

India-Thailand Bilateral Brief

India and Thailand have historically enjoyed warm and cordial relations. In the contemporary times, the diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1947 and both sides celebrated the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2022.

2. The bilateral ties are multifaceted and cover a wide spectrum of areas including trade and investment, defence and security, connectivity, culture and tourism, education, science and technology, and people-to-people exchanges. Further, the 'Act West' policy of Thailand complements India's 'Act East' policy. Thailand is India's maritime neighbour.

3. In the context of regional and sub-regional groupings, Thailand is an important partner of India including in the ASEAN, the East Asia Summit (EAS), the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), the Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD), the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), and the Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS).

High Level Exchanges

4. High level visits and meetings have taken place on a regular basis between both sides.

5. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi briefly met Prime Minister of Thailand (Ms.) Paetongtarn Shinawatra on the sidelines of 44th and 45th ASEAN and Related Summits in Vientiane on 11 October 2024. The leaders discussed bilateral cooperation in various areas and also exchanged views on ways to forge closer cooperation in sub-regional, regional and multilateral fora, including BIMSTEC.

6. Prime Minister of Thailand (Mr.) Srettha Thavisin congratulated Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi through a phone call on 06 June 2024 for the victory in the general elections in India.

7. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi accompanied by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S. Jaishankar and Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal visited Thailand from 02-04 November 2019 to attend the 16th ASEAN and Related Summits. During the visit, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi addressed a community event "Sawasdee PM Modi" on 02 November, which was attended by around 5000 members of the Indian community; had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha on 03 November; and also released a special commemorative coin to mark the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji and the Thai translation of Tamil book, Thirukkural. Earlier, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Bangkok to pay tributes to late King Bhumibol Adulyadej on 10 November 2016.

8. From Thailand, Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha visited India from 24-26 January 2018 for the India-ASEAN Special Commemorative Summit and as a Guest of Honour for the Republic Day Parade along with other ASEAN leaders. Earlier, Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Industry Minister and Culture Minister, paid a State Visit to India from 16-18 June 2016, and held extensive dialogue with various interlocutors.

9. Further, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha met on the sidelines of G-20 Summit in Osaka, Japan on 28 June 2019. They also met on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Singapore on 14 November 2018; and on the margins of the 4th BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu on 31 August 2018.

10. In addition to the above, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha on 01 May 2020, a few months into the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. The two leaders exchanged views on effectively dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed upon collaboration for Research and Development in the field of medical sciences and vaccine development. Subsequently, the two sides signed an MoU in this regard in August 2022.

11. HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn (sister of King Rama X), has been a regular visitor to India. She is a recipient of Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace (2004); first World Sanskrit Award (2016); and Padma Bhushan (2017).

Foreign Ministers Meetings

12. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand (Mr.) Maris Sangiampongsa (MS) paid a visit to New Delhi from 17-19 March 2025 for participating in Raisina Dialogue. In the sidelines, MS held a bilateral meeting with EAM. MS visited India from 01-02 November to attend the Royal Kathina Ceremony, offering robes to Buddhist monks. During his visit, he held a meeting with EAM.

13. Earlier, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand (Mr.) Maris Sangiampongsa visited New Delhi on 11-13 July 2024 for the 2nd BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat hosted by EAM and for an official bilateral visit. This was his first official visit to India. He also met EAM on 12 July 2024.

14. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (DPM/FM) of Thailand (Dr.) Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara visited India on 26-28 February 2024. EAM co-chaired the 10th edition of the India-Thailand Joint Commission Meeting with DPM/FM on 28 February 2024.

15. EAM visited Bangkok from 15-18 July 2023 to co-chair the MGC Foreign Ministers' Meeting (MCG FMM), along with the Foreign Minister of Lao PDR, and to participate in the first BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' (FMs) Retreat hosted by Thailand in Bangkok. EAM paid a joint call on then Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chan-o-cha on 17 July 2023 along with other BIMSTEC FMs.

16. Earlier, EAM visited Bangkok from 16-18 August 2022 to co-chair the 9th Meeting of India-Thailand Joint Commission with (Mr.) Don Pramudwinai, then DPM/FM of Thailand on 17 August 2022. During the visit, EAM paid a courtesy call on General Prayut Chan-o-cha, Prime Minister of Thailand on 17 August 2022. EAM's other engagements included interaction with the Indian Community on 16 August 2022; joint inauguration of the newly constructed Embassy Residence and Residential Complex, along with DPM/FM of Thailand; and a public talk on "India's Vision of the Indo-Pacific" at the Chulalongkorn University on 18 August 2022.

17. On 01-02 August 2019, EAM attended ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting, the 9th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting (EAS FMM), 26th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and 10th MGC Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok.

18. Mr. Don Pramudwinai, DPM/FM of Thailand visited India and met EAM on 30 January 2023. He also visited India to attend the 8th JCM on 10 October 2019. In addition to the above, EAM and DPM/FM interacted on the sidelines of BRICS meeting on 24 August 2023 in South Africa; and also on the sidelines of the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings in Jakarta on 13 July 2023.

19. The DPM/FM of Thailand (Dr.) Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara addressed the second edition of the Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November 2023. Further, on 12 January 2023, Prime Minister of Thailand, General Prayut Chan-o-Cha, participated virtually at the first Voice of Global South Summit.

Parliamentary Interaction

20. Shri Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha met (Mr.) Mongkol Surasajja, President of the Senate of Thailand on the sidelines of the 149th Assembly of IPU in Geneva on 15 October 2024. Earlier, he had met (Mr.) Chuan Leekpai, then Speaker of the House of Representatives of Thailand on the sidelines of P20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit in Jakarta, Indonesia on 07 October 2022.

21. Indian Parliamentary delegation consisting of Shri Kamkhya Prasad Tasa, MP, Lok Sabha and Smt. Kiran Choudhry, MP, Rajya Sabha met the Thai Parliamentary delegation in the 15th Plenary Session of Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) on 19 February 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan. A 14 member delegation from the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs led by its Chairperson, Senator (Mrs.) Pikulkeaw Krairiksh, visited India from 05-08 February 2024. During the visit, they called on Shri Om Birla, Speaker of Lok Sabha, and EAM. They also met the members of Departmental Related Standing Committee on External Affairs.

Other High Level Meetings

22. On the request of Thai government, Government of India sent the Holy Relics of Lord Buddha, along with two of his principal disciples for public

exposition from 22 February to 19 March 2024. A high level delegation led by Governor of Bihar Shri Rajendra Arlekar and Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment (Dr.) Virendra Kumar accompanied the relics to Thailand. The relics were enshrined at Sanam Luang, the Royal palace ground, in Bangkok on 23 February and the enshrinement ceremony was presided over by Prime Minister of Thailand H.E. (Mr.) Srettha Thavisin. They were opened for public display from 24 February to 03 March in Bangkok and thereafter it was enshrined in Chiang Mai, Ubon Ratchathani and Krabi. Over a period of 25 days, more than 4.1 million devotees paid tributes to the Sacred Relics.

23. Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog Shri Suman Bery visited Thailand from 24-28 February 2025 to attend the 12th edition of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD) in the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) in Bangkok. During the visit, he had separate meetings with Minister of Commerce ; Tourism and Sports of Thailand and; Industry of Thailand. He also met Advisor to the Prime Minister and the President of Thailand Trade Representatives; and Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the UNESCAP.

24. Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Minority Affairs, (Mr.) Kiren Rijju, and the Governor of Bihar, (Mr.) Arif Mohammed Khan visited Thailand on 13-14 February 2025 and 13-17 February 2025 respectively to attend the 4th edition of SAMVAD (Global Hindu Buddhist Initiative) Conference. The inaugural session was held in the United Nations Convention Center in Bangkok on 14 February 2025. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi delivered his address through a video message.

25. Minister of State for Communications, Dr. Pemmasani Chandra Sekhar visited Bangkok from 15-17 January 2025 to attend the 5th ASEAN Digital Ministers' Meeting and Related Meetings. During the visit, he met (Mr.) Prasert Chantararuangthong, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Digital Economy and Society of Thailand, and discussed issues of mutual interest.

26. A delegation led by Shri Keshab Mahanta, Minister of Revenue and Disaster Management, Science and Technology and Information Technology, Government of Assam visited Thailand from 09-11 January 2025 to promote the 'Advantage Assam 2.0'. He also met various Thai interlocutors including (Mr.) Kritsada Tanthetthit, Secretary to Minister of Tourism and Sports; Vice

Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr.) Russ Jalichandra; Vice Minister of Commerce (Mr.) Varavongsa Ramangkura; and (Mr.) Wirat Tatsaringkansakul, Deputy Secretary General of Board of Investment of Thailand.

27. On the sidelines of the Informal Consultation at the Ministerial level between Bangladesh, China, India, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Thailand, Foreign Secretary (Mr.) Vikram Misri called on the Foreign Minister of Thailand (Mr.) Maris Sangiampongsa in Bangkok on 19 December 2024 and discussed bilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

28. Deputy Minister of Commerce of Thailand (Mr.) Napintorn Srisanpang led a delegation to participate in Vibrant Gujarat Summit (10-12 January 2024), wherein Thailand joined as partner country.

29. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of Health & Family Welfare of India met (Mr.) Anutin Charnvirakul, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Public Health of Thailand on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos on 17 January 2023, and discussed cooperation in the fields of digital health, disease surveillance system and pandemic management among other matters of mutual interest.

30. Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs and Education visited Thailand from 29-31 July 2022 to attend the 2nd edition of North-East India Festival. Mr. Jurin Laksanawisit, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Commerce, Government of Thailand and Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh jointly inaugurated the festival on 30 July 2022 in the presence of Chief Ministers of Meghalaya and Nagaland, Deputy Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, other Ministers and senior officials from the North Eastern States of India.

31. Ambassadors of India, Australia, Japan & the Cd'A of the US in Thailand jointly presented 200,000 doses of Made in India Covovax vaccines to Thailand under the Quad Vaccine Partnership on 21 April 2022. This was part of the commitment made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Quad Leaders' Summit in Washington DC in September 2021 to donate 500,000 doses of COVID vaccines to countries in the Indo-Pacific region under the Quad Vaccine Partnership.

Bilateral Institutional Mechanisms

32. **Joint Commission Meeting** : The 10th round of JCM was held in New Delhi on 27 February 2024. EAM and Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs (DPM/FM) of Thailand (Dr.) Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara co-chaired the meeting. The entire gamut of bilateral relations was reviewed during the meeting.

33. **Foreign Office Consultations** : The 7th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Thailand, co-chaired by Secretary (East), Shri Saurabh Kumar and Thai Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Mr.) Sarun Charoensuwan, were held on 07 August 2023 in Bangkok.

34. **Bilateral Dialogues**: India and Thailand have institutionalized various dialogue mechanisms such as Joint Working Group on Security Cooperation; on Education; on Visa and Consular matters (ad hoc); and Joint Task Force on Maritime Cooperation. The two sides meet regularly to discuss bilateral cooperation and international developments in these areas.

Defence Cooperation

35. The Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation between India and Thailand was signed on 25 January 2012. The ongoing defence cooperation initiatives comprise of defence dialogue, joint maritime patrolling by the navies of both countries, annual staff talks, subject matter expert exchange visits, training of officers at each other's institutions, trilateral/multilateral military exercises etc. As part of regular high level defence-related visits, Chief of Defence Force of Royal Thai Armed Forces General Songwit Noonpackdee paid an official visit to India from 21-24 January 2025.

Economic & Commercial Cooperation

36. The bilateral trade between India and Thailand has increased manifold in recent years. As per the Department of Commerce of India, during the period FY 2023-2024, Thailand was the 21st largest trading partner of India with total bilateral trade of around USD 14.94 billion. As per Ministry of Commerce of Thailand, in 2024 (January-December), India was the 11th largest trading partner of Thailand, and the total bilateral trade in 2024 was around

USD 17.5 billion. The trade figures between the two countries in last few years are as under:

(amount in billion USD)			
Year	Total trade	Imports from Thailand	Exports to Thailand
2021-22	15.08	9.33	5.75
2022-23	16.90	11.20	5.70
2023-24	14.98	9.90	5.03
<i>Source: Department of Commerce, India.</i>			

37. Major Indian companies in Thailand include the Tata group – Tata Steel Thailand, and Tata Consultancy Services, Aditya Birla Group, Tech Mahindra, Kirloskar Brothers Ltd., L&T, Bajaj Auto, Royal Enfield, NRB Bearing, Ranbaxy, Camper Pharmaceuticals Coforge Ltd, Usha Siam Steel Industries PLC, KEC International, Kalpataru Power Transmission Ltd., Desmond International, Apollo Tyres, etc.

38. Leading Thai companies in the fields of agro-processing, construction, automotive and engineering have active and growing business presence in India. Some of the notable Thai companies active in India are – Charoen Pokphand Group, Italian Thai Development PCL, the Thai Union Frozen Products PCL, Thai Summit Neel Auto Pvt. Ltd., Delta Electronics (Thailand) PCL, Srithai Superware PCL (Melamine tableware manufacturing), Siam Makro PCL, Global Renewable Synergy Co (GRSC), etc.

39. **India-Thailand Joint Trade Committee:** The 13th Joint Trade Committee (at JS level) meeting took place on 20 April 2023 in New Delhi.

Cultural and Tourism Cooperation and Connectivity

40. An Indian Cultural Centre was opened in Bangkok in September 2009 *[it has since been renamed as the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre]*. The India-Thailand Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for the years 2022-2027 was signed by Minister of Culture of India and Minister of Culture of Thailand in a virtual ceremony held on 22 December 2022.

41. Regular visits of Indian cultural troupes to Thailand are organised, in addition to Indian films, food and other festivals. Several commemorative

events were organised to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries in 2022, as well as to celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's Independence under the theme of "Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav". Further, as one of the three countries requested by the Government of Thailand, an eight-member dance troupe from India performed during the 241st anniversary celebrations of the foundation of Rattanakosin (Bangkok) in April 2023; Mission facilitated the participation of an Indian dance troupe at the Candle Festival Procession in Ubon Ratchathani Province on 01-02 August 2023; and on 13 July, a dance troupe led by (Ms.) Ananda S Jayant performed at the opening ceremony of International Ramayana Festival at Sanam Luang ground in Bangkok. This was part of International Ramayana Festival organised by Thai Ministry of Culture to celebrate the occasion of 6th Cycle Birthday Anniversary of the King Rama X.

42. The 10th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Bangkok with participation of over 5000 yoga enthusiasts from different walks of life including Ambassadors, Diplomats, Government officials, Media, Students and Academia and Indian diaspora. The event was organized at the Chulalongkorn University grounds in Bangkok on 16 June 2024.

43. Prime Minister of Thailand (Ms.) Paetongtarn Shinawatra inaugurated the 'Amazing Thailand Diwali Festival 2024' which was held at Pahurat, Little India in Bangkok on 29 October 2024. The 7-day event (from 29 October to 03 November) was co-organized by our Embassy, Indian Diaspora Associations, Thai government and Indian companies in Thailand. The inauguration was attended by Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin, Minister of Tourism and Sports, Governor of Bangkok and Members of Indian Associations. During the event, a cultural troupe from India presented a vibrant folk dance from Rajasthan.

44. Thailand has been directly connected with more than 15 Indian cities with around 400 weekly flights with seasonal variation. All major airlines operate between the two countries. Before Covid, around 1.9 million Indian tourists visited Thailand in 2019. As per Ministry of Tourism and Sports of Thailand, during 2024, around 2.1 million Indian tourists visited Thailand, which is around 6% of the total tourist inflow into Thailand and Indians were the third largest group of tourists visiting Thailand during this period.

45. To promote people to people connectivity, Government of India grants 30 days e-tourist visa with single/double entry on gratis basis to Thai nationals. The regime was introduced in July 2024 for a period of 6 months, and is currently extended till 31 December 2025. Thailand introduced new visa measures from 15 July 2024, whereby Indian passport holders can enter Thailand without a visa and stay in the country for up to 60 days, which can further be extended up to 30 more days.

Cooperation in the field of Education

46. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Education was signed in 2005. India offers around 75 scholarships annually under various schemes to Thailand. India also offered 1,000 Ph.D. fellowships at the IITs to ASEAN countries, including 100 slots to Thailand. Currently, there are 6 India Studies Centers and 13 India Corners in various Thai Universities/institutions.

47. Recipients of Padma Awards: HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn received the Padma Bhushan in 2017 and HH Somdet Phra Ariyawongsakhatayan, the Supreme Patriarch of Thailand, who is an alumnus of BHU, received the Padma Shri in 2018. In March 2022, Dr. Chirapat Prapandvidya received the Padma Shri under the category of 'Literature and Education'.

Indian Diaspora in Thailand

48. The total number of people of Indian origin in Thailand is estimated to be around 4 to 5 lakh, including more than 25,000 NRIs, majority of whom are concentrated in Bangkok. The community comprises mainly of Punjabi Hindus, Namdhari and other Sikh sects, Gorakhpuris, Malayalis, Tamils, Gujaratis, Marwaris, and Sindhis. Other linguistic and regional groups are also well represented.

Embassy & Consulate

49. Besides the Embassy in Bangkok, India has a Consulate in Chiang Mai in Northern Thailand. Thailand has 3 Consulates in India in the cities of Mumbai, Kolkata and Chennai, besides its Embassy in New Delhi.

March 2025