning trade, investment, technology transfer, training and development across sectors such as Infrastructure, Manufacturing & Engineering, ICT, Healthcare, Tourism, Environment, Agriculture, Science & Technology, Finance and Banking, Logistics and Retail. The CII's Southeast Asia Regional Representative Office in Singapore is supported by the ASEAN desk at the CII Headquarters and also by the network of CII offices in India. Today, CII's Southeast Asia Regional Representative Office is a reference point for not only Indian, but also ASEAN industry. It assists and actively enables Indian

industry to look at new markets in ASEAN and work closely with a number of ASEAN industry association's think tanks, universities and government representatives. Likewise, they also encourage ASEAN companies to look at Indian as a lucrative investment destination.

Aims and objectives of CII's work in Singapore are

- To encourage Indian companies establish new businesses in Singapore.
- To promote cooperation between companies and organizations in India with counterparts in Singapore both with respect to trade, economic and investment cooperation in India and Singapore and in also other countries.
- To organize events, seminars and sector specific delegations focusing on Small and Medium Enterprises, Quality, infrastructure, Healthcare, Insurance, Financial Services, Tourism, Biotechnology, IPR, ICT, Education, Technology and other areas in India and Singapore— with greater participation from ASEAN.
- To work closely with organizations in Singapore and to look at a China-India-ASEAN network for promoting trade and economic cooperation.
- To create awareness amongst Indian exporters to look at Singapore as a gateway for their products and services into the Southeast Asian region and explore benefits from Singapore's FTA with Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the United States of America.

An outfit called "India-Singapore CEO Forum," comprising of select chief executive officers in the corporate sector and co-chaired by steel magnate Ratan Tata, chairman of the Tata Group, from the Indian side and Koh Boon Hwee, chairman of DBS Group Holdings Ltd. and DBS Bank Ltd. was formed in 2007. The CII, the

Singapore Business Federation, and International Enterprise (IE) Singapore constitute the joint secretariat of the CEO Forum. The CEO Forum's mandate is to make recommendations to the two governments for enhancing bilateral ties. Singapore is home to some 2500 Indian companies with diverse business interests.²⁰ In order to assist Singapore companies to operate in India, a Network India was set up in October 2002.²¹ Singapore and India concluded the comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) in 2005, considered a stepping stone for the India-ASEAN FTA. The multi-million dollar Information Technology (IT) Theme Park in Bangalore, as well as collaboration in the banking, pharmaceutical, bio-technology and telecommunication sectors are just some of the areas of mutual interest in which the two countries have vigorously engaged with each other, joint military exercises have been conducted between the two countries navies and armed forces, such as the annual naval training operations as part of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercises (SIMBEX). Indeed, India and Singapore have much in common.²² Both are multiracial, multi-religious, multi-lingual democracies, non-aligned and members of the commonwealth and G-77 clods, Indian journalist, Sunanda Datta-Ray, has suggested that, because of these similarities, Singapore will continue to facilitate India's links with the regions.²³

Singapore realized that with the rise of Shanghai as China's own financial centre and the transfer of Hong Kong back to China in 1997 it would be disadvantaged in doing business with China. It accordingly decided that it could play a catalytic role in India's economic transformation similar to what Hong Kong player for China has traditionally. It felt that if India as a whole developed greater long-term stakes in Singapore through inflow of investment knowledge workers, tourists and students this would bring greater vitality to Singapore's economy and enhance its

security.²⁴ The result of Singapore's efforts, reciprocated by India, is the India-Singapore comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement, the first of its kind for India, which has been operative since 2005. Over the last few years, there has been a noticeable spurt in India – Singapore trade and economic relations. India has an extensive defence cooperation programme with Singapore that is unmatched in the rest of ASEAN. Overall, between India and Singapore there is a high level of mutual trust and confidence, extensive people-to-people ties and frequent exchanges of high-level official visits.²⁵

Education

On the education front, greater interaction between students is being facilitated by the Asian Business Fellowship for India. The Fellowship sponsors Singaporeans for market immersion programmes such as internships in Indian companies as well as full-time postgraduate and executive programmes at top Indian institutions, such as the Indian Institutes of Management (IIM).²⁶

IIM Bangalore has started to offer management education in Singapore, operating out of Bhavan's Indian International School.²⁷ The National University of Singapore and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB) signed a MoU on 29 March 2005 to establish a joint graduate engineering degree programme for training human resource relevant to a number of industrial sectors in both countries.²⁸ Singapore is playing the role of a catalyst and facilitator in setting up an Asian consortium for the revival of Nalanda, the ancient Buddhist seat of learning into, a Centre for Buddhist and Secular Learning.²⁹

The ethnic Indians constitute about 9.2% of the total population of 5.1 million, including permanent residents. Tamil is one of the four official languages of

Singapore. The growth of the community has also led to the establishment of educational institutions including the Global Indian International School, Delhi Public School, National Public School, Yuva Bharati International School, DAV School and S.P. Jain Centre of Management Cultural. Given the large and diverse Indian community in Singapore, cultural activities receive considerable support from the Singapore Government and community organizations.

Cultural

A number of cultural societies (i.e., Temple of Fine Arts, Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society, Nrityalaya, Kalamandir), promote Indian classical dance and arts. The local ethos is supportive of its constituent communities expressing their cultural creativity and Deepawali is regarded as the premier Indian cultural celebration, on par with Chinese New Year and the Malay Han Raya. Showcasing Indian culture and cuisine, an 'India Evening' was hosted in "Indian Show" in Singapore from January 14-16, 2011. The Evening included a performance conceived and choreographed by world renowned Indian artist, Ms Shovana Narayan. On this occasion, Indian and foreign dignitaries and guests had the opportunity to taste an exquisite selection of Indian wines and special Indian cuisine prepared by Chefs flown from the Taj Group of India.³⁰

India-Malaysia Relations

Malaysia is an important complex and different country in ASEAN. It matters to India because of its economic dynamism it is India's second largest trading partner in ASEAN its Islamic orientation (it has a generally pro-Pakistan and pro-organization of Islamic Conference view on many matters), its sympathetic orientation towards China because of the control of its economy by businessmen of

Chinese origin, and its considerable weight in ASEAN. Malaysia has more than two million citizens of Indian Origin, mostly the descendants of the workers brought by colonial Britain from India to work on Malaysia's rubber, tin and Palm oil plantations. The ruling ethnic Malay majority discriminates against this economically weak community at the lowest strata of Malaysia's society, which at times creates ripples among the public in India as during the widespread Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF) agitation in Malaysia in 2004.³¹ The attitude towards India Despite the high level of trade and the extensive involvement of Malaysian companies in road building, housing and other infrastructure projects in India and of Indian companies in Malaysia's infrastructure and information technology sectors, India's relations with Malaysia continue to be marked by tension and a degree of mistrust.³²

India and Malaysia have a long history of trade and cultural relations. Diplomatic relations between India and Malaysia were established in 1957 and the two countries celebrated the 50th anniversary of the foundation of their diplomatic engagement in 2007. Though, bilateral relations have generally been cordial, the enthusiasm to engage deeper has remained absent for a long period. Bilateral ties have, however, improved' during recent years due to the convergence of mutual interests in an economically globalized world. Regular exchanges of high level visits have also contributed to the improved relations, P.V. Narsimha Rao in 1995 and Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2001 visited Malaysia. Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Malaysia in 2005 to participate in the First East Asia summit. Similarly various Malaysian Prime Ministers have also visited India. Dr. Mahathir met in 1994 for G-15 and in 1993, 1996, and 2002 for bilateral visits.³³ Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Bin Mohammad paid a state visit to India from 19-22 December 1996 to receive the 1994 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding. Dr.

Mahathir also delivered the First India-ASEAN Lecture instituted under the Full Dialogue Partnership with ASEAN. During the official visit of the Minister of External Affairs to Malaysia on 18 and 19 August 1996 ports, power and highways were identified as three areas where Malaysian expertise can be beneficial to India.³⁴

India-Malaysia cooperation also has its regional and international dimensions. Both are the common member of various forums such as the NAM, the G-15, the G-77, the Commonwealth, the WTO, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), the East Asia Summit and the Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IORAC). India has always been extremely supportive of Malaysia's active role in NAM while Malaysia also extended its support in favor of India's status as an observer nation in the ASEAN. However, during the tenure of Mahathir Mohammad, the nature of India-Malaysia relations remained extremely complex due to his attempt to 'be more Malay than the Malays.' Mahathir, due to his partly-Indian origin, was forced to choose a delicate balance in bilateral ties because his closeness with India could have aroused Malay nationalistic sentiments against him. However, despite domestic political compulsions, Mahathir was in favor of economic and defense cooperation with India. This is evident from the fact that during his tenure Malaysia also got its air force pilots trained on MIG-29s in India. During the Vajpayee's visit to Malaysia in 2001, a positive sign in India- Malaysia relations was seen when Malaysia changed its previous view on the Kashmir issue and accepted the Indian position that the issue could be resolved only through bilateral negotiations. However, Indo-Malaysian bilateral relations deteriorated in 2003 when some Indian IT professionals, working in Malaysia's Multimedia Super Corridor project were harassed and charged as illegal migrants. Following strong criticism from the Indian government, the Malaysian government conveyed its apology to India, Thereafter, and Prime Minister Badawi's

landmark visit to India in 2004 stimulated the bilateral relationship and opened new vistas for India-Malaysia cooperation. His visit culminated in the signing of 12 agreements and MoUs covering wide ranging cooperation in the areas of satellite technology, biotechnology, IT, infrastructure, education, and research. In a meeting with Prime Minister Badawi on sidelines of ASEAN-India Summit in December 2005, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh suggested for a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to fund infrastructure projects on government-to-government basis through Malaysian Khazanah. Malaysian Minister of Finance II Yacop visited India in May 2006 to discuss and develop the idea of the SPV further.³⁵ Foreign Ministers of both countries head the Joint Commission, which held its 4th meeting in New Delhi in February 2007.³⁶

Cultural

The Limkokwing University of Creative Technology, in association with the High Commission of India and Indian Council of Cultural Relations, held an Odissi Dance Performance Night at the University's Hall of Fame to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Malaysia. The warm and cordial atmosphere throughout the evening, where high ranking foreign officials of India and Malaysia intermingled with Limkokwing's staff and students, was a testimony of the long-standing friendship and excellent relations that exist between Malaysia and India. As a leading global university of the world, Limkokwing University is conscious that Malaysia attaches great importance to its relations with India, especially where the longstanding relations are bound by history, culture and economic imperatives. Over the past 50 years, the bilateral cooperation between Malaysia and India in areas such as science and technology, transportation, defence, agriculture, labour, culture and tourism have been intensified.³⁷

Air links have improved significantly following a bilateral agreement in 2007 to increase the seat capacity to six major destinations in India and a provision for multiple destinations and designating any number of airlines to operate on the India—Malaysia routes. India is the sixth largest source country for inbound tourism to Malaysia with about 600,000 Indian tourists visiting Malaysia in 2009, an increase of 9% over figures of 2008. Malaysia is the tenth largest source country for foreign tourists visiting India with 115,794 Malaysians visiting India in 2008.

There are about 150,000 legally recruited Indian workers in Malaysia in both the skilled and semi-skilled category. This includes about 10,000 expatriated employed in IT, manufacturing, banking, etc. A bilateral MoU on Employment and Welfare of Workers signed in January 2009 establishes an institutional framework to deal with issues concerning Indian workers. A Joint Working Group at the Secretary level held its first meeting in March 2009, and this was followed by a meeting of Middle Level officials in October 2009.

Malaysian Prime Minister Dato' Sri Najib paid a landmark state visit to India from 19-23 January 2010. During his visit he expressed his wish to see a qualitatively new relationship between two countries.³⁸ 2000 Indian students are studying in Malaysia, while an estimated 3000 Malaysian students are studying in India. A MOU on Higher Education was signed on 20 January 2010 during PM Najib's visit to India. India offers about 30 slots under ITEC and 25 under the Colombo Plan. A new Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) has been opened in Kuala Lumpur on 10 February 2010 to promote cultural relations with Malaysia. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for 2010-13 is under consideration. Progress in India-Malaysia relations is also evident from various agreements and memorandum of understanding signed between them as given below.³⁹

Bilateral Agreements with Malaysia

Cooperation in Science and Technology 1998	12 September
Trade Agreement	October 2000
Exemption of the Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports	14 May 2001
Avoidance of Double Taxation and the prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to Taxes on Income	14 May 2001
Agreements in cooperation on Information Technology between NASSCOM (India) and PIKOM (Malaysia)	December 2004

Memorandum of Understanding signed with Malaysia

Defense Cooperation	1993
Air Service Operation	12 September 2000
Mutual Cooperation Relating to Investment, Construction, Privatization and Management of Seaports in India	14 May 2001
Cooperation on Information Technology and Services	14 May 2001
Cooperation in the field of Civil Service,	14 May 2001

Personnel Management and Public

Administration

Between Securities Commission of Malaysia

14 May 2001

and the Securities and Exchange Board of

India in relation to Assistance and Mutual

Cooperation

On Space Technology between Antrix,

December 2004

ISRO and MEASAT Satellite Systems

Sdn Bhd.

Technical Services Agreement concerning

December 2004

between Hyderabad International Airport

Ltd. and Malaysia Airport Holdings Bhd.

Malaysia has one of the largest communities of People of Indian Origin in the world, numbering close of 2 million (about 8% of Malaysia's population). The overwhelming numbers are Tamil speaking, with significant Telugu, Malayalee and Punjabi speaking minorities. PIOs from Malaysia have been sending the largest contingents to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.⁴⁰ The Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh, during his visit to Malaysia in December 2005 met Indian Community in Malaysia and said that the Government is committed to taking further the reform process that emphasized caring for the common man and ensured that no one is left behind and included all sections of society. Speaking at a meeting with the Indian community at Kuala Lumpur the capital of Malaysia, the Prime Minister said that"

*Malaysian firms are now participating actively in the Indian economy and that the bilateral trade was growing satisfactorily. The 'Little India' which we see in so many towns in Malaysia is more than geographical spaces. The relations between India and Malaysia go back many centuries and have always been characterized by peaceful and productive people- to-people contact and cultural cross-fertilization. Education is an area that offers immense potential. I am happy to note that a significant proportion of practicing doctors and legal luminaries in Malaysia have obtained professional degrees from Indian universities. However, since the 1980's this trend has slowed down for several reasons. We must not only reinstate our traditional educational linkages but provide them with a fresh momentum. The Government of India will work to make this happen ”.*⁴¹

On 25 November 2007, the Hindu Rights Action Force (HINDRAF), a group of Hindu NGOs led a demonstration of some 10,000 ethnic Indians in Malaysia demanding the same rights and opportunities as ethnic Malays. Ethnic Indians comprise 8 per cent of the total population of 26 million in the country numbering about 1.8 million. The native ethnic Malays constitute 54 per cent of the total population while ethnic Chinese form the second largest and most economically dominant community with 26 per cent of total population Ethnic Malays are the beneficiaries of the government's affirmative action policy under the Bhumiputra (“sons of the soil”) system but the government has been most reluctant in working towards the well-being of ethnic Indians. Moreover, the demolition of Hindu temples in the name of development intensified the grievances of ethnic Indians who are generally Tamil Hindus. On looking at the immediate consequences of the

HINDRAF's move, it appears that it has been successful in highlighting the grievances of ethnic Indian's in Malaysia and generated a worldwide awareness in this regard. HINDRAF put forward a non-Malay perspective demanding the revamping of the present political system which favour the Malays.⁴² The state of affairs in Malaysia does not appear entirely depressing because the ruling government, despite the domination of Malays, has a more liberal agenda in comparison to the main opposition party, Parti Islam SeMalaysia (PAS) which wants to establish a theocratic state in the country. In a multicultural society such as Malaysia, threats to social harmony occur when the majority places its values, culture and interests in a superior position as compared to other groups. As a result, minority groups feel excluded and marginalized. This politics of exclusion makes the process of national integration difficult. This is evident in the case of Malaysia, which after 50 years of its independence is still facing problems in the process of nation-building. Indians in Malaysia do not have any separatist ambitions and they have identified themselves as Malaysians but because of their underprivileged conditions they want their genuine rights recognized so that they too can be integrated with the mainstream. Thus, their demand is for the politics of recognition.⁴³

Prime Minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh has a reception by the Indian Community at Kuala Lumpur during his visit to Malaysia on 28 October 2010 to attend 8th India-ASEAN Summit. In his speech Dr. Man Mohan Singh said that the Malaysian Indian community holds a very special place in our hearts. It represents the largest gathering of people of Indian origin in the world. The Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas is now a full-fledged mechanism for reaching out to our overseas community and Malaysian delegation is usually one of the largest an— active delegations at the annual Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas. Prime Minister announced a contribution of 5 crore

to augment the Indian Scholarship Trust Fund, which will raise the corpus to 7.55 cr. The Fund was set up by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946 to provide assistance to Malaysian Indian students. At the request of the Indian community in Malaysia, Dr. Man Mohan Singh also announced 20 scholarships for Malaysian students to pursue courses in traditional system of medicine in India. The respect that non-resident Indians have earned abroad, including in Malaysia, is a matter of pride for all Indians. As a government we will continue to provide all assistance to the community in Malaysia through our High Commission in Kuala Lumpur.⁴⁴

During his visit Prime Minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh inaugurated 'LITTLE INDIA' at Brickfields. The Malaysian Government's decision to dedicate the area of Brickfields, which is one of the oldest Indian settlements in the country, as "Little India" is a tribute to the contribution to nation building of all Malaysians of Indian origin. On this special occasion Dr. Man Mohan Singh announced that India would be presenting a Torana Gate to the residents of Brickfields as a mark of India- Malaysia friendship. He said,

"Malaysia under the dynamic leadership of Dato' Sri Najib has entered a new era of progress and prosperity. Dato' Sri Najib has extended his hand of friendship to India. I fully reciprocate his friendship. After my discussions with Dato' Sri Najib today, I can say with confidence that India-Malaysia relations are poised for significant expansion in the coming years. Improving ties with Malaysia will be a very high priority of India's foreign policy in the years ahead".

In his concluding remarks Dr. Man Mohan Singh recalled what Rabindranath Tagore once said:

“A civilization must be judged and assessed not by the level of power it has reached but by how it develops and expresses a love of humanity.”

It is to that high ideal that we must aspire and I hope that Brickfields will serve as a worthy example in that respect.”⁴⁵

During his visit to Malaysia in October 2010 Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh had official talks with Malaysian leaders, Prime Minister Dato’ Sri Najib and Dr. Man Mohan Singh agreed on the framework for a strategic partnership. The Joint Statement outlines a road map for enhanced contacts between two countries at the political, business and people-to-people levels, based on our shared values of democracy and multiculturalism. Both leaders agreed to work closely with each other on regional and international matters of common interest, including on combating the scourge of terrorism. Both leaders successfully concluded negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement and agreed to complete the formalities by 31 January 2011 so that CECA can come into force by the agreed date of 1 July 2011. Dr. Man Mohan Singh said that this Agreement will transform our economic engagement in a substantive way. India-Malaysia CEOs Forum was formally launched. This will encourage direct interaction between business and industry in each other’s countries as well in third countries. Both leaders agreed to further enhance exchanges in the fields of tourism, civil aviation, culture, higher education and labour. Dr. Man Mohan Singh thanked the Prime Minister for Malaysia’s constructive role, as ASEAN Coordinator, in helping to work towards an early conclusion of the India-ASEAN Free Trade Agreement in Services and Investment. Dr. Man Mohan Singh in a media statement after the official talks with the Malaysian leaders said that the year 2010 is a turning point in the history of India-Malaysian relations. He said that the understandings and agreements that we reached

today have established a solid foundation for the building of a Strategic Partnership, and bringing our two peoples together for a better future.⁴⁶ List of MoUs/Agreements signed on 27 October 2010 between India and Malaysia during the Visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh are as follows:⁴⁷

Table 5.1 List of Agreements signed between India and Malaysia in October 2010

S.No,	Name of the MoU/Agreement	Signatory from Indian side	Signatory from Malaysian side
1.	Agreement towards implementing Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) between India and Malaysia on 1st July 2011	Hon'ble Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of Commerce and Industry	Hon'ble Mr. Mustapa Mohamed, Minister of International Trade and Industry
2.	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Traditional Systems of Medicine	Hon'ble Shri Anand Sharma Minister of Commerce & Industry	Hon'ble Mr. Liow Tiong Lai Minister of Health
3.	M0U for cooperation in the field of Tourism	Ms. Latha Paddy Secretary Ministry of External Affairs	Dr. On Hong Pang Secretary General Ministry of Tourism
4.	M0U for Cooperation in the field of IT & Services	Ms. Lathe Reddy Secretary Ministry of External Affairs	Ms. Madinah Mohamad Secretary General Ministry of Science.

			Technology and innovation
5.	Agreement between CSIR of India and UNII< of Malaysia on Research arid Development Collaboration	Mr. Vijay Gokhale High Commissioner of India to Malaysia	Dr. Kamal Jit Singh Chief Executive Officer Special Innovation Unit of the Prime Minister's Office
6.	Cultural Exchange Programme for 2010-13	Mr. Vijay Golchale High Commissioner of India to Malaysia	Mr. Wira Kamaruddin Siaref Secretary General Ministry of Information, Communication and Culture

India-Thailand Relations

As maritime neighbours, and in view of the fact that many insurgent groups from the Northeast Region use Thailand as a base, Thailand and India understandably give each other special attention and cooperate closely and counter terrorism and defence. Thailand remains an attractive tourist destination for Indians. ⁴⁸

Under Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra, Thailand was very aggressive in pursuing closer ties with India as part of its 'Look West' policy. In order to give a boost to the modest level of trade, India and Thailand signed a Framework Agreement for FTA in goods in 2003, but both sides have worked slowly in concluding negotiations. The operation of the Early Harvest Programme that has come into effect

has created misgivings among some sections of Indian industry.⁴⁹ Imports of some products from Thailand have put them at a serious disadvantage. Thailand's geographical location gives it a natural advantage in facilitating India's engagement with the Indo-China countries. For a while, after the departure of Malaysia's long standing Prime Minister Mahathir, Thailand tried to position itself as the natural leader of ASEAN. While that has not fructified, Thailand does remain relevant for India's engagement with CLMV countries and is the only developed member of ASEAN that is involved with India in sub-regional mechanisms like BIMSTEC and the MGC. On the whole, India's relations with Thailand are marked by warmth, cordiality and confidence.⁵⁰

The first remarkable high level 'interaction between India and Thailand was started when Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi paid a visit to Thailand in 1986. His visit was reciprocated by the Thai Prime Minister Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan's visit to India. The end of the Cold War led to a significant improvement in relations. This has been reinforced by increasing economic and commercial links, exchanges of high-level visits on both sides, India's dialogue partnership with ASEAN and the resultant membership of ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), with the formation of the sub-regional grouping BIMSTEC, and launching of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation in November 2000. Thailand's Look West Policy also complements India's Look East Policy.⁵¹ Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao paid an official visit to Thailand in April 1993; this visit further stimulated the process initiated by Rajiv Gandhi. After that, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra paid a state visit to India in November 2001, followed up by another visit to India in 2002. Thereafter, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Thailand in 2003. During his visit five bilateral agreements were concluded. Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh paid a visit to

Thailand in 2004 to attend the first BIMSTEC summit in Bangkok from 29-31 July. On the sidelines of this summit the Indian and Thai Prime Ministers discussed a wide range of bilateral, regional and international issues of common concern. The two leaders welcomed the completion of negotiations for implementing the Early Harvest Scheme under the Framework Agreement for establishing a Free Trade Area between the Kingdom of Thailand and the Republic of India and the finalization of the Protocol by negotiators from both sides. Both leaders agreed that after completion of appropriate formalities, the protocol for implementing the Early Harvest Scheme would be signed by the Ministers of Commerce of both countries during the visit of Thai Commerce Minister, H.E. Mr. Watana Muangsook, to India in August, 2004.⁵² Thaksin Shinawatra again paid a working visit to India in 2005. In 2007, the Thai interim Prime Minister, Gen. Surayud Chulanont paid a visit to India that contributed to breaking the deadlock in India-Thailand FTA negotiations. Two MoUs on renewable energy and cultural cooperation were also signed during his visit.⁵³ Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh visited Thailand in October 2009 and has a meeting with Prime Minister of Thailand His Excellency Mr. Abhisit Vejjajiva on the sidelines of 7th India-ASEAN Summit and 4th East Asia Summit. A brief look at various treaties and agreements signed between India and Thailand⁵⁴ and visits by Thai royal family and government of Thailand to India and Indian government visits to Thailand reveal progress in their bilateral relationship.⁵⁵

Bilateral Treaties and Agreements with Thailand

Cooperation Agreement between the Federation of	1991
Thai Industries and the Federation of Indian	
Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)	

MoU between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and the Asian institute of Technology (AIT)	1992
Agreement on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy	2000
Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA)	2000
MoU on Cooperation in Information Technology	2001
Agreement on Cooperation in the Exploration and use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes	2002
Agreement on Scientific, Technical and Environmental Cooperation and Transfer of Technology	2002
Agreement for Exemption of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passports	2003
MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Agricultural Science, Technology and Economy	2003
Agreement on Tourism Cooperation	2003
Framework Agreement for Establishing Free Trade Area between Thailand and India	2003
Program of Cooperation in Biotechnology	2003
Framework Agreement on the BIMSTEC Free Trade Area	2004

Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty	2004
MoU between the Indian Navy and the Royal Thai Navy on Coordinated Patrol Procedures in the Areas Adjacent to International Maritime Boundary Line and Establishment of Lines of Communication	2005
MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Education	2005
MoU on Air-Services	2006
Program of Cooperation (POC) in Science and Technology	2006
MoU on Cooperation in the area of Renewable Energy	2007
MoU on Cultural Cooperation	2007

Visits of the Thai Royal Family

On 23-27 December 1998, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Maha Vajiralongkorn and his daughters, Her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha and Her Serene Highness Princess Siriwanwaree Mahidol, paid an official visit to India at the invitation of Indian Vice President.⁵⁶

- On 26-31 January 2004, Prof. Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol visited New Delhi to give a lecture at the International Conference on Biodiversity and Natural Products: Chemistry and Medical Application.

- On 19-26 November 2004, Prof. Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol attended the International Conference on Chemistry-Biology Interface: Synergy New Frontiers in New Delhi.
- On 27 February—10 March 2005, Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn paid an official visit to India to receive the 2004 Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development.
- On 21-29 November 2005, Prof. Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol visited Bangalore and New Delhi to attend the Third General Assembly and International Conference on Women's Impact on Science and Technology in the New Millennium.
- On 10-13 October 2006, Prof. Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol visited Hyderabad to meet with executives from Shanta Biotechnics Company Limited.
- On 8-11 November 2006, Prof. Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Chulabhorn Mahidol visited New Delhi to attend a meeting at the WHO Regional Office for Southeast Asia.
- On 5-10 March 2007, Dr. Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn paid an official visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- Gen. Surayud Chulanont (Ret.), Prime Minister, visited India on 25-27 June 2007 with an aim to strengthen bilateral relations and enhance cooperation in energy and economic affairs between the two countries.

- Mr. Sawanit Kongsiri, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, visited New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata on 27 June—3 July 2007 for FTA promotion between Thailand-India.

Visits from India

- On 7-8 February 2004, Mr. Yashwant Sinha, Minister of External Affairs, and Mr. Arun Jaitley, Minister of Commerce and Industry, attended the BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting in Phuket.
- On 1-2 July 2004, Mr. Dayanidhi Maran, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, attended the Ministerial Conference on Broadband and ICT Development in Bangkok.
- On 10-12 July 2004, Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, attended the second Asia Pacific Ministerial Meeting (APMM-II) in Bangkok.
- On 16 July 2004, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, President of the Congress Party and the Chairperson of United Progressive Alliance (UPA), attended the Fifteenth International AIDS Conference in Bangkok.
- On 30-31 July 2004, Dr. Man Mohan Singh, Prime Minister of India, visited Bangkok to attend the first BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok.

Thai-India relations have matured over the years. The renewed relationship since the end of the Cold War has laid the ground work for cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology, Information Technology and Agriculture. A programme of bilateral cooperation in the field of Science and Technology is a better place between CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research) and TISTR (Thailand Institute

of Scientific and Technological Research). Cooperation between the two countries in the Science & Technology field, received an impetus with the signing of an Agreement on Scientific, Technical and Environmental Cooperation and Transfer of Technology in 2002. A Programme of Cooperation (POC) in Science & Technology has been signed in February 2006. A Thai delegation visited India in April 2006 and had interactions with the Department of Biotechnology, National Informatics Centre (NIC), The Energy Resources Institute (TERI) and the National Brain Research Centre. There have been some training programmes for Thai scientists. An Electronics Design Laboratory (EDL) was set up at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, with Government of India assistance. The second meeting of the Joint Committee on Cooperation in Science and Technology was held on 8 November 2006 in New Delhi.⁵⁷

MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Science Technology and Economy was signed in 2003. The dairy sector was identified as offering promising possibilities of mutually officials from the dairy sector visited India at the invitation of the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in 1996, NDDB also gifted 50 buffaloes to the Government of Thailand in March 1999 towards dairy development in Thailand.

MoU on Information Technology cooperation was signed in November 2001 considering that both countries, being participants in providing technology and services in the IT sector, intend to build up their partnership in the IT sector in the variety of ways. A report by Indian experts on setting up an Information Technology Training Institute in Thailand was submitted to the Thai Government, MoU was signed between the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and the Kasetsart University, Bangkok, in April 2006, for cooperation in the field of Rural Informatics.⁵⁸

Various Scholarship & Exchange Programmes between India and Thailand are:

1. Every year, ICCR allocates 10 slots under this Scheme for Thai students desirous of pursuing undergraduate, postgraduate and Ph.D. studies in various courses (excluding medicine and dentistry) in Indian universities. This scheme is publicized through the Thai Ministry of Education and some universities in Thailand as well as the India Studies Centre, Thammasat University, Bangkok. Selection of the final 10 candidates is done by the ICCR, New Delhi. Under the Scheme, the scholars are offered living allowance, contingent grant, tuition fees as well as boarding and lodging fees, except airfare.
2. ICCR allocates four slots to Thai students under this Programme, every year. The courses offered, publicity for the Programme, selection procedure, and allowances for the selected candidates are the same as those of the GCSS.
3. ICCR allocates five scholarships to Thai students for undergraduate and postgraduate courses in traditional systems of medicine such as Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy. Terms and conditions are same as GCSS.
4. ICCR offers 10 scholarships to Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) member countries in culture related subjects, such as ancient history of Mekong-Ganga Cooperation countries and Buddhism, Sanskrit, pali, dance, preservation of manuscripts, archaeology, handicrafts, musicology, etc. Terms and conditions are same as GCSS.

5. In the year 2006-07, the Ministry of External Affairs allocated 60 slots under the ITEC Programme to Thai nationals for short-term training courses in Indian institutes in various fields. The Thai Government utilized all 60 slots.
6. Central Institute of Hindi, Agra (Ministry of HRD) allotted four slots for Thai students desirous of studying Hindi at Central Institute of Hindi in Agra.
7. In June 2007, Director of Symbiosis Center for Distance Learning (SCDL) visited Distance Learning Foundation (DLF) and Sukhothai Thammathirac Open University (STOU) in Thailand. They have agreed to establish an educational cooperation programme by which the first coeducational classroom is scheduled to be held in July 2007 through a video conference method. SCDL and STOU also agreed to sign MoU, co-develop e-learning programme, and establish joint degree programme in marketing, finance, human resource development, and public relations management.⁵⁹

Seen from a regional perspective, Thailand is viewed as an ideal partner for India in promoting closer cooperation with Southeast Asia. Thailand is a founder member of ASEAN in which it plays an important role and wields considerable influence. Thailand supported proposals for upgrading India's interaction with ASEAN to the Summit level during the 34th PMC/8th ARF meetings in Hanoi in July 2001 and ASEAN Summit at Brunei on 5-6 November 2001. Thailand took the initiative for sub-regional cooperation, which has resulted in the launching of Bangladesh-India-Myanmar-Sri Lanka-Thailand (Economic Cooperation) BIMSTEC. India visualises this as a bridge linking Southeast Asia and South Asia and expects it to lead to ever growing economic, commercial and investment interaction between the two regions, between ASEAN and SAARC and between Thailand and India. Later on,

in 2003, full membership was granted to Nepal and Bhutan. During the First Summit in Bangkok on 31 July 2004, the grouping's name was changed to the BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation). BIMSTEC covers 13 Priority Sectors lead by member countries in a voluntary manner, namely: Trade & Investment, Technology, Energy, Transport & Communication, Tourism, Fisheries, Agriculture, Cultural Cooperation, Environment and Disaster Management, Public Health, People-to-People Contact, Poverty Alleviation and Counter-Terrorism and Trans-national Crimes.⁶⁰

India-Indonesia Relations

India's historical ties with Indonesia have proved to be a useful asset in the promotion of their modern-day interactions. In the early days when India was practicing non-alignment, it supported the Sukarno led armed struggle against Dutch Colonial rule. In fact, the Indian military trained the armed forces of Indonesia after it became independent and Indonesia was the only country outside the Commonwealth with which India held joint naval exercises.⁶¹

As by far the largest country in the region, Indonesia gives weight, credibility and stability to ASEAN. Given its strategic location linking the Pacific and the Indian Oceans, and its sprawling size from the borders of India to those of Australia, Indonesia is vital for regional stability. Indonesia is also the world's largest Muslim country, and whether it remains democratic, tolerant and secular or succumbs to incipient fundamentalist tendencies matters hugely to the rest of the world, including India. India has an indifferent relationship with Indonesia during the more than three decades of Soeharto's rule, but over the last decade or so the tempo of relations has rapidly picked up under his successors. A lot of the old warmth that characterized

India's relations with Indonesia in the 1950s, when both countries were the leaders of the NAM has come back. During Indonesian President Yudhoyono's visit to India in November 2005, the two countries agreed to develop a 'New Strategic Partnership'. Since both are large developing countries, Indonesia's new leaders are keen to learn from India's experience of managing a pluralistic democratic society.⁶² Trade and economic cooperation, including investments, a growing and Indonesia is India's third largest trading partner in ASEAN after Singapore and Malaysia. India is keen to tap Indonesia's rich resources like gas, coal and timber. Defence and counter terrorism are the growing areas of cooperation. Indonesia and India are maritime neighbours who undertake regular joint patrolling. Indonesia has become a valuable friend of India in ASEAN, the more so as Indonesia is trying to region its traditional leadership role in ASEAN.⁶³

Half a century later with India rising and Indonesia re-emerged as a boom-again democracy after long, tumultuous years under the Suharto regime, bilateral relations are seeing new heights. The two countries signed a strategic partnership in 2005 which serve as a crucial platform for discussion of issues of strategic concern, including maritime security, energy security and cooperation in counter terrorism.⁶⁴

The importance of Indonesia in India's foreign policy and strategic calculations needs to be located within the-broader context of India's Look East Policy (LEP), which guides its interactions with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), its relations with Indonesia form an important component of that policy. Indonesia is the world's 13th largest economy measured by GDP on a purchasing power parity basis, and is on an upswing economically given its position as a major player in global energy, minerals and food.

Relatively unscathed by the global financial crisis, Indonesia's economy is projected to grow at a healthy 6.1 per cent in 2010 and at 6.3 per cent in 2011—one of the fastest in Asia (and the world). What is more, its per capita GDP is projected to increase by almost 20 per cent in the next two years. Since 2009, Indonesia has had Asia's second-best-performing stock market. It now is a US\$ 550 billion economy that is on an upward trajectory. As Indonesia will assume the chair of ASEAN in 2011 and will welcome the U.S. and Russia for the first time to the East Asian Summit (EAS) or ASEAN plus 8, it will play a critical role in shaping the discourse and agenda of the region. All of the above factors indicate the growing strategic and diplomatic importance of Indonesia in Southeast Asia, making the country of greater interest to India than ever before. The most fitting manifestation of Indonesia's special place to India was the welcome of President Sukarno as the chief guest on our very first Republic Day in 1950 and it is no wonder that the same honour has been extended to President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to mark the 60th anniversary of India-Indonesia relations.⁶⁵

India-Indonesia relations have passed through ups and downs and have been characterized by both friendship and indifference. India provided both emotional and material support during Indonesia's independence struggle. India and Indonesia worked together to spread the message of freedom among all oppressed peoples of the world as co-sponsors of the Bandung Conference of 1955. Their founding leaders, Sukarno and Nehru shared the same values of independence, freedom and non-alignment and later translated those ideals into the first Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung.⁶⁶ With the end of the Cold War and India's Look East Policy from the early 1990s, perceptions of each other changed dramatically.

Indian Minister of External Affairs visited Indonesia in July 1996 to attend the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN PMC meetings in Jakarta where India was formally admitted as member of the ARF and Full Dialogue Partner of ASEAN. Chief of Naval Staff attended the inauguration of the Indonesia Air Show held in Jakarta on 20 June 1996. During the World Food Summit held in Rome, Prime Minister had a meeting with the Indonesian President on 16 November 1996. The two leaders discussed means to build and expand bilateral relations and the need to strengthen India's relations with ASEAN, The holding of an exclusive Indian Trade Exhibition in Jakarta in March 1996 coincided with the meeting of the Joint Business Council.⁶⁷ Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnopurti visited India in April 2002. During her visit President, K.R. Narayanan, at a ceremony hold to honour the visiting dignitary said, "ASEAN India relations can mature only when India has the goodwill and co-operation of as a largest member-country."⁶⁸ During Indonesian Trade Minister Marie Elka Pengastu's visit to India in August 2005 the two countries decided to set up a joint study group to examine the possibility of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.⁶⁹ In October 2005 Top officials of India and Indonesia met in Yogyakarta under the, Joint Consultative Forum, India was represented by Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs Rajiv Sikri, Ambassador to Indonesia H.K. Singh and Joint Secretary Biren Nanda. The Indonesian team was led by Herijanto Soeprapto, Director-General (Asia Pacific and Africa), and Ambassador to India, Donnilo Anwar. Forum expressed satisfaction at the state of bilateral relations.⁷⁰

Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh also led a high level delegation to the Asian-African Summit (AAS) in Jakarta in April 2005. To further improve relations with a superpower in information technology and world's fourth largest modern

economy' President Yudhoyono visited Bangalore, Agra and New Delhi in November 2005 and agreed to establish a "strategic partnership" to open a new chapter in, bilateral relations. The New Strategic Partnership (NSP) is designed to address the long term interests of both countries, through closer diplomatic coordination, stronger defence relations, enhanced economic relations especially in trade and investment, greater technological cooperation, intensified cultural ties, educational linkages and people to people contacts. By working together and drawing upon each other's strengths, it is hoped that the NSP will enable India and Indonesia to contribute to regional and global peace, prosperity and stability. The NSP is based on the recognition that "as the world's largest democracies, and as independent-minded nations with a long tradition of internationalism, the combined voice of Indonesia and India can make a difference in international affairs."⁷¹ Indonesia strongly supported India's participation in the first East Asian Summit (EAS), which was held in Kuala Lumpur in December 2005 as a means of balancing China's influence. Indonesia, for example, avoided aligning with China while retaining friendly ties with other powers such as the US—a classic "hedging" strategy. The participation of India, Australia and New Zealand was seen as ensuring that ASEAN remained the core of any emerging East Asian community.⁷²

In the contemporary period, relations between the two countries have come perceptibly closer. There has been a regular exchange of high level Visits with Presidents Wahid (2000), Megawati (2002) and Yudhoyono (2005) paying State Visits to India and with return visits from Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh who attended the Golden Jubilee commemoration of the Bandung Conference in April 2005.⁷³ India was among the first countries to provide assistance amounting to US\$ 1 billion in relief supplies to Indonesia following the Tsunami disaster. India also

donated US\$ 2 million in relief assistance following the major earthquake in Northern Sumatra on 28 March, 2005. Two Indian Air Force IL-76 aircraft airlifted the relief supplies to Medan (North Sumatra) on 21st April 2005. India delivered US\$ 2 million worth of relief assistance to Indonesia after the earthquake in Java in May, 2006. A medical team from the Indian Navy also engaged in relief work in the affected area after these disasters.⁷⁴ In June 2007, during the India—Indonesia Joint Commission Meeting at Jakarta, the Foreign Ministers of the two countries concluded an Action Plan to infuse the partnership with greater content and vigour. President Patil had paid a state visit to Indonesia in December 2008.⁷⁵ There has also been a regular exchange of Ministerial visits and an active Joint Commission process co-chaired by the Foreign Ministers of the two countries, Dr. Singh and Mr. Yudhoyono have been regularly meeting on the margins of international fora, and their last structured meeting was on the margins of the ASEAN Summit in Thailand in November 2009.⁷⁶ We have active cultural exchanges between the two countries. The focal points for this exchange are the two Indian Cultural Centers established in Jakarta and Bali. The Cultural Centers organized a 'Festival of India' in Indonesia in the period October to December 2009.⁷⁷ Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono will pay a three-day state visit to India from January 24 to 26 2011 which is expected to take the new strategic relationship between the two countries to a higher plane. Mr. Yudhoyono will be the Chief Guest at the country's Republic Day celebrations, reflecting the importance India attaches to the relationship. He will be the first Head of State or Government to pay an official or state visit to India in 2011. Indonesian President holds delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh, followed by the signing of agreements between the two sides. The discussions between the two leaders are expected to cover various bilateral, regional and international issues. Mr.

Yudhoyono will attend a Business Summit organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry in which leading Indian businessmen and industrialists and their Indonesian counterparts will participate.⁷⁸

Education

India and Indonesia can cooperate in the field of higher education. While answering questions from the editors of Jakarta Post Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh, during his visit to Indonesia in April 2005 for the commemoration of the Bandung Conference—declared that India intended to stay engaged by sharing experiences—"gained from our own development process with nations in Asia". To quote Singh

“Human resource development holds the key to employment and wealth creation, particularly in this age of globalization. This has been our strategy and we have laid particular emphasis on training and skills development as we globalize.”

We have extended technical assistance valued at about US\$ 1 billion. We stand ready to do more.” Undoubtedly Indonesia has been one of the prominent beneficiaries of India’s technical cooperation programmes meant for fellow developing countries. Around 1000 Indonesian experts as well as officials received training in India under India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). India offered more than 1100 scholarships to Indonesian students to study at Indian universities. In 2005 India opened a US\$ 750,000 Vocational Training Centre in Aceh followed by another one more recently. But there is greater potential for India-Indonesia cooperation in education, which will be of benefit to both the countries.⁷⁹

To promote people to people contacts, it is time that Indian and Indonesia universities

establish academic programmes involving exchange of teachers, and joint research projects of common interest. There is also an urgent need for regular Track-II dialogue on both bilateral and regional issues between the think tanks of the two countries. One major factor standing in the way of improved relations between the two countries is the lack of knowledge of each other's society, politics, economy and strategic imperatives. Regular dialogues between civil societies, religious groups, academics and intelligence communities of the two countries will remove misperceptions and ignorance about each other and help foster empathy in each other's concerns and stakes. One of the important reasons for the Asian economic crisis of the late '90s was that while there had been a shift in the production process, there was no commensurate development in higher education in most Asian NICs to keep pace with such shift. India has a lead in information technology and our IITs and IIMs have a very high reputation in those countries, Many Indonesians have expressed a desire not only to come and study in those institutions, but also to have these institutions to set up campuses in Indonesia. There are Indonesian businessmen of Indian origin who would only be too glad to raise the money for these institutions. What they want is the brand name and some experienced back up faculty from India. Till that is done, India should open the doors of its premier institutions, like the IITs, IIMs, Delhi School of Economics and universities like JNU by reserving a 'few seats exclusively for them. The dividend from such a policy will be enormous, as the products of these institutions would eventually emerge as critical elites in decision-making in Indonesian government and corporate life, and India will surely strike a familiar chord for them. Under the I-Tech programme, India has trained a number of Indonesian engineers and technicians at the Roorkee Engineering College. Then there are others who have done their higher studies, including Ph.Ds in Indian universities

and have high regard for the Indian educational system. The Indian embassy and the other cultural and commercial centers in Indonesia need to keep track of the people, who have been beneficiaries of Indian education and training, cultivate them so that they could form the critical mass and constituency to speak for India in Indonesia.⁸⁰

The agreement on scientific and technical cooperation was signed in 1982. The agreement provided the basis for cooperation between, India and Indonesia in the field of science and technology, but no notable progress was made for a long time, except in the field of remote sensing. The cooperation between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and its Indonesian counterpart LAPAN has made considerable progress since the two organizations began cooperating in the early 1990s. In 1998, Indonesia agreed to set up a Telemetry Tracking Command and Network (TTC) ground station in Biak in Papua province for satellites and geostationary launch vehicles. India is building a second \$ 900,000 ground station, which is bigger than the previous one, in Biak. In January 2003, during the visit of Prime Minister Vajpayee, a MoU for cooperation in the field of science and technology was signed under which a joint committee has been established. The areas of cooperation identified under the MoU are biotechnology, renewable energy sources, medical sciences, science policy, science popularization, information technology, agriculture and marine science. After a gap of 25 years, India organized an 'India tech 2005' in March 2005 in Jakarta to promote its engineering products in Indonesia.⁸¹

Cultural

Yet another area that can promote India's soft power in Southeast Asia in general and Indonesia in particular, is its culture. India's comprehensive engagement

with the Southeast Asian region started with the ‘Look East Policy’; flagged off in 1991. However, historical evidence—both oral and written— shows that India has not only been ‘Looking East’ for the past two millennia, but has also engaged the east during this period, though intermittently. Cultural interactions along with trade ties have formed the bedrock of this connection. However, in the past two decades, India has not adequately leveraged the culture factor in its interaction with the countries of the region; which together, form the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). Although India has had robust cultural connections with these countries in the past, this connection was particularly pronounced in the case of Indonesia.⁸² Signifying the ancient cultural relations India and Indonesia signed a Cultural Agreement as early as 1955, which has acted as the central guideline for bilateral cultural interaction.

The Indian Council of Cultural Relations also provided an institutional support system for cooperation in human resources development through its education programmes and scholarships including the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme. Further, in 1989, the Indian government set up the Jawaharlal Nehru Indian Culture Centre in Jakarta. In November 2005, the two countries agreed to establish the Indonesia-India Friendship Association, facilitating people-to-people cultural linkages.⁸³

The cultural agreement has been updated regularly through the cultural exchange programme (CEP), which has facilitated inter-institutional linkages and collaborative programmes between the two countries. Much of the cultural activities are either sponsored or undertaken by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), which oversees India’s cultural relations with other countries. India now has an active cultural exchange programme with Indonesia. The focal points for this

exchange are the two Indian cultural centers established in Jakarta and Bali. The embassy of India organized a Festival of India in Indonesia in 2009 that included 48 performances in seven cities of Indonesia, a food festival, an art exhibition and a fashion show. A seminar was organized by ICCR in Jakarta and Yogyakarta in early October 2010 on India's historical and civilizational Links with Southeast Asia.⁸⁴

However, there is still a lot to be done to promote India's cultural linkages with Indonesia. By virtue of being the biggest country in the region and a growing economy, Indonesia deserves to be accorded special importance. The year ahead is a great opportunity for doing so since Indonesia will be chairing the ASEAN. Through intensive and extensive cultural interactions with Indonesia, India has to provide a boost to its cultural diplomacy and strengthen its 'soft power'. India has already taken the first step by inviting the Indonesian president to be the chief guest for 2011 Republic Day parade. That, however, has to be followed by several other steps to ensure that this unique relationship is given priority in Indian foreign policy.⁸⁵

India's cultural ambassadors should be encouraged to disseminate knowledge about India. A working group could be established focusing on promoting inter linkages, with the diasporas in the driving seat. India could share its expertise with Indonesia for the restoration of archeologically important sites. This will not only promote better understanding but also encourage tourism. Nalanda University, an ancient Indian centre of learning, has been restored lately through the collective efforts of India, Japan and Singapore. Similarly, India and Indonesia could jointly restore historical centers of learning in Indonesia. A joint working group needs to be set up to explore the possibility of restoring educational institutions, with Pali, Sanskrit, and Bahasa, as centres of excellence. Every year, after the India-ASEAN annual summit, India should take up a member country of ASEAN as the 'focus

country'. The yearlong series of interactions should start-off from there. This should not only include interaction among diplomats and officials, but also teachers, students, cultural activists, NGOs, and small scale entrepreneurs. The focus at present seems to be on MNCs and big business. This has of course helped in the expansion of bilateral trade, but not in people to people contact, which is crucial for strengthening bilateral ties.⁸⁶

Political, economic and strategic factors in the post-Cold War period call for expanded co-operation between India and Indonesia. It is essential that all-round ties be steadily strengthened and expanded so that both emerge stronger not only to face the new challenges in the areas of security, politics and economics, but also the problems emanating from deep asymmetry of power in the international system. The 21st century is inevitably the Asian century and, India, Indonesia and Southeast Asian countries are destined to play a major role in ensuring peace, stability and prosperity for humanity. This has long been an untapped relationship, somehow lost in the vagaries of time. But now the time seems right to reconnect and bolster relations, more so in view of the increase in China's power. The NSP has marked the beginning of extensive relations between Asia's two largest democracies. Indonesian strategic thinkers have recently been inclined to look beyond ASEAN and are in favour of a regional architecture in which major nations of the Asia Pacific region and beyond are represented. In such a grouping, Indonesia, as the fulcrum of Southeast Asia, could be a valuable interlocutor in India's interactions with Southeast and East Asia.

India-Vietnam Relations

India and Vietnam share long standing, historic, cultural, religious, economic and strategic relations. On 7 January 1972, Vietnam and India had decided to promote

their diplomatic relations to the ambassadorial level. Although geographically, Vietnam and India are not neighbours,⁸⁷ Vietnam and India were close friends during the Cold War years, but the residual goodwill of that period has not translated into any concrete benefits for India as Vietnam has focused on rebuilding its economy and working out stable equations with its giant neighbours, China, and the US. In many respects, India and Vietnam are competitors in the world market. Nevertheless, there is valuable and growing defence cooperation between India and Vietnam. India is also assisting Vietnam, both bilaterally and within the framework of ASEAN, in the areas of technical and scientific cooperation, in human resources development and in setting up projects funded by relatively cheap credit lines. India has also made profitable investments in Vietnam hydrocarbons sector.⁸⁸

India's relations with Vietnam have always been closer than those to any of its neighbors. Now moving forward from ideological linkages, both countries are endeavoring to refurbish their relations according to the requirements of globalization. Chairman of National Assembly of Vietnam visited India in 1994. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong Vo Van Kiet visited India in 1997.”⁸⁹ Vietnamese President Tan Duc Loung visited India in 1999. Both countries established a Joint Commission for Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation for providing an institutional mechanism to bilateral cooperation. India and Vietnam opened a new chapter in their relationship in May 2003, during the occasion of the visit to India by Nong Duc Manh, Secretary General of the Communist Party of Vietnam by signing the Joint Declaration on the Framework for Comprehensive Cooperation.⁹⁰

Vietnam appreciates India's international role and track record of being a peace-loving country. Under the cooperation agreement signed in 2003, both countries have agreed to conduct regular high-level meetings, cooperate in the UN

and other international fora and assist each other in protecting their respective interests in international arena. With these sentiments, Vietnam supports India in its peaceful use of nuclear energy. It also backs India's bid for a permanent candidature in an expanded United Nations Security Council. In return, Vietnam received India's support for entry into the World Trade Organization. Vietnam and India work closely together in organizations like ASEAN, and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) and Vietnam is also expected to help India in gaining membership of organizations like Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) and Asia Europe Meetings (ASEM).⁹¹

Vietnam and India also signed a Plan of Action for the implementation of the Joint Declaration in 2004. Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visited India in July 2007. During Mr. Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to India, the two sides signed a Joint Declaration to officially establish strategic partnership between the two countries. A Vietnamese delegation led by former Vice President Nguyen Thi Binh attended Vietnam India Friendship Festival in September 2007. From Indian side, President R. Venkatraman (1991) Vice-President K.R. Naraynan (1993), Prime Minister Narsimha Rao (1994) and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee (2001) visited Vietnam. Speaker of Lok Sabha Shri Somanath Chatterjee visited Vietnam in March, 2007. Indian Minister of Home Affairs visited Vietnam in October 2007.

Human resources development is another potential area of India-Vietnam cooperation. During the past few years India has undergone a rapid technological revolution and has established itself as a knowledge economy. Vietnam needs technological assistance for its socioeconomic development and therefore, India is an appropriate partner for Vietnam. In this regard both countries can work together in the key areas of science and technology and education and cultural exchanges. In the field of science and technology cooperation, India and Vietnam have signed many

agreements and projects. Both have identified the particular areas for cooperation such as biotechnology in agriculture and healthcare, technology for new materials, IT and electronics, super-computing, nuclear energy for peaceful uses, science and technology policy making and administration, remote sensing, non-traditional energy and so on. Since 1976, India has extended 14 lines of credit amounting to 3,610 million to Vietnam. Another credit line of US\$ 27 million to Vietnam was signed in August 2004 between Exim Bank of India and Ministry of Finance, Vietnam. India is also helping Vietnam. in setting up art Advanced Resource Centre in IT in Hanoi and HRD in the field of IT in six educational institutions in Vietnam. India has a number of bilateral treaties and agreements with Vietnam in the areas of Consular relations, Avoidance of Double Taxation, Narcotics, Science & Technology and Culture.⁹²

Education

In the area of education, the Indian government provides about 130 scholarships every year to Vietnamese students and researchers for studying in Indian educational institutes. India also has plans to set up English language teaching centers in Da Nang province in central Vietnam. Under the framework of India-Vietnam protocol on IT, Vietnam receives Indian assistance for training its manpower in the area of IT and IT enabled services. In 2000, Vietnamese Foreign Minister, Nguyen Dy Nien, acknowledged Indian government's assistance in training Vietnamese manpower. Indian assistance has definitely contributed immensely to the cause of Vietnam's renewal program (Doi Moi) and has helped it in modernization, industrialization, and active international integration. However, more efforts are needed to promote India Vietnam cooperation in this field of human resources development as is evident in the Vietnam-India Action Plan for 2007-2009 concluded

in February 2007 between Vietnam's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Gia Khiem and Indian Foreign Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

In recent years, the India-Vietnam relationship has witnessed encouraging developments in the all fields. Both countries are keen to intensify their bilateral relationship in a wide range of areas sentiments that were voiced by the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and his counterpart Nguyen Tan Dung during their meeting on the sidelines of 12th ASEAN Summit in Cebu, Philippines on 14 January 2007. The two leaders expressed happiness over new developments in the traditional relationship and stressed carrying forward the comprehensive cooperation cultivated by President Ho Chi Minh and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. They agreed to raise their cooperation to new heights to meet new challenges posed by globalization, the menace of international terrorism, and the significant challenges to the international system, thus clearly showing the road ahead for bilateral ties.⁹³

The Indian Embassy in Hanoi held an Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Day in Hanoi on December 1, 2010 to meet students who had received scholarships from the IETC programme. The programme was initiated in 1964 by late Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and has a presence in 158 countries, it covers several fields including IT and telecommunications, management, small and medium enterprise and rural development, environment, English language training, finance and accounts. In his speech delivered at the meeting, Ambassador Ranjit Rae said the Government of India has offered about 95 ITEC scholarships annually to Vietnam and around 1,255 people in Vietnam have received the scholarships since 1992. He also said that it helps to further strengthen India-Vietnam friendship, particularly at people-to-people level.” The Head of the Ministry of Education and Training's International Education Development Department, Nguyen

Xuan Vang, said he hoped the Indian Government would provide more scholarships to Vietnamese people as a contribution to Vietnam's human resources training for its development.⁹⁴

India and Vietnam will establish a joint committee to strengthen bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and agricultural production. An agreement in this regard was signed here May 20, 2010 by visiting Indian Minister of State for Food Processing Subodh Kant Sahai and Vietnam's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Cao Duc Phat. India hopes to advance cooperation with Vietnam in food processing and animal feed production. Cao Duc Phat also encouraged business houses of Vietnam and India to set up joint ventures in manufacturing and food processing industries, and hold fora and trade fairs for agricultural produce and seafood in both countries.⁹⁵

The Embassy of India, Vietnam, in coordination with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce & Industry and the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Hanoi, with support from FIEO and ASSOCHAM organized a "Seminar and Buyer Seller Meet on Trade and Investment between Vietnam and India" on April 5, 2011 in Hanoi, Vietnam, for the benefit of a business delegation from India. The seminar provided opportunities for visiting Indian companies to get an overview of the business climate in Vietnam and to interact with Vietnamese companies, which opened up new avenues for business. More than 100 Vietnamese companies participated in the programme and interacted with members of the business delegation. Mr. Ranjit Rae, Ambassador of India, in his welcome address said both countries should take advantage of their ancient trading and cultural relations to increase mutual trade. Both India and Vietnam are among the fastest growing economies in Asia. Bilateral trade has seen continuous growth during the past few years and India is now among Vietnam's top

10 trading partners.⁹⁶ Total trade between the two countries was US\$ 2.75 billion in 2010. During the first two months of 2011, total trade turnover reached US\$ 64136 million, growing 59.5 percent vis-à-vis the corresponding period of 2010. Highlighting various initiatives taken by the Government of India for promotion of trade between the two countries, Mr. Rae said the Exim Bank of India has announced a new scheme of extending buyers' credit to overseas companies to import goods and services from India on deferred payment terms. The scheme will initiate Indian companies in executing projects in Vietnam, especially in the infrastructure sectors. Mr. Doan Duy Khuong, Vice Chairman of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry, highlighted the growing relationship between India and Vietnam. He said the visit of Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung to India in July 2007 played a key role in paving the way for bilateral cooperation in the strategic, economic, technological, scientific and cultural spheres. However, he said mutual trade was languishing and far below potential. Both countries need to take more steps to expand economic cooperation. Vietnam and India share abundance of similarities in term of geography, products' structure, etc. Vietnam is a core member of ASEAN and has become the 150th member of WTO, In addition, the signing of the ASEAN-India FTA will broaden the legal framework for business communities to be more aggressive in penetrating the two countries' markets⁹⁷. With the signing of the FTA on goods, Vietnam's commodities will enjoy an advantage in India, especially when tariff barriers are removed under AITIG Agreement. Because 90% of imports from India are inputs for various manufacturing sectors, the implementation of AIFTA will allow Vietnamese companies better access to cheaper and more economical manufacturing inputs, which shall enhance Vietnam's competitiveness, Mr. Doan Duy Khuong added. Mr. Shantanu Srivastava, Co-Chairman, ASSOCHAM, highlighted various initiatives taken by the Chamber that led to increase in India's trade with ASEAN. He

highlighted the proposed activities of ASSOCHAM in Vietnam which includes regular participation in exhibitions organized in various cities in the country. He also spoke about the MoU to be signed by ASSOCHAM and FICCI. Mr. Unnikrishnan K., Director, FIEO (Southern Region), in his presentation highlighted various activities of FIEO for connecting Indian and Vietnamese businessmen. He highlighted various sectors like biotechnology, information technology, educational services, etc, where India and Vietnam could work together for third-country exports. Mr. Unnikrishnan also highlighted the need for more cooperation between both countries in the area of tourism for establishing people to people contact. The seminar was followed by a buyer seller meet organized for the benefit of the Indian delegation. The Indian participants got an opportunity to interact with potential buyers and also to know more about the Vietnamese market.⁹⁸

India-Thailand Relations

In response to India's Look East Policy, Thailand in 1996, announced its own 'Look West' policy to cash in on the new regional context. It aimed primarily at engaging, mostly economically, India and other countries in the sub-continent. This policy brought about the establishment of the Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC)⁹⁹ and the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC)¹⁰⁰ as regional mechanisms that bind countries in the region together. The success of Thailand's Look West policy was seen clearly in the conclusion of a bilateral FTA in 2003 – the first between India and an ASEAN country which served to slash tariffs to zero by 2010. Bilateral relations are, nonetheless, not limited only to trade. Thai Premier Thaksin Shinawatra intensified Thailand's security cooperation with India through joint efforts against terrorism and narcotic trafficking, and joint naval patrols against narcotics and piracy. In addition,

Thaksin offered to perform as a gateway for India in its venture into Southeast Asia and ASEAN in particular. Generally, bilateral ties seem to be unequivocally positive in all aspects.¹⁰¹

India's Relations with Other ASEAN Countries

In the relations with other, smaller countries in ASEAN, India is seeking ways to expand trade partnership as a prerequisite for other aspects of bilateral ties. India and Brunei set up a joint trade committee to enhance economic interactions. India also signed an agreement with Laos for cooperation in the field of agriculture in 2004, and donated USD 1 million to assist victims of the widespread flooding that occurred in Laos in August 2008.¹⁰² Similarly, India has also improved its relations with Cambodia. Since 1981, when India recognized the Hang Samrin regime, India had cordial relations with Cambodia. India has entered into a number of bilateral treaties and agreements for cooperation in the fields of trade, science & technology, agriculture, tourism, air services and visa exemption. India has helped Cambodia in a big way through the ITEC programme. Shri Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister, led a three-member delegation on an official visit to Phnom Penh from 18-19 January, 1996. The visit was at the invitation of the Cambodian Foreign Minister. During his stay in Phnom Penh, External Affairs Minister called on the Acting Head of State and resident of the National Assembly Samdech Chea Sim and the two Co-Prime Ministers Norodom Ranariddh and Hun Sen respectively. External Affairs Minister held Pehin Lim Jock Seng, Minister of Foreign Affairs & Trade-II in October 2006; Pehin Abu Baker Apong, Minister of Communication in November 2006; Brunei Investment Agency delegation in August 2007. India signed an agreement with Cambodia to institute a joint commission on trade, economic, scientific and technological cooperation.¹⁰³

India is also trying to find out areas of convergence with Brunei. Bilateral cooperation in the fields of education and health is limited to recruitment/employment of Indian teachers, doctors and engineers by the Bruneian Government through its own channels, to meet its manpower requirements. In spite of the ancient cultural links and similarities in customs and traditions, India's cultural interactions with Brunei have remained basically restricted to the screening of Indian movies in Brunei and the popular appeal of Indian film music. Brunei is well aware of India's expertise in information and communication technology. During 2003, two Indian information technology companies, I-Flex and Lifetree Convergence Ltd. have signed significant agreements for supplying software and related services to Bruneian companies. Chairs in Universities on Indian Studies, South Asian Studies, etc., and vice versa in Indian Universities, are relevant Area Studies' centers in the two countries. In view of its per capita income, Brunei Darussalam does not qualify for assistance under ITEC. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) offers every year a slot of one scholarship to Brunei under the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme. India also offers training slots to Bruneians under the ASEAN-India IT Training Programme and ASEAN-India Human Resource Development Training Programme. Brunei also offers scholarships to India under the Commonwealth Scholarship Scheme.¹⁰⁴

India and ASEAN Political Leaders Visits

Interest of India and Southeast Asia in each other is also revealed by bilateral visits of Premiers. Premiers of India paid visit to ASEAN countries in order to boost political and economic relations. Reciprocally Premiers of member countries of ASEAN also paid visit to India. This is evinced from tables 5.2 and 5.3 given blow:¹⁰⁵

Table 5.2: Visits by Indian Political Leaders to ASEAN countries after 1991

1. President	Vietnam	24-25 April, 1991
2. President	Philippines	28 April to 1 May, 1999
3. Prime Minister	Indonesia	31 August to 5 Sept., 1992
4. Prime Minister	Thailand	7-9 April, 1993
5. Prime Minister	Vietnam	5-7 September, 1994
6. Prime Minister	Singapore	7-9 September, 1994
7. Prime Minister	Malaysia	2-5 August, 1995
8. Prime Minister	Malaysia	May, 2001
9. Prime Minister	Malaysia	2003
10. Prime Minister	Thailand	2003
11. Prime Minister	Thailand	August, 2004
12. Prime Minister	Laos	November, 2004
13. Prime Minister	Indonesia	April 2005
14. Prime Minister	Malaysia	12-14 December, 2005
15. Prime Minister	Philippines	14 January, 2007
16. Prime Minister	Singapore	21 November, 2007
17. President	Cambodia	December, 2007
18. Prime Minister	Thailand	24 October, 2009

19. Vice President	Myanmar	2009
20. President	Cambodia	September, 2010
21. Prime Minister	Malaysia	28 October, 2010
22. Prime Minister	Vietnam	30 October, 2010
23. President	Cambodia	September, 2010

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4. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. <http://www.meaindia.nic.in>

Table 5.3: Visits by ASEAN Political Leaders to India after 1991

1. President	Singapore	21-30 November, 1993
2. President	Indonesia	27-30 March, 1994
3. President	Philippines	2-5 March, 1997
4. Prince	Thailand	7-21 April, 1992
5. Prince	Thailand	27-30 March, 1994
6. Prince	Cambodia	16 December, 1996
7. Prime Minister	Thailand	3 October, 1991
8. Prime Minister	Malaysia	31 March, 1993
9. Prime Minister	Singapore	23-31 January, 1994
10. Prime Minister	Malaysia	27-30 March, 1994
11. Prime Minister	Cambodia	18-19 January, 1996
12. Prime Minister	Malaysia	2-5 March, 1997
13. Prime Minister	Indonesia	7-9 March, 1997
14. Prime Minister	Thailand	November, 2001
15. Prime Minister	Thailand	2002
16. Prime Minister	Malaysia	October, 2002
17. Prime Minister	Malaysia	December, 2004

18. Prime Minister	Singapore	June, 2005
19. Prime Minister	Thailand	2005
20. President	Indonesia	November, 2005
21. President	Philippines	3-6 October, 2007
22. Prime Minister	Cambodia	December, 2007
23. Prime Minister	Thailand	2007
24. President	Cambodia	December, 2007
25. General Maung Aye	Myanmar	April, 2008
26. Prime Minister	Malaysia	19-23 January, 2010
27. President	Indonesia	26 January, 2011

Sources:

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In addition to this, delegates of these countries had also visited both regions to enhance mutual cooperation. Besides government-to-government interaction, steps were also taken to develop relations on non-governmental organisations (NGO's) level as in the context of Southeast Asia, NGO's have also a major role to play. In this context the Indian Institute of Defence Studies and Strategic Analysis (IDSA) and Council of Security and Cooperation in Asia Pacific (CSCAP) has been helping members since 1994.¹⁰⁶ Due to this reason IDSA has been participating in all meetings of working committees and permanent committees. The discussion of these committees reflects common issues in which both India and ASEAN remain interested. But there is very little scope for NGO's to play role in negotiation between governmental and non-governmental agencies and there is no arrangement of transfer of negotiations between single track and double track. In spite of the above problems, India's interaction with these countries is going smoothly because a large number of Indians are residing in every part of Southeast Asian countries. (See table 5.4)¹⁰⁷ and there is development in people to people contact called third track diplomacy.

Table 5.4: Indian Residences in ASEAN Countries

S. No.	Country	Indian Population	Total of country's population
1.	Myanmar	3,30,000	4,37,00,000
2.	Thailand	20,000	5,80,00,000
3.	Malaysia	14,46,166	1,86,00,000
4.	Singapore	1,95,100	28,00,000

5.	Indonesia	35,000	18,43,00,000
6.	Philippine	2,516	640,00,000
7.	Cambodia	2,500	90,00,000
8.	Laos	110	44,00,000
9.	Vietnam	1,500	6,90,00,000
10.	Brunei	2,162	2,73,000
	Total	20,35,054	45,43,73,000

Source: V. Suryanarayan, 'Overseas Chinese and Indians in Southeast Asia: A comparative study', Strategic Analysis, Vol. 18, no. 9 December 1996.

India's Look East Policy, while intended to South East Asia and Asia-pacific engagement, launched in the early 1990 has enquired critical momentum and strategic depth. There is now mutuality of interest, interdependence and evident mutual convergence. And because of robust cultural and civilization connections between ASEAN and India in the past and the common interests that both parties share today means that there is significant potential for the development of a strong partnership for tomorrow. But the potential of the relations must be carefully cultivated by policy maker's strategists as southeast is likely to remain a viable foreign and security policy option for India in its quest to establish its geo-political and economic prowess in the year to come. It will require bold decisions, innovative policies, and smart politics on the part of ASEAN and Indian leaders in order to both get past potential obstacles as well as push through initiatives that provides opportunities for enhancing the

relationship. Both India and ASEAN should try to get strong their relations. That will be beneficial not only for them but for the peace, progress and prosperity of the Asia – Pacific region. But there are a number of challenges in the way of their relations. In the next chapter, a discussion will be made on these challenges and the opportunities in their relations.

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- 77 www.indianembassyjakarta.com/, Accessed on July 25, 2013.
- 78 <http://www.defence.pk/forums/india=-defence/89917-indonesian-president-yudhoyono-chief-guest-r-day-celebrations.html>, Accessed on July 24, 2012.
- 79 It will be worthwhile to quote a letter that appeared in the *Jakarta Post*, a leading Indonesian English daily on 21 April 2006: "if India reaches out, especially in the field of education, it will benefit the common people here. India has one of the best and cheapest education systems in the world. Presently Microsoft, Intel, etc., are some of the companies managed by the Indians. If India offered scholarships to deserving

Indonesian students, may be just 25 seats in the areas of medicine, engineering, hotel management, tourism, IT, nursing, etc., it would be a real continuation of cooperation between the two countries. So many Indonesian women leave the country to earn money as maids. If Indian nursing schools opened up branches in Indonesia or offered Indonesian women scholarships to study in India, local women could earn higher salaries as trained nurses in developing countries could, where the aging population is increasing. Indonesian people have great compassion, and very clean habits. The Indonesian women could prove to be excellent nurses with much higher earning potential than as housemaids. I take this opportunity to draw the attention of the honourable ambassador of India to these suggestions. I am sure it would go a long way to further cementing the relations between the two great countries". Accessed on May 7, 2006.

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97 *Ibid.*

98 *Ibid.*

99 BIMSTEC was set up with the goal of combining the 'Look West' policy of Thailand with the Look East policy of the India and South Asia. BIMSTEC members are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand are promote 13 priority Sectors trade and investment technology, energy, transport and communication, tourism, fisheries, agriculture, cultural cooperation, environment and disaster management, public health, people to people contact, poverty alleviation and counter-terrorism and transnational crimes.

100 The Mekong- Ganga Cooperation (MGC) was established at Vietnam on 10 November 2000. It comprises India, Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam and emphasises four areas of cooperation: tourism culture, education and transportation linkages as a basis for building a strong foundation for future trade and investment cooperation in the region.

101 Chachavalpongpon, Op.cit., n-61, pp. 99-100.

- ¹⁰² Ibid, p.101.
- ¹⁰³ Kumar, *Op.cit.*, n-56, pp.135-139.
- ¹⁰⁴ India- Brunei Bilateral Country Brunei, The Commission of India in Brunei,
http://www.hcindiabrunei.org.bn/indiabruneibilateral.html. Accessed on dec15,2012.
- ¹⁰⁵ Yadav, *Op.cit.*, n. 1, p. 460.
- ¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, p.459.
- ¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, p.467.