
Bilateral Brief on India-Myanmar Relations-short

India and Myanmar share deep-rooted historical, civilizational, cultural and people-to-people ties that form the foundation of their contemporary partnership. As immediate neighbors linked by a 1,643-km land border and a maritime boundary of 1098 kms in the Bay of Bengal, the two countries share multifaceted cooperation spanning trade, connectivity, border management, defence and security, development partnership, capacity building, energy, health, education and cultural exchanges. Guided by India's Neighborhood First, Act East, Indo-Pacific and MAHASAGAR visions, the two countries continue to strengthen cooperation across traditional and emerging sectors while advancing towards regional connectivity, stability and prosperity.

2. Myanmar occupies a position of strategic importance for India as the only ASEAN country sharing both a land and maritime boundary with India, serving as a gateway connecting India's Northeast with Southeast Asia. India remains an important partner for Myanmar in areas such as development assistance, humanitarian support, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, education, capacity building and infrastructure development. India's timely assistance during natural disasters, including humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts, as well as its role as a trusted development partner, has created an immense goodwill among the people of Myanmar.

3. The recent Official Visit of Min Aung Hlaing (MAH) to India has provided an opportunity to review progress across key areas of cooperation and explore new avenues for partnership. MAH started his visit in Bodh Gaya, and travelled to Delhi and held meeting with PM, President, EAM, NSA. He also travelled to Noida and Mumbai and visited key institutions. Last year, both leaders met twice and first on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok immediately after the March earthquake, the Prime Minister offered condolences and pledged relief under Operation Brahma and second on the sidelines of SCO meeting in Tianjin on 31 August 2025, the Prime Minister met Senior General Min Aung Hlaing to discuss a broad bilateral agenda, including development, connectivity, rare earths, defence, border management, trade and the elections in Myanmar. Earlier high-level exchanges have included Prime Ministerial visits to Myanmar in 2014 and 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind's State Visit in 2018, and reciprocal Myanmar state visits in 2016, 2018, 2019 and 2020, which helped sustain political momentum between the two countries.

4. Other senior-level engagements have been frequent and sustained. Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh attended the presidential inauguration of President U Min Aung Hlaing in April 2026. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar met Myanmar counterpart during his transit in June 2024 and again on the margins of the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' meeting in July 2024. NSA Shri Ajit Doval visited Myanmar to attend the BIMSTEC NSAs meeting in August 2024. Regular ministerial and deputy-ministerial travel from Myanmar to India has continued, including visits by the NSPNC Chairman and Border Affairs Minister, the Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations, and the Central Bank Governor.

5. India is a long-standing and increasingly important economic partner for Myanmar, with bilateral trade reaching US\$1.95 billion in FY 2025–26 (April–March), up about 24% from FY 2024–25; India's exports rose 31.48% to US\$808 million while imports from Myanmar were US\$1,149 million. India has risen to become Myanmar's fourth largest trading partner (previously seventh). To facilitate trade, the Rupee–Kyat Trade Settlement Mechanism, operational since 25 January 2024, has processed over 130 transactions amounting to approximately INR 102 crore.

6. Economic engagement has been reinforced by frequent business delegations and sectoral visits, including missions led by the Department of Consumer Affairs, the Manipur Chamber of Commerce & Industry, and an Indian rare-earth and critical-minerals delegation. Institutional cooperation continues through regular meetings: the 1st Joint Working Group on Traditional Medicine (14 May 2026), 9th Joint Trade Committee (21 January 2026), the JWG on Indian Pharmacopoeia (9 December 2025), power cooperation talks including an MoU for a DPR on cross-border interconnection (10–11 July 2025), shipping cooperation agreements and SOPs (July 2025–January 2026), and technical discussions on transmission interconnection (3 February 2026). Strong participation by Indian industry—62 firms at the India-Myanmar Pharmaceutical Business Forum and 26 companies at the 2nd India-Myanmar Business Conclave in 2026, underscores growing commercial ties and momentum for deeper bilateral economic cooperation.

7. Defence and security cooperation between India and Myanmar has strengthened steadily over the years, marked by regular high-level exchanges, institutional engagements and capacity building. Visits by senior military officials — including CNS Admiral Dinesh K. Tripathi (2-5 May 2026), Defence Secretary Shri Rajesh Kumar Singh (25-26 September 2025), have provided opportunities for wide-ranging discussions to enhance defence relations.

Reciprocal visits by Myanmar's leadership, notably Sr. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing [July 2017 and recent visits by Gen. Tun Aung, C-in-C(Air) for Aero India and Lt. Gen. Ko Ko Oo for 7th AAST in Sept. 2025], have further consolidated ties. Institutional mechanisms such as Army, Air Force and Naval Staff Talks, and memoranda of understanding on Border Cooperation, Maritime Cooperation underpin ongoing training exchanges including 9th Edition of UN Peace Keeping capsule, 3 cultural exchange visits and operational coordination.

8. The Indian developmental assistance portfolio for Myanmar is designed to meet the needs of the people of Myanmar and is valued at about US\$1.5 billion, with nearly US\$1 billion provided as grants; major projects include the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (including a 109 km road from Paletwa to the India–Myanmar border) and the IMT Trilateral Highway linking India's Northeast with Myanmar, while Sittwe Port (part of KMMTTP), inaugurated in May 2023, had berthed over 301 vessels by 15 May 2026; India has also supported multiple institutional-capacity building initiatives through institutions such as the Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) in Mandalay, the Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education (ACARE) and the Rice Bio-Park in Naypyitaw.

9. India's community-level assistance in Myanmar is delivered through targeted, largely grant-funded schemes coordinated with Myanmar ministries and local authorities to ensure relevance and sustainability; these programmes including BADP, RSDP, SDP and QIP—finance short-gestation, high-impact works such as schools, health centres, roads and bridges, prefabricated housing, village solar electrification, water-supply systems, agricultural support and social-infrastructure projects (e.g., a 200-bedded Women & Children Hospital in Monywa, computers for Sittwe Computer University, tractors and harvesters for Rakhine), and over 25 QIPs in areas like renewable energy, education and disaster risk reduction, thereby producing immediate, tangible improvements in health, education, livelihoods, market access and resilience while complementing larger connectivity initiatives.

10. India has been offering avenues of capacity building to Myanmar under various schemes like Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC), Indian Council for Cultural Affairs (ICCR) Scholarships, MGC, BIMSTEC, ASEAN-India and other training programs. During FY 2025–26, approximately 216 civilians and 190 Defense personnel from Myanmar have availed ITEC scholarships while 56 Myanmar students joined various Indian universities through ICCR scholarships. Special courses have been organized for 320 Myanmar judicial officers, 19 officials from the Ministry of Social Welfare, senior officials from

Forest department etc. Myanmar professionals from various walks of life have attended capacity building courses under BIMSTEC and ASEAN-India framework.

11. India's humanitarian assistance to Myanmar has been prompt and substantial, responding to major disasters including Cyclone Nargis (2008), the Shan State earthquake (2010), Cyclone Komen (2015), Cyclone Mora (2017) and influenza outbreaks. Recent support includes US\$200,000 for Rakhine rehabilitation, US\$1 million for ten schools in Rakhine, and a consignment of 2,200 MT of rice delivered to Yangon in December 2024. In response to Typhoon Yagi, Operation Sadbhav (17 September 2024) provided 53 tonnes of emergency relief and essential medicines. After the 7.7 magnitude earthquake on 28 March 2025, Operation Brahma deployed nine aircraft and five warships to deliver about 1000 tonnes of HADR aid, deployed a search and rescue team and Indian Army field hospital treated 2,519 patients, performed 55 major and 307 minor surgeries, and conducted 6,888 laboratory investigations.

12. Cultural ties between India and Myanmar are deep and enduring, rooted in a shared Buddhist heritage and long historical links. India has supported restoration of key monuments such as the Ananda Temple and ongoing works on 72 earthquake-damaged pagodas in Bagan, and cultural exchanges continue through regular performances and joint events. In recent years, Myanmar artists participated in ICCR's Ramayana workshops, the Kullu Dusshera Festival and the Surajkund International Craft Mela, and an exhibition on the Ramayana was organized in Myanmar, all of which have reinforced people-to-people connections.

13. The Indian community in Myanmar dates back to the mid-19th century under British rule and remains an important social and economic presence. Estimates of people of Indian origin range from 1.5 to 2.5 million, with major concentrations in Yangon and Mandalay. Around 180,000 live in Bago (Zeyawaddy and Kyaikto), Tanintharyi Region and Mon State, mainly engaged in agriculture, while a smaller NRI community of about 5,000 resides primarily in Yangon and Mandalay, working in trade, export-import and with multinational companies and UN organisations.

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