

India-Thailand Strategic Partnership: PM Modi's Visit Reinforces 'Act East-Act West' Synergy

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India-Thailand Latest News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi landed in Thailand on a two-day visit to attend the 6th **BIMSTEC** summit.

Historical and Cultural Linkages

- India and Thailand share civilizational ties rooted in history, culture, and religion.
- Buddhism, which originated in India, remains a key spiritual bond between the two countries.
- Ancient linkages through maritime trade routes and cultural exchanges, such as the adaptation of the Ramayana in Thai folklore as **Ramakien**, have ensured a long-standing mutual cultural appreciation.
- Indian influence is visible in Thai architecture, language (Sanskrit-Pali roots), traditional medicine, and performing arts.
- Thailand has historically acknowledged these ties, recently reaffirmed by the issuance of a commemorative postage stamp based on the Ramayana mural paintings during PM Modi's 2025 visit.

Political Relations between India and Thailand

- India and Thailand share warm and friendly political relations rooted in historical and cultural ties.
- The relationship gained momentum after India launched its '**Look East Policy**' in the early 1990s, which evolved into the '**Act East Policy**' under Prime Minister Modi.
- Thailand, in turn, has embraced its '**Act West Policy**', seeking deeper engagement with South Asia.
- Both nations support multilateralism and collaborate closely in regional forums like **ASEAN**, **BIMSTEC**, **ADMM-Plus**, and the **East Asia Summit**.

Economic and Commercial Relations

- India and Thailand are important economic partners within Southeast Asia.
- During FY 2023-24, **Thailand was the 21st largest trading partner of India** with total bilateral trade of around **USD 14.94 Billion**.
- Thailand is part of India's regional trade ambitions through ASEAN and BIMSTEC.
- There is a push to enhance mutual investments, MSME collaboration, and connectivity through initiatives such as the India-Myanmar-Thailand trilateral highway.

The Indian Diaspora in Thailand

- The Indian community in Thailand, estimated at over **250,000**, includes both historical and recent migrants.
- They are primarily engaged in trade, jewellery business, hospitality, and various service sectors.
- Indians are well integrated into Thai society and have contributed to strengthening people-to-people ties.
- Prominent Indian-origin associations and Buddhist spiritual networks further bridge societal connections between the two nations.

News Summary

- **Upgrading to a Strategic Partnership**
 - During his two-day visit to Thailand in April 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the elevation of bilateral ties to a "**Strategic Partnership**" following delegation-level talks with Thai PM **Paetongtarn Shinawatra**.

- This development signifies a deepening of ties in security, trade, and regional cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.
- The leaders agreed to establish a *Strategic Dialogue* between security agencies of both nations, signalling enhanced maritime and defence cooperation.

- **Indo-Pacific Vision and Regional Connectivity**

- Reaffirming India's support for *ASEAN Centrality* and *Unity*, PM Modi underlined the shared vision of a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- He contrasted India's developmental approach (*vikaasvaad*) against expansionism (*vistaarvaad*), sending a clear message in line with India's evolving geopolitical stance in Asia.
- PM Modi also reiterated India's commitment to the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), which both countries are a part of.
- Ahead of the 6th BIMSTEC Summit, he stressed BIMSTEC's role in boosting regional connectivity and trade.
- A key agenda item included the signing of an Agreement on Maritime Cooperation, a strategic component given India's and Thailand's maritime interests.

- **Cultural Diplomacy and Symbolic Gestures**

- In a powerful gesture of soft diplomacy, Thailand gifted PM Modi with the ***World Tipitaka: Sajjhaya Phonetic Edition***, symbolizing shared Buddhist heritage.
- This version was specially published in 2016 to commemorate the 70-year reign of Thai monarch King Bhumibol Adulyadej.

India-Thailand Strategic Partnership FAQs

Q1. What major development occurred during PM Modi's 2025 visit to Thailand?

Ans. India and Thailand elevated their bilateral ties to the level of a Strategic Partnership.

Q2. What sectors saw new cooperation agreements during the visit?

Ans. New cooperation areas include MSMEs, handlooms, handicrafts, tourism, and education.

Q3. How does the India-Thailand partnership align with the Indo-Pacific strategy?

Ans. Both countries support a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific order.

Q4. What cultural gesture did Thailand make during PM Modi's visit?

Ans. Thailand issued a postage stamp based on Ramayana murals and gifted PM Modi the Tipitaka scriptures.

Q5. What regional platform did PM Modi engage with during the visit?

Ans. PM Modi participated in the 6th BIMSTEC Summit held in Thailand.

Source: [IE](#)

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