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# MARITIME TRADE AND CULTURAL TRANSMISSION: ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONAL LINKS BETWEEN INDIA AND MALAYSIA

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***Abstract:*** India's strategic location between the Arabian Sea and the Bay of Bengal has made it a maritime hub for over two millennia, facilitating enormous cultural and economic contacts with Southeast Asia. The Chola Empire (9th-13th centuries) was instrumental in controlling maritime routes to the Malay Peninsula, transmitting *Hindu-Buddhist* traditions, art, and governance models, and fostering a thriving trade. Ports like *Muziris*, *Tamralipti*, and *Kaveripattinam* functioned as crucial conduits for the interchange of products, ideas, and religious rituals. *Malaysia's* Indian diaspora, which numbers around 2.9 million people, continues to uphold these traditions, serving as a live cultural bridge between the two countries. This studies seeks to examine how maritime trade facilitated cultural transmission between India and Malaysia, with an emphasis on economic exchanges, religious spread, linguistic borrowings, and administrative impacts. The research blends comparative studies of texts, architecture, and diaspora behaviors by analyzing historical inscriptions, temple ruins, and trade records, as well as archaeological evidence from Bet *Dwarka* (India) and *Penang* (Malaysia). The findings show that India exported spices, textiles, beads, and ivory while acquiring gold, silver, and horses. *Buddhism* and *Hinduism* spread over marine channels, and *Malaysian* temples mirror Indian architectural forms. *Sanskrit* expanded *Malay* language, and epics like the *Ramayana* were localized in Southeast Asia. Indianized kingdoms, such as *Srivijaya*, adopted governance traditions influenced by Indian polities. Artifacts and diaspora traditions illustrate the continuation of Indian art, rituals, and festivals. Finally, maritime trade served as a civilizational connector, spreading religion, governance, language, and art, molding Malaysia's cultural identity and emphasizing long-standing Indo-Malay links across the Indian Ocean.

***Keywords:*** Chola Empire, cultural exchange, Indian diaspora, Indian Ocean trade, India-Malaysia relations

## INTRODUCTION

Malaysia now is what was once known as the *Malay* Islands.Many *Sanskrit* terms originate from the Malay Islands, which means a collection of many islands. The Malay language depicts the relationship between the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* in *Malay* literature, demonstrating how these ancient epics have influenced regional cultural narratives and storytelling practices (Varun, 2023). The ancient Indian scripture Vayu Purana also mentions a location called Malayadvipa. This phrase may refer to Sumatra or the Malay Peninsula. Ptolemy's map showed the Malay Peninsula as the Golden Chersonese.Three inscriptions found in Palembang (South Sumatra) and Banka Island, written in *Malay* and *Pallava* script letters, demonstrate that the archipelago embraced Indian models while retaining its indigenous language and social order. These inscriptions confirm the presence of a *Dapunta Hyang* (lord) in Srivijaya. Srivijaya ruled over much of the *Malay* Peninsula from the seventh to the thirteenth centuries.Relations between the Chola

Empire of South India and Srivijaya were favorable during *Raja Raja Chola* I's reign, but deteriorated during *Rajendra Chola* I. In 1025 and 1026*, Rajendra Chola* I of the *Chola* Empire, a *Tamil* emperor, is thought to have led the Cholas to attack *Kedah* (known as Kadaram in Tamil). The second invasion was headed by *Virarajendra Chola* of the Chola dynasty, who took over Kedah in the late 11th century. To vanquish the remaining invaders, *Vira Rajendra Chola* had to quash the *Kedah* insurrection. The entry of the Cholas reduced *Srivijaya's* prestige, which stretched to *Kedah, Pattani*, and *Ligor*. In the late 11th century, under *Kuluthunga Chola* I, the Cholas cemented their authority over the *Srivijaya* province of *Kedah*. The *Chola* Empire aspired to gain control over minor *Malay* kingdoms.In 1324, *Sang Nila Utama*, a prince from *Srivijaya*, established the kingdom of *Singapura* (Temasek). According to tradition, he was linked to *Sang Sapurba*. He had authority over Temasek for 48 years. Around 1366, a Chinese emperor's embassy recognized him as the ruler of Temasek. He was succeeded by his son, *Paduka Sri Pekerma Wira* Diraja (1372-1386), and grandson, *Paduka Seri Rana Wira Kerma*.The armies of Majapahit or *Ayutthaya* evicted Temasek's last ruler, *Paduka Sri Maharaja Parameswara,* in 1401. He later traveled north, establishing the Malacca Sultanate in 1402. The Malacca Sultanate succeeded the *Srivijaya* Empire as the most powerful *Malay* political organization in the archipelago.India and *Malaysia* have a long history of linguistic, cultural, and historical relations. The Indian community in *Malaysia* promotes India-Southeast Asia connections through cultural diplomacy, language, temples, and festivals. Indians have made advances in education, business, and public services, demonstrating social mobility. Indian educational and cultural institutions have safeguarded language, identity, and traditions (Tamil Culture, 2026).

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Maritime trade and cultural interchange across the Indian Ocean have long been vital to India and *Malaysia's* history. Economic transactions were the foundation of this contact, with historic sea routes facilitating the transport of spices, textiles, and other goods. These networks not only supported business, but also established long-lasting avenues of cultural diffusion. *Hinduism, Buddhism, Sanskrit, and Tamil* traditions have deeply influenced *Malaysian* society. Temples, inscriptions, and literary works demonstrate the impact of Indian thinking and aesthetics. Along with culture, Indian governance and administration supplied models of polity and institutional practices that resonated with *Malay* governments, leaving a mark on their administrative structures. Equally important is the Indian diaspora, which continues to serve as a living link between the two countries. This diaspora maintains cultural ties and contributes to *Malaysia's* sociocultural identity through rituals, festivals, and community institutions.

Finally, the long-term impact of Indian civilization can be seen in Malaysian art, architecture, and cultural memory. From temple designs to linguistic legacy, the Indian presence has left an indelible effect throughout centuries.These factors show the varied character of India-Malaysia relations, in which trade, culture, government, diaspora, and civilizational impact all intersect to form a rich historical tapestry that continues to define contemporary ties.

## METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of India-Malaysia ties necessitates a multifaceted approach that considers historical, archeological, cultural, and textual evidence. Historical study serves as the foundation, with inscriptions,

temple ruins, royal charters, and trade records used to track maritime relations and cultural exchanges. In addition, archaeological evidence from port sites, artifacts, coinage, pottery, and maritime constructions in Tamil Nadu and the Malay Peninsula aids in the reconstruction of material trade networks. Equally significant are diaspora studies, which look into how Indian commercial communities and settlers maintain cultural ties through temples, rituals, and social structures. Finally, an interdisciplinary approach that includes history, archaeology, languages, and anthropology ensures a comprehensive knowledge of marine trade as a means of civilizational interchange.

## RESEARCH PROBLEM

Despite centuries of maritime engagement across the Indian Ocean, the specific processes by which trade enabled cultural transfer between India and Malaysia remain unknown. While inscriptions, temple ruins, and diaspora populations demonstrate significant civilizational relationships, contemporary literature frequently sees economic transaction and cultural dissemination as distinct processes. This leaves a gap in our understanding of how business, religion, language, and governance interacted to shape Malaysia's historical identity.

The research problem is thus to critically examine the role of maritime trade as a conduit for cultural transmission, examining how Indian economic, religious, and administrative traditions were integrated into Malay society, and assessing the long-term implications of these exchanges for regional civilizational development.

## SCOPE OF RESEARCH

The study of India-Malaysia trade spans the ancient to medieval periods, beginning with early Indian Ocean interactions (about the 1st century CE), booming throughout the Chola era (9th-13th centuries), and extending to early Islamic influences in Southeast Asia. Geographically, the study focuses on Indian Ocean trade networks, Tamil Nadu ports like Nagapattinam and *Kaveripattinam*, and Malay hubs like as *Malacca, Kedah, and Srivijaya*.

Thematically, the scope includes economic exchanges in spices, textiles, metals, and maritime commerce; cultural transmission through religion (Hinduism, Buddhism), language (Sanskrit, Tamil), literature, and art; political-administrative influence through governance models; and diaspora studies, with a focus on the role of Indian merchant communities in maintaining cultural ties.Analytically, the study compares Indian and Malay behaviors, using archeological data, inscriptions, and textual sources to assess integration and adaptation. However, the scope is confined to pre-modern civilizational linkages, leaving out current diplomatic, commercial, and political relations established after 1957.

### *Cultural dimension*

*Malaysia* and India share deep cultural ties. Thousands of temples in *Malaysia* dedicated to various Tamil deities exhibit both religious and South Indian cultural beliefs. The *huge Maha Mariamman* Temple in *Kualalumpur* is one of the country's most visited temples. The *Tamil* community in *Malaysia* has played an important role in fostering such cultural qualities, as indicated by the celebration of big holidays like Diwali and Thaipusam, as well as smaller festivals like *Ganesh Chaturthi, Maha Shivaratri,* and *Baisakhi.*

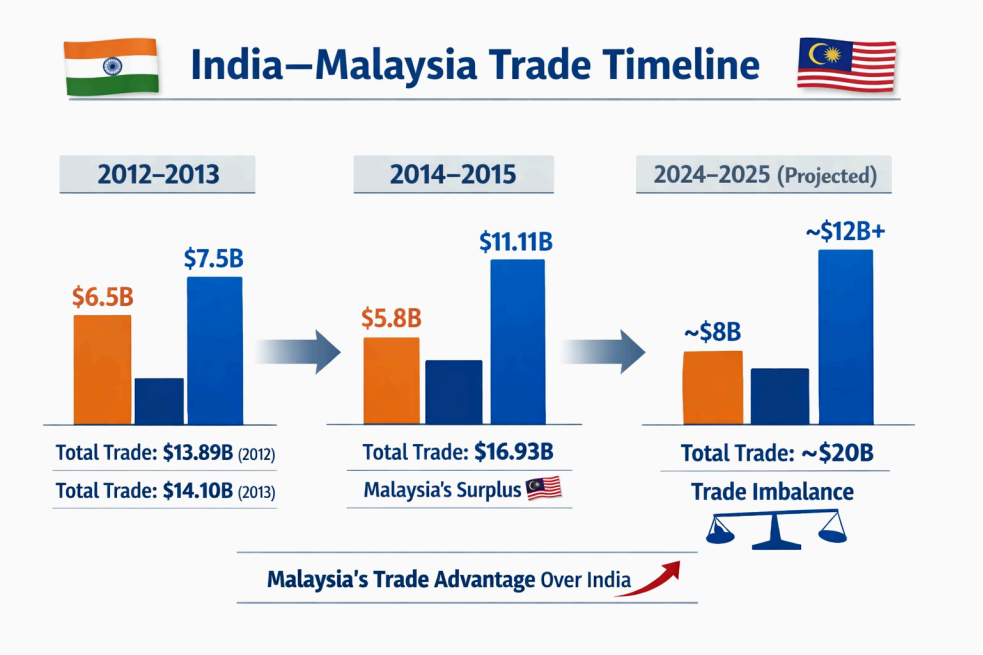
The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has launched many initiatives to strengthen bilateral cultural ties. The Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture *(IGCIC), Kualalumpur's* dedicated Indian cultural center, opened in February 2010 and offers programs in classical Indian music, dance, *yoga, Hindi* language education, and other activities. A Friend of the Indian Culture Centre (FICC) committee has been formed to oversee the center's promotional activities. Another prominent example of bilateral cultural diplomacy is the signing of a Cultural Programme Exchange Agreement between India and Malaysia.In 2010, Malaysia and India inked a bilateral cooperation agreement to ensure educational opportunities for their respective student communities. On February 10, 2023, the Indian High Commission in Kuala Lumpur held a special musical performance called "India-Malaysia@65: A Celebration of Music," in partnership with the Lalit Kala Mandir (TFA). Prasar Bharati and Radio Television Malaysia (RTM) are planned to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in November 2023. This Memorandum of Understanding aims to foster collaboration in public broadcasting through "free/fee-based exchange programs in culture, education, science, technology, sports, news, and other areas (Cultural Relations, 2024).

India and Malaysia have long-standing relationship ties that are rooted in history, civilization, and culture. The existence of Malaysia's 2.9 million Indian diaspora, the world's third largest, strengthens this bond even further.Malaysia has the world's largest Indian-origin community, with around 8.5 percent of the overall population. They include experts and laborers from many industries. The Indian diaspora plays an important role in expanding economic networks and strengthening communication connections between the two countries. Tourism relations between India and *Malaysia* have been rather substantial. In 2019, India welcomed roughly 3.3 million *Malaysian* tourists, while *Malaysia* received approximately 7.3 million Indian tourists. The two sides praised the establishment of the *Thiruvalluvar* Chair of Indian Studies at the prominent University of Malaya (UM) in *Kualalumpur*, as well as the Thiruvalluvar Centre. Prime Minister *Anwar* appreciated the introduction of the *Thiruvalluvar* Scholarship for Malaysians. They highlighted tourism as a critical component of bilateral cooperation and a crucial driver in fostering people-to-people ties between *Malaysia* and India. In this context, India appreciated the Visit *Malaysia* 2026 campaign, and *Malaysia* praised the 'Incredible India' tourism promotion. Both parties emphasized the importance of sustainable and inclusive tourism, which promotes economic growth and mutual understanding.

***Economic dimension***

India-Malaysia ties go back thousands of years, to the *Chola* period (9th-13th centuries), when there was extensive marine trade between South India and the Malay Peninsula. Malaysia is India's third-largest trading partner in *ASEAN*. Bilateral trade totaled USD 19.86 billion in 2024-25. To minimize their reliance on the US currency, the countries actively promote commerce in local currencies (INR and Ringgit). The *MICECA* and *AITIGA* guide economic cooperation between Malaysia and India. Bilateral trade totaled almost USD 20 billion in fiscal year 2024-25, but it was skewed in Malaysia's benefit ((Press Information Bureau, 2026)). This expansion has been hampered by the worldwide economic downturn. According to Indian data, bilateral trade in January-December 2013 was $14.10 billion, up 1.5 percent from $13.89 billion in January-December 2012. Bilateral commerce totaled $3.04 billion between January and March 2014, compared to $3.48 billion in the same period in 2013. In 2014-15, bilateral trade between India and *Malaysia* totaled $16.93 billion ($5.8 billion in Indian exports to Malaysia and $11.11 billion in imports), up from $13.43 billion in 2013-14. Malaysia continues to enjoy a significant trade advantage. Malaysia is currently India's 23rd largest investor, with $732 million in foreign direct investment (FDI) during the last

15 years. According to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), Indian investment in Malaysia totaled around $2.31 billion from 1980 to 2014, with $225.50 million invested between January and December of 2014.




*D&B Bureau. (2016).*

Malaysia-India bilateral ties are immensely complex, covering economic, social, and cultural consequences.In 2009, India was Malaysia's 12th largest importer and 11th largest export destination. Malaysia is developing as a major potential investor in India, with ambitions to invest in power plants, oil refineries, telecommunications, and electrical equipment, as well as highway and other infrastructure projects. Malaysian direct investment (FDI) in India is mostly concentrated in roads and highways, telecommunications, oil and gas, power plants, tourism, and human resources. The telecommunications sector has received the most investment proposals, followed by fuel (power and oil refineries), and roads and highways. Trade between the two countries has grown significantly, more than quadrupling between 2003 and 2012. Furthermore, several government agencies in India and Malaysia have signed Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs). These missions concern mutual cooperation in the fields of investment, construction, privatization and port management, information technology, civil service personnel management, and public administration (Press Information Bureau, 2026).

***Investment Scenario***

KualaLumpur, India's 28th largest investor received a considerable amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) of US$1.17 billion between April 2000 and March 2023. Approximately 70 Malaysian enterprises, including joint ventures, have established operations in India, focused on infrastructure, telecommunications, oil and gas, power plants, tourism, and human resources. Malaysia and India share

profound cultural relations.Malaysia boasts the world's largest Indian-origin community, which accounts for around 8.5% of the overall population. Furthermore, around 140,000 Indian expatriates live in Malaysia, including professionals and laborers from many fields. This Indian expatriate community plays an important role in extending economic networks and strengthening communication channels between the two countries.Malaysian investment in India is expected to total $7 billion, with telecommunications being the most significant, followed by gasoline, roads, and highways. Over 150 Indian enterprises, including leading IT organizations, have established a presence in Malaysia.

Malaysia's primary exports to India in 2022 included animal and vegetable fats and oils, fission products (US$3.61 billion), mineral fuels, oils, distillation products (US$1.59 billion), electrical and electronic equipment (US$1.53 billion), machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers (US$828.74 million), organic chemicals (US$684.35 million), plastics (US$533.96 million), miscellaneous chemical products (US$452.90 million), copper (US$320.80 million), optical, photographic,In contrast, India's exports to Malaysia totaled US$ 7.19 billion in 2022.

India's major commodities exported to Malaysia included mineral fuels, oils, distillation products (US$ 1.74 billion), aluminum (US$ 597.26 million), organic chemicals (US$ 589.71 million), meat and edible meat offal (US$ 509.73 million), machinery, nuclear reactors, boilers (US$ 417.59 million), and electrical and electronic equipment.




*Source- Press Information Bureau (PIB). (2026)*

India and Malaysia have inked a substantial trade agreement that allows India to export 100,000 tons of rice to Malaysia, notwithstanding India's earlier ban on non-basmati white rice exports, and Malaysia's lifting of palm oil import restrictions. Cooperation between India and Malaysia has grown to address rising energy demand and attract investment in energy infrastructure. The 2012 Memorandum on

Renewable Energy Cooperation and the Joint Working Group on Renewable Energy demonstrate that cooperation in the energy industry has advanced significantly. According to BN Reddy, bilateral trade between India and Malaysia will exceed $25 billion over the next three years. He made these statements when speaking at a press conference.

It should be mentioned that bilateral commerce between India and Malaysia totaled $20 billion in 2022-23(Sputniknews, 2023). Malaysian corporations are investing in India's solar energy and green hydrogen industries. The founding of the Malaysia-India Digital Council (MIDC) and the collaboration between NPCI International Limited and Malaysia's PayNet mark a watershed moment in digital payments and fintech. The CSP establishes a new structure for defensive and security cooperation. The formation of the Strategic Affairs Working Group (SAWG) and the Su-30 Forum is a significant step. The Su-30 Forum allows both countries' air forces to share maintenance and technological expertise, solving supply chain bottlenecks (New Dimensions, 2026). During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit, India and Malaysia inked 11 agreements and memorandums of understanding in a variety of areas, including defense cooperation, semiconductors, digital technology, health, and energy. The Framework Agreement on Semiconductor Cooperation was a significant milestone of the visit, demonstrating a shared commitment to integrating into global supply chains for sophisticated manufacturing. Highlighted the significance of the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (MICECA) and the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA). The two presidents praised the ongoing evaluation of AITIGA to ensure that it is mutually beneficial, trade-facilitating, and consistent with current global trade norms.

Increased cooperation and investment in priority sectors such as infrastructure, energy *(including renewable energy), advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, healthcare, digital economy, fintech, startups, artificial intelligence, hospitality, green technologies, and other high-value industries).*Appreciating the ongoing collaboration between the Reserve Bank of India and Bank Negara Malaysia to promote local currency settlements in bilateral trade and investment, they encouraged both sides' industries to further facilitate billing and settlement of trade in local currencies such as the Indian rupee and the Malaysian ringgit.The two leaders welcomed the formal establishment of the Malaysia-India Digital Council (MIDC), recognizing it as an important platform for advancing digital cooperation, encouraging innovation, and exploring the potential for collaborative projects in fintech, e-governance, cyber security, artificial intelligence, digital public infrastructure (DPI), and emerging technologies (Press Information Bureau, 2026).

India and Malaysia have advanced the examination of the ASEAN-India Trade Agreement (AITIGA), with the goal of concluding it by 2025. During the ministerial discussions, Mr Jitin Prasada and Mr Liu Chin Tong discussed improving market access, semiconductor cooperation, services, and alignment with Bureau of Indian norms (BIS) norms. India and Malaysia share strong political, economic, and socio-cultural relations. On August 20, 2024, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen their collaboration in the tourism sector.The MoU was signed by Shri Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Minister of Tourism and Culture of India, and Shri YB Dato' Sri Tiong King Singh, Malaysia's Minister of Tourism, Arts, and Culture. The agreement reaffirms both countries' commitment to promoting tourism, encouraging cultural interaction, and strengthening mutual understanding, which will benefit both economies and deepen bilateral relations. In an effort to boost economic ties, India and Malaysia have

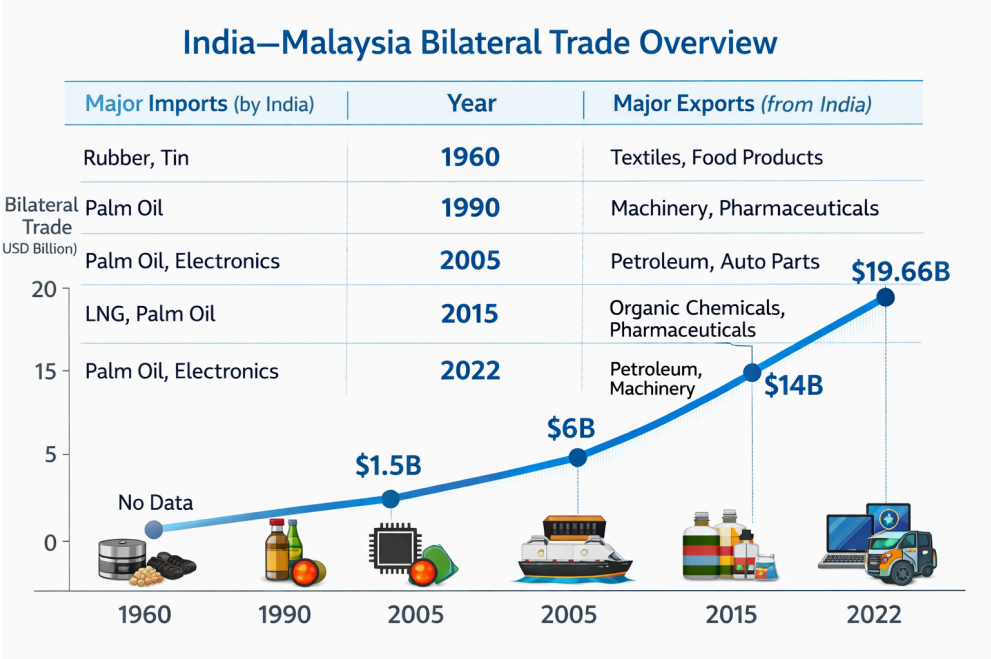
agreed to allow bilateral trade in their respective currencies. This will make it easier for Indian firms to make payments in Indian rupees, as well as Malaysian enterprises to do the same. This is expected to increase trade between the two countries while reducing reliance on the US dollar.Some of Malaysia's major corporations have invested in India, particularly in the telecommunications sector (Maxis Communications in Aircel (US$2 billion), Axiata in Idea Cellular (US$0.75 billion), and Khazanah in IDFC, Apollo Hospitals, Yes Bank, among others). Airports are being built in Hyderabad (in 2008) and Delhi (in 2010) as part of cooperation between India's GMR and Malaysian Airports. Outside of Malaysia, India has the most Malaysian construction companies.Tata Electronics (part of the Tata Group) initiated talks in June 2025 to acquire a semiconductor fabrication/assembly plant in Malaysia, as well as outsourced semiconductor assembly and test (OSAT) capabilities, in order to boost India's semiconductor ecosystem through knowledge and skill transfer.On May 28, 2025, officials from Malaysia and Maharashtra met in Mumbai to explore expanding bilateral trade, particularly in agriculture. Malaysian agencies highlighted trade growth under the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (MICECA) and the ASEAN-India Free Trade Agreement (AIFTA), and invited Indian companies to participate in the Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) 2025, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur. During a Malaysian minister's visit to India in July 2024, the two countries agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the palm oil industry and other industries (India-Malaysia).Appreciated the Reserve Bank of India and Bank Negara Malaysia's collaboration to promote the use of local currency payments in bilateral trade and investment, and encouraged industries on both sides to further facilitate trade billing and payments in local currencies, namely the Indian rupee and Malaysian ringgit **(**Ministry of External Affairs,2024).

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a three-day tour to Southeast Asian countries from May 29 to June 2, 2018. These countries included Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore. These three countries are among India's key strategic allies in the area. Malaysia and Singapore are key allies for India since they are strategic partners with close economic links. Singapore led India's exports to ASEAN countries in 2016, accounting for 28%, while Malaysia came in third with 16%. Malaysia came in second with 23% of ASEAN imports, followed by Singapore with 18% (Strengthening Relations, 2018).Malaysia's Deputy Minister for Investment, Trade, and Industry, YB Liew Chin Tong, announced on Wednesday that the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement will be reviewed by the end of 2025. This year, Malaysia serves as ASEAN's chair and coordinates the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement. We want to complete the revision of the trade agreement by the end of this year," Liew told PTI. Malaysia is India's third-largest trade partner in ASEAN **(**Punjab Kesari, 2025).

**Table 1**

India–Malaysia Bilateral Trade Overview

| Year | Bilateral Trade (USD Billion) | Major Imports (by India) | Major Exports (from India) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **1960** | — | Rubber, Tin | Textiles, Food Products |
| **1990** | ~1.5 | Palm Oil | Machinery, Pharmaceuticals |
| **2005** | ~6 | Palm Oil, Electronics | Petroleum, Auto Parts |
| **2015** | ~14 | LNG, Palm Oil | Organic Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals |
| **2022** | ~19.66 | Palm Oil, Electronics | Petroleum, Machinery |




*Source- Punjab Kesari. (2025).*

***Political and administrative relations between India and Malaysia***

In the 1960s, Prime Ministers Nehru and Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra established a personal connection, which helped strengthen relations between the two countries. Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh's visit in 2010 resulted in an agreement to establish a Strategic Partnership, which was then reinforced to an Enhanced Strategic Partnership during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in 2015. In 2024, India and Malaysia elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, demonstrating the two nations' growing political trust (*Plutus, 2026*).

Malaysia hailed India's 2026 BRICS Chairmanship, while India reaffirmed its commitment to Malaysia's role as a BRICS Partner Country and acknowledged Malaysia's desire to join BRICS. The two leaders saw this collaboration as a critical step toward building a more balanced and representative international order. Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) on Corruption Combating and Prevention, Disaster Management, Cooperation in Promoting Social Security Programs and Activities for Indian Nationals as Insured Persons in Malaysia, and Audio-Visual Co-Production Agreement. The leaders also observed an exchange of notes between Malaysia and India in the fields of semiconductors, healthcare, national security, and Technical and Vocational Education and Training. Both sides welcomed the intensification of efforts to implement the 'ASEAN-India Joint Statement on Cooperation on the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP) for Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the Region', which will be accomplished through improved cooperation between the AOIP and India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), including concrete initiatives to implement the AOIP's areas of cooperation.

They expressed satisfaction with the successful conclusion of the visit of Tan Sri Dato' Dr. Johari Abdul, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malaysia to India to attend the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers (CSPOC) of the Commonwealth during 13-16 January 2026. They also noted the visit of the Indian Parliamentary Delegation to Malaysia for the 46th General Assembly of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA) in September 2025 and the visit of the 2015, the two countries formed a "Enhanced Strategic Partnership" that was later upgraded to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership." Malaysia also opted to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) as an original member. Malaysia plays an important role in increasing India's commerce with ASEAN, aligning with India's Act East Policy, and supporting ASEAN's Indo-Pacific Perspective (AOIP) and Indo-Pacific Initiative (IPOI). India sees Malaysia as a significant Global South partner. Malaysia has attended all three Voices of the Global South Summits (VOGSS) led by India India Malaysia, 2024).Malaysia plays a crucial role in India's Look East and Act East policies.

The two countries have significant political, economic, and cultural relations. Both countries are full members of the Commonwealth of Nations, the Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (AAARC), and the G-15. A bilateral Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) covering commodities, services, and investment went into force on July 1, 2011.India and ASEAN have also inked a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) that includes commodities, services, and investment. The 11th Malaysia-India Defence Cooperation Meeting (MIDCOM), chaired by the Secretaries of the two nations' Ministries of Defence, took place in Kuala Lumpur on November 21, 2018. Prior to this, the 6th Army-to-Army Staff Talks took place in Kuala Lumpur in May 2017. The 8th Air Force-to-Air Force Staff Talks were held in Kuala Lumpur from February 14 to 16, 2018. Furthermore, the seventh Navy-to-Navy Staff Talks between the two countries took place in July 2018. To improve aerial reconnaissance capabilities, Indian Air Force pilots taught Malaysian equivalents on Su-30 MKM aircraft between 2008 and 2010, with the initial phase taking place in India and the final phase in Malaysia. Following then-Prime Minister Najib Razak's visit to India in 2017, India and Malaysia strengthened their mutual agreement to increase cooperation in sectors such as infrastructure development and smart city construction **(**Lotus Arise, 2023**).**

***India–Malaysia Bilateral Agreements & MoUs***

**(MoU)**

The following are important India-Malaysia bilateral agreements:

1. Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation (1993)
2. Memorandum of Understanding between the Security Commissions of Malaysia and India (1993)
3. Memorandum of Understanding on Employment and Labour Welfare (2009)
4. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Higher Education (2010)
5. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Renewable Energy (2012)
6. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters (2013)
7. Memorandum of Understanding on Tourism (2013)
8. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Traditional Medicine Systems (2013)
9. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in Information Technology and Services (2013)
10. Memorandum of Understanding on Cyber Security (2015)
11. Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Exchange Programme (2015)

12. Memorandum of Understanding between NITI Aayog and PEMANDU (2015)
13. Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Field of Sports (2017)
14. Memorandum of Understanding between the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) and the Institute of Chemical Technology (ICT), India (2017)
15. Memorandum of Understanding on Mutual Recognition of Academic Degrees and Certificates between AIU and MQA (2017)
16. Memorandum of Understanding on the Relations of the United Nations with Malaysia (2018)

**Agreements:**

1. Agreement on the Promotion and Protection of Investments (1995)
2. Agreement on Double Taxation (2001)
3. Cooperation in the Provision of Technical Assistance Services on Highway Management and Development (2010)
4. Revised Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Tax Evasion with Respect to Income Taxes (2010)
5. Comprehensive Economic and Cooperation Agreement (CECA) (2010)
6. Bilateral Extradition Treaty (January 2011)
7. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (2012)
8. Revised Air Services Agreement (2017) (**Joint Statement,)**




*Source- Lotus Arise. (2023).*

***Recommendation***

The Malaysian administration has been impressively consistent in prioritizing more economic, political, security, and defense ties with India. Officially, the two countries have a "Advanced Strategic Partnership." India sees its relationship with Malaysia as a critical component of its Act East Policy. Both countries are strongly committed to multiculturalism, democracy, pluralism, and inclusive growth. On the diplomatic front, India and Malaysia collaborate to ensure freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea and other regions, as well as to uphold the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They are determined to combat terrorism and radicalism. Indeed, India admires Malaysia's moderate Islam model and the effectiveness of its anti-radicalization campaign (Bhatia, 2017).

## CONCLUSION

Malaysia and India share strong cultural relations. Malaysia has the world's largest community of Indian heritage, with around 8.5 percent of the overall population. Furthermore, Malaysia is home to about 140,000 Indian expatriates, including professionals and laborers from diverse fields. This Indian expatriate community plays an important role in extending economic networks and strengthening communication channels between the two countries. India and Malaysia have a long history of linguistic, cultural, and historical relations. The Indian community in Malaysia promotes India-Southeast Asia connections through cultural diplomacy, language, temples, and festivals. Indians have made advances in education, business, and public services, demonstrating social mobility. Indian educational and cultural institutions have safeguarded language, identity, and traditions.The two leaders emphasized the significance of the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (MICECA) and the ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA). The two presidents praised the ongoing evaluation of AITIGA to ensure that it is mutually advantageous, trade-facilitating, and in line with current global trade norms.The Malaysian administration has been impressively consistent in prioritizing more economic, political, security, and defense ties with India. Officially, the two countries have a "Advanced Strategic Partnership." India sees its relationship with Malaysia as a critical component of its Act East Policy. Both countries are strongly committed to multiculturalism, democracy, pluralism, and inclusive growth.

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## STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

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**Presenter's Biodata**

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