



President's Visit To Myanmar

 drishtiias.com/printpdf/presidents-visit-to-myanmar

Recently President of India visited Myanmar.

It is the first visit by the President to Myanmar since assuming office.

Highlights of the visit

- A number of Memorandums of Understanding were signed between both the sides in the areas of judicial and education cooperation.
- There was also the announcement of visa on arrival facility for Indian tourists by the Myanmar government.
- Both sides agreed to sign at the earliest the MoU for Cooperation on Combating Timber-Trafficking and Conservation of Tigers and Other Wildlife.

India-Myanmar Relations

- **Geopolitical:** India shares a long **land border of over 1600 Km** with Myanmar **as well as a maritime boundary** in the Bay of Bengal.
Four north-eastern states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram share boundary with Myanmar.
- **Commercial Cooperation:** A bilateral Trade Agreement was signed in 1970. Bilateral trade has been growing steadily to reach US\$2.1 billion (2016-17), of which Indian exports amounted to US\$1.1 billion and Indian imports to US\$1 billion.
India is the fifth largest trading partner of Myanmar but trade remains below potential.
- **Cultural Relations:** India and Myanmar share **close cultural ties given India's Buddhist heritage**. Building on this shared heritage India has undertaken some key initiatives: Restoration of the Ananda Temple in Bagan and donation of a 16-foot replica of the Sarnath Buddha Statue which has been installed at the premises of Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon.
The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is working to preserve and restore stone

inscriptions and temples of King Mindon and King Bagyidaw of Myanmar in Bodh Gaya.

Indian Projects in Myanmar

- **India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway**

A number of infrastructure projects are underway. This includes the Trilateral Highway which will eventually connect **India to Thailand through Myanmar.**

- **Kaladan Multimodal Project**

- The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project was jointly identified by the India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal mode of transport for shipment of cargo from the eastern seaport of India to Myanmar and to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.
- This **project connects Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border, is expected to contribute to the economic development of the North-Eastern States of India.** It is also an alternate route to India's North-East bypassing the Siliguri Corridor.

- **Projects in Rakhine State**

India had signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Myanmar for improving the socioeconomic condition of the people belonging to Myanmar's Rakhine state under the aegis of **Rakhine State Development Programme.**

- **Other Projects**

India is also working on the Rhi-Tiddim road; supply of Bailey bridges; assistance for border area development by financing bridges, roads, schools, and health centers; assistance in higher learning and research, Myanmar-India Entrepreneurship Development Centre etc.

Importance of Myanmar for India

- India's **Act East Policy and Neighbourhood first policy** interacts at Myanmar.
- Myanmar is the **member of both Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), which is an organization of East Asian nations as well as Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) which bridges South and South-East Asia.**
- Connectivity projects through Myanmar help India overcome its **Chicken-neck dilemma (Siliguri Corridor).**
- Myanmar is also necessary for the **development of North Eastern India.**
- Myanmar is a close neighbor and **only ASEAN country to which we are linked by land and sea.**