



India's relations with Myanmar during Modi regime

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Abstract

Myanmar had approach to accomplish critical significance in Asian strategic concerned in the since its origin. A series of developments, both internal and external, had escalated concerns about the long term security, stability and independence of mainland Southeast Asia's largest country. Myanmar's strategic value was born out of its geographical location, a country having an area of approximately 678,500 square kilometers and a population of over 48.8 million, lying at the juncture of three regions within Asia-East Asia, Southeast Asia and South Asia, Myanmar also had the undesirable situation of being straddled by two Asian giants viz. India and China. It had a significant coastline in the South along the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea, which provided entrance to the Indian Ocean. It was also located in a region which had witnessed wonderful economic growth since self-government.

Key words , National Democratic Alliance (NDA), United Progressive Alliance (UPA), Narendra Modi, Neighbourhood Policy, SAARC, the National League of Democracy (NLD).

Introduction

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) came into power in May 2014 after defeating the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in the general elections, marking the new era of India's approach towards her neighbours. The Indian general election of 2014 had been held to constitute the 16th Lok Sabha, electing members of parliament for all 543 parliamentary constituencies of India. The National Democratic Alliance won a sweeping victory, taking 336 seats. Narendra Modi's became prime minister of India ⁱ After Narendra Modi's wave, some media members called him the "Shinzo Abe of India" while the westerners fear him as the "Indian Putin." Many believe that he might emerge as the "Indian Deng Xiaoping." Time would tell which name suits him's best. However, Modi has a proactive foreign policy, possibly one driven by economy. Modi promised 'development and governance' to the peoples of India during his election campaign and he promised the peoples of India for the development and governance. The Myanmar economy too can harvest the benefits because it had been closely linked with the Indian economy.ⁱⁱ

On 19th May, 2014 Narendra Modi had been congratulated by President Thein Sein during the Lok Sabha elections. The Government of Myanmar and the general public, offered best wishes to Modi and his party (Bharatiya Janata Party) for the outstanding victory and urged him to work together to strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries India and Myanmar. Thein Sein hoped that India will develop under the leadership of Modi. "We are ready to welcome you here," said Thein Sein to Modi. While accepting the congratulatory message and invitation, Modi replied, Thein Sein that he had been also interested to work with the Myanmar leadership to further strengthen the relationship between the two countries.ⁱⁱⁱ

Objective of study

1. To find out the impact of China factor on Indo- Myanmar relations
2. To assess the impact of Rohingyas on Indo- Myanmar relations,
3. To find out the importance of Myanmar for India.

Methodology

The methodology undertaken in this research work entitled: *“India’s relations with Myanmar: during Modi regime”* includes historical and analytical methods. The historical records and official document are examined: primary as well as secondary sources that are available on the subject have been used. A primary source includes policy documents, reports, official statements and interview of policy makers. In the secondary sources, the major works of different distinguished authors in the field have also been included and analyzed.

Discussion

Modi’s Neighbourhood Policy

The Prime Minister had persecute, anticipatory, and innovative foreign policy that had been aligned with our Government's main goal of accelerating national economic development; and to fulfill India’s global responsibilities as the world's most populous youth nation and largest democracy. Samman – dignity and honour; Samvad – greater engagement and dialogue; Saiddhi – shared prosperity; Suraksha – regional and global security; and Sanskriti evam Sabhyata – cultural and civilizational linkages; these five themes have become the Panchait - new pillars of our foreign policy.^{iv}

The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government under the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited the head of states from the neighbouring countries at its swearing in ceremony. The move had been welcomed and seen as a beginning of a new era in the India’s policy towards neighbours and later Prime Minister also made a proposal for setting up a SAARC Bank, and SAARC satellite.

The new government’s policy of ‘first priority had produced goodwill however; there had been no need to flow with tides of hope. Almost all Prime Ministers in the past had something or other for the region in India’s bilateral tensions with its neighbours that the most of the proposal could not be yield any result.

The manifesto of BJP is to assured that they would make friendly ties with all of India’s neighbours but would not hesitate from taking stances and strong stride. There should be no

compromise on the issues of national security and terrorism. It is a crystal clear signal to all neighbours. Modi's image as a determined leader and his party's 'nationalist' stand that Modi would be different from the previous governments India had.^v

Indian External Minister of Sushma Swaraj visit

Indian External Minister of Sushma Swaraj visited Myanmar for four days and focused on India's objectives towards growing the New Delhi-Naypyitaw bilateral. During her visit, Swaraj had emphasized on the boundary collaboration and trade and investment among India and Myanmar. Swaraj went to three multilateral discussion meetings: the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers meeting, the East Asia Summit (EAS) and the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). She additionally held bilateral gatherings with her partners from Indonesia, the Philippines, Brunei, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China, and other ASEAN and East Asian nations. Her gatherings with no reign clergymen of ASEAN and other East Asian nations exhibits India's developing trust towards pushing its Look East Policy (LEP) to another stage, one that called the 'Enhanced LEP' or 'Look East'. Swaraj additionally had the chance to meet the President of Myanmar, Thein Sein, and her Myanmar partner, Wunna Maung Lwin. The essential discussions in these gatherings were on boundary cooperation, financial investment and connectivity. Swaraj additionally met with the Speaker of the Myanmar Upper House of the Parliament, Thura U Shwe. Interestingly, she didn't meet Aung San Suu Kyi, the pioneer of the fundamental opposition party, the National League of Democracy (NLD). Official explanations clarified this by reasoning that since Swaraj had been just visiting Naypyidaw, it had been impossible for her to meet the pioneer who lives in Yangon. Nonetheless, Swaraj had been estimated to meet Suu Kyi, particularly since the nation is in expectation of the 2015 general race. It could imply India's assistance is towards the Union Solidarity Development Party (USDP), rather than the NLD.^{vi}

Economic cooperation

The Indian external affairs minister in her talks at the multilateral discussions cited to another term called 'economic commons'. The term had a bigger significance, and incorporates trade, investment, connectivity and element elements. As per Swaraj, "The financial commons in East Asia would profit by the network and infrastructure adequacy in the region." The requirement for connectivity and created infrastructure had been likewise emphasized upon in her meetings with Myanmar pioneers. However, other critical issues, for example, the

Rohingya issue, continuous ethnic clashes – particularly in the Shan and Kachin states – seem to have been purposefully kept aside in her meeting with her Myanmar partner. The strategy could have been that of concentrating simply on economy as it is a more secure subject to be examined without influencing bilateral relations. Two issues play a noteworthy job in the development of New Delhi-Naypyidaw trade relations:

- a) The trilateral highway project planned to interface India, Myanmar, and Thailand that is be expected to be completed by 2016, and
- b) The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) started by India in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

In 2012-13, the India-Myanmar mutual trade remained at \$1.8 billion. India's traded \$532 million worth materials to Myanmar imported \$1.33 billion worth materials from the nation. India imports a significant measure of pulses from Myanmar. Regardless of being prompt neighbors and sharing a 1600-kilometer border, the import relies upon the ocean routes rather than land routes – owing to the absence of infrastructural advancement, particularly in Northeast India. Moreover, Northeast India is associated with the territory by a narrow stretch called the Silliguri corridor; the other option is by means of Bangladesh's Chittagong port.

However, Bangladesh had constantly utilized transit facility through this port as a political influence. In this manner, India's concentration on the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) is advocated. The Project won't just enhance India's connectivity with Myanmar and other Southeast Asian nations but also provide the previous with an alternative ocean route through the Kaladan River into India's northeastern territory of Mizoram. Along with the improvement of connectivity along the boundary, India ought to also concentrate on the improvement of infrastructural facilities within the nation. Enhanced connectivity with Myanmar through India's north-eastern states will additionally encourage Indian businesses to invest resources into Myanmar's developing economy. Indian companies, for example, ONGC Videsh Ltd, Jubliant Oil and Gas Pvt. Ltd, Gas (India) Ltd., etc are mostly public projects. Enhanced infrastructure will draw Indian private enterprises into the Myanmar market. Moreover, a few Indian banks, for example, the State Bank of India (SBI), the Bank of India and the United Bank of India have pronounced their plans to set up their representatives' offices in Myanmar. This will help support two-sided India-Myanmar

exchange and investments. Strengthening Ties, An Agenda for the Government The ongoing visit enhanced the desires for expanded trade between the two nations just as of more prominent contribution of Indian private ventures in Myanmar. Notwithstanding, it is vital that India attempts certain measures so as to satisfy these desires. Time-bound fulfillment of administrative undertakings is essential. New Delhi ought to also give incentives and exchange concessions to private businesses' that have – and that may – wandered into the Myanmar market. It is also fundamental to construct the general people to people relationship that is urgently missing – as made obvious by means of the absence of eagerness in the Myanmar media vis-à-vis Swaraj's visit. In this manner, it is basic that India focuses around these perspectives so as to construct its relations with Myanmar.

Myanmar's Foreign Minister, Aung San Suu Kyi to visit India New Delhi:

In what can be observed as an achievement in New Delhi's "Neighborhood First" approach, Myanmar's State Counselor and Foreign Minister Aung San Suu Kyi will pay a state visit to India at the welcome of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from 17 to 19 October. "The State Counselor will be joined by a few key Ministers and senior authorities," the External Affairs Ministry said in an announcement on Wednesday. "During her visit, the State Counselor will approach President of India Pranab Mukherjee and have gatherings with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj," it stated. Suu Kyi will likewise go to a business occasion during which she will cooperate with driving Indian business pioneers on methods for supporting two-sided economic and business relations. ^{vii}

"The visit of the State Counselor will give a chance to the opposite sides to discuss issues of common interest and seek ways to additionally support the nearby and friendly ties that exist between the two nations," the announcement said.

This will be first official visit of Suu Kyi to New Delhi since her National League for Democracy (NLD) charged power in Myanmar in March this year. Last month, Modi met Suu Kyi on the sidelines of the fourteenth India-Asean Summit and the eleventh East Asia Summit in Vientiane, Laos. Suu Kyi spent a significant piece of her initial life in India and had been trained at Lady Ram College in New Delhi. On 6 April this year, the 70-year-old Nobel peace laureate accepted charge as State Counselor as she had been constitutionally banned from the administration in the wake of turning into the nation's first female foreign minister on 30 March. Prior to visiting New Delhi, Suu Kyi will go to the Brics- Bimstec Outreach Summit to be held in Goa on 15 and 16 October. In August, Myanmar President U

Htin Kyaw had been in New Delhi on his first official visit abroad subsequent to accepting charge. His visit came not exactly seven days after External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's visit to Nay Pyi Taw.^{viii}

According to an official declaration, Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw visited India and then welcomed of partner Pranab Mukherjee,"U Htin Kyaw, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and spouse Daw Su Lwin will pay a State Visit to the Republic of India sooner rather than later at the welcome of His Excellency Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, President of the Republic of India," the President Office here said in an announcement without determining the date of his visit. The declaration came multi day after External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj's one-day visit to the nation to hold talks with Myanmarese pioneers on key two-sided issues during which it had been guaranteed that Myanmar won't enable any extremist(insurgent) group to utilize its territory against India.

India will supply 18 meter gauge diesel electric locomotives to Myanmar to expand the locomotive fleet of the nation's railroads which will help satisfy expanding need for traveler and cargo traffic, an official proclamation said here on Friday. Reuters "RITES is attempting all endeavors to enlarge export of moving stock manufactured at railway generation units. Reaction from Southeast Asian markets is exceptionally supportive," said Rajeev Mehrotra, chairman and MD, RITES (public sector enterprise under Ministry of Railways). As per the announcement, the agreement had been signed on March 4 in Myanmar's capital Nay Pyi daw by S B Malik, Director Technical, RITES and U Thurein Win, MD, Myanmar Railways. Additionally U Nyan Tun Aung, Minister Of Rail Transportation, Myanmar and Gautam Mukpadhaya, Ambassador of India to Myanmar were available during the event. The supply contract of locomotives is an essential project being financed under an existing line of credit extended to Myanmar by the Indian government. These locomotives will be made by Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi with present day highlights like chip controls, eco-friendly motor and ergonomic taxi plan, the announcement included. The MoUs were marked after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held wide-extending speaks with Myanmar's State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi. - Reuters - India and Myanmar today agreed to 11 arrangements in a scope of parts,

1. To further strengthen oceanic security collaboration.
2. To offer white shipping information to enhance information (data) sharing on non-grouped merchant naval force boats or cargo ships.
3. To incorporate one between the Election Commission and Union Election of Myanmar, the national level constituent (electoral) commission of Myanmar.
4. To organize social trade program for the period 2017-2020, according to an announcement issued by Ministry of External Affairs.
5. To coordinate between Myanmar Press Council and Press Council of India, extension of concurrence on the foundation of India-Myanmar Center for Enhancement of IT skill.
6. To coordinate in 'Therapeutic Products Regulation' and in the field of health and medication.
7. To improve the cooperation on upgradation of the ladies' police preparing centre at Yam thin in Myanmar.

Modi arrived here on the second leg of his two-country tour during which he made a trip to southeastern Chinese city Xiamen where he attended to the yearly BRICS summit and held converses with Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and other world leaders. This is Modi's first two-sided visit to Myanmar. He had visited the nation in 2014 to go to the ASEAN-India Summit. Myanmar is one of India's key neighbors and shares a 1,640-km-long border with various northeastern states including militancy-hit Nagaland and Manipur.^{ix}

State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi undertook a State Visit to India on 17- 19 October 2016

State Counselor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi embraced a State Visit to India on 17-19 October 2016 after taking part in the BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit 16 October, Goa, when she met Rashtrapati, PM and EAM. 3 MOUs on Power, Insurance and Banking supervision were agreed upon. India guaranteed support for production of occupations, upgradation of skills, reconstruction of roads, power, education facilities and wellbeing infrastructure for Myanmar people.^x

Defence and Security Cooperation had toughened throughout the years. Trade of high-level visits, marking of MoU on Border Cooperation, and training, Army, Air Force and Naval Staff Talks are vital pointers toward this path. CNS Admiral Sunil Lamba (1-4 Nov 2016) and COAS Gen. Bipin Rawat (27-31 May 2017) visited Myanmar and had wide-extending discussions on improving the extent of defense relations. In July 2017, Gen Min Aung Hliang, C-in-C Myanmar Defense Services visited India, in what had been his second visit in the same number of years, allowing a chance to additionally bond defense ties. Myanmar side had given assurance at the largest levels that it will collaborate with India in making necessary action in preventing the utilization of Myanmar territory for anti-india activity.

Commercial Cooperation:

A two-sided Trade Agreement had been marked in 1970. Two-sided trade had been developing consistently to reach US\$ 2178.44 million (2016-17), of which Indian exports added up to US\$ 1111.19 million and Indian's imports to US\$ 1067.25 million. India is the fifth biggest exchanging partner of Myanmar however trade stays below potential. Farming sector commands trade, especially supply of beans and pulses to India (\$ 809 million, 2016-17) and timber (\$ 156 million). India's exports to Myanmar incorporate sugar (\$ 424 million), pharmaceuticals (\$ 184 million), and so on. Boundary trade by means of Moreh and Zawkhatar came to \$ 87.89 million; Indian fares being \$ 24.44 million and Indian imports being \$ 63.46 million.^{xi}

India is by and by the tenth largest investor with an affirmed investment of US\$ 740.64 million by 25 Indian companies (starting at 30 Jun 2017). The vast majority of India's investments have been in oil and gas division. 100% FDI is permitted in select sectors. Indian companies have displayed enthusiasm for putting resources into Myanmar and real contracts have been won by Indian companies.

Apart from normal trade, the two sides have additionally found a way to reinforce trade over the land boundary. Collaboration in the banking sector is urgent for investment and exchange. Joined Bank of India had consented banking agreements with banks of Myanmar (MFTB, MICB, MEB, and 9 private banks) to encourage two-sided exchange. Joined Bank of India, EXIM bank and State Bank of India had representative offices in Yangon. In March

2016, State Bank of India had been granted a Commercial Banking License and initiated tasks from 3 October 2016.

Dharmendra Pradhan visits Myanmar from 20-24 Feb 2017

Myanmar is a critical partner in our energy relations with different nations. MOS for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan visited Myanmar from 20-24 Feb 2017 amid which the two sides examined opportunities for participation in shifted regions.^{xii}

Development Cooperation

We have expanded improvement help on liberal terms. We are resolved to give concede in help amounting to nearly Rs 4000 core (of total duty of approx. US\$ 1726 million). These incorporate help for the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project; the Trilateral Highway Project, which is an East-West corridor relating our Northeast with Myanmar and Thailand; the Rhi-Tiddim road; supply of Bailey bridges; help for boundary region improvement in the Naga Self Administered Zone by financing schools, roads, bridges and small health centres; help with setting up foundations for higher learning and research, Advance Center for Agricultural Research and Education, Myanmar-India Entrepreneurship Development Center, namely Myanmar Institute of Information Technology, Myanmar-India Center for English Language Training, India-Myanmar Industrial Training Centers, help in public health by supporting upgradation of Yangon Children's Hospital, Sittwe General Hospital and so forth.^{xiii}

India had responded instantly and successfully to help Myanmar in humanitarian relief operations following natural disasters like Cyclone Mora (2017), Komen (2015), earthquake in Shan State (2010), Cyclone Nargis in 2008 and the ongoing outbreak of Influenza infection in July-August 2017, when we are providing reagent kits, vaccine, drugs, and masks. We gave prompt relief material through INS Gharial: rehabilitation supplies medical assistance, clothing, tents,, among others during cyclone Mora. Amid Cyclone Komen, biomass gasifiers, sunlight based lights and lamps were given and 16 damaged transformers were repaired. A give of USD 200,000 to repair the Shwedagon Pagoda complex in Yangon had been given amid during Nargis. US\$200,000 money had been provided for Rakhine State rehabilitation. India gave assistance of US\$ 1 million which had been utilized to construct 10 schools in Rakhine State. We have offered to provide helping in capacity working in disaster hazard alleviation just as in strengthening Myanmar's National Disaster Response Mechanism.^{xiv}

India and Myanmar share close social ties and a feeling of deep family relationship given India's Buddhist legacy (heritage). Expanding on this mutual heritage India is attempted some key activities: Restoration of the Ananda Temple in Bagan and GOI gift of a 16 foot imitation of the Sarnath Buddha Statue which had been installed at the premises of Shwedagon pagoda in Yangon. The 'Samvad-II' Interfaith discourse had been established on 6-7 August 2017, Yangon. The occasion had been graced by Ram Naik, Governor of Uttar Pradesh, Yogi Adityanath, Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and MOS Home Kiren Rejju. ICCR and Sitagu International Buddhist Academy composed an International Conference on Buddhist Cultural Heritage from 15-17 December 2012. Exhibitions by cultural troupes have been organized all the time. Myanmar troupes and artistes have taken part in South Asian and ASEAN cultural occasions in India. We have responded to Myanmar's enthusiasm for reestablishing and remodeling two historic temples in Bodh Gaya worked by Myanmar rulers King Mindon and King Baygyidaw. These temples and inscriptions will currently be reestablished as a two-sided friendship project.^{xv}

The starting point of the Indian community in Myanmar is followed to the mid-nineteenth century with the coming of the British rule in Lower Burma in 1852. The two urban areas Yangon and Mandalay had a commanding nearness of Indians in education, trade, civil services and business amid the British rule. There is shifting est. of 1.5-2.5 million individuals of Indian origin living and working in different parts of Myanmar. An large number of the Indian people group (almost 150,000) live in Bago (Zeyawaddy and Kuayktaga) and Tanintharyi Region and Mon State, essentially engaged in cultivating. The 7000 in number NRI people group (community) in Myanmar mostly lives in Yangon and Mandalay, occupied with export- import business or employees of MNCs situated in India, Singapore and Thailand.

Two-sided Cooperation in Regional/Sub-local setting: Myanmar's membership of ASEAN, BIMSTEC and Mekong Ganga Cooperation had presented a regional/sub-regional dimension to two-sided relations and conferred included centrality with regards to our "Act East" policy. Myanmar had by and large been supportive of India's remain to different global

organizations. As far as concerns us, we have upheld Myanmar's relationship with SAARC as an observer; Myanmar formally gained such status in 2008.

The State Visit to Myanmar of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (5-7 September 2017)

The State Visit to Myanmar of Prime Minister Narendra Modi (5-7 September 2017), when he visited Nay Pyi Taw, Yangon and Bagan, further prompted supporting of political relationship just as upgrading people to people ties. Eleven understandings were marked in fluctuated regions, for example, health, police, decision commissions, maritime, cooperation, culture, and press chambers. Discourses between the opposite sides concentrated on issues relating to infrastructure-development projects, security, boundary, defence participation, terrorism, energy, and exchange and investment. He addressed to the Indian people group (community) in Yangon, where is highlighted the memorable ties just as unveiled activities important to the community.^{xvi}

- Earlier, PM Rajiv Gandhi toured Myanmar in 1987; Gen. Than Shwe visited India twice in 2004 and 2010; President Abdul Kalam in 2006, Vice Gen. Maung Aye in 2008, Vice President Ansari in 2009 and President U Thein Sein twice in Oct 2011 and Dec 2012. At that point Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's State Visit to Myanmar occurred in May 2012 following 25 years, apart from different Agreements and MOUs, an Agreement on USD 500 million Line of Credit had been marked with the then President U Thein Sein. Currently, India's commitment to Myanmar's advancement remains at over US\$ 1.726 billion, which is more than the assistance offered by numerous different countries.^{xvii}

Prime Minister Narendra Modi went to the twelfth ASEAN-India Summit and ninth East Asia Summit (Nov 11-13, 2014, Nay Pyi Taw). During the visit, PM approached then President U Thein Sein, met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and collaborated with more than 300 individuals from the PIO community. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Went To Fourth East Asia Summit FMM and 21st ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting (August 08-10, 2014, NPT) and visited on August 11, 2014. In an exhibition of India's assistance to the harmony procedure NSA attended to the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement service as signatory observer on October 15, 2015.^{xviii}

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-drove NLD Government had been sworn-in on 30 March 2016. MOS (I/C) for Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman toured Yangon leading the

principal high-level foreign business designation on May 18-20, 2016 and addressed to the Business Conclave. NSA toured Myanmar as Special Envoy of Prime Minister on 16 June 2016 and met President U Htin Kyaw and Daw Suu Kyi. MOS V.K. Singh met the State Counselor on the counselor of fourteenth India-ASEAN FMM (26 July 2016, Vientiane, Laos). External Affairs Minister visited Nay Pyi Taw on 22 August 2016 and had warm connections with State Counselor and the President, underlining India's assistance for Myanmar. Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the State Counselor on the sidelines of fourteenth India-ASEAN Summit and eleventh East Asia Summit on 8 Sept 2016 in Vientiane.

Myanmar President U Htin Kyaw embraced a State Visit to India from August 27-30, 2016. Amid the visit President U Htin Kyaw had wide-going exchanges with Rashtrapati and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Four records were signed: MOU on Cooperation in Traditional Medicine, Construction of 69 connects in the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa area, Renewable Energy, and Cooperation in the Construction of Kalewa-Yagyi street segment of a similar Trilateral Highway. President Htin Kyaw had been accompanied by spouse and furthermore visited Bodh Gaya and Agra.

The External Affairs Minister of India, Sushma Swaraj, visits Myanmar on 10-11 May 2018

The EAM, Sushma Swaraj, visited Myanmar on 10-11 March 2018. Amid the visit, she approached H.E U Win Myint, President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar and met H.E. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counselor and Minister for Foreign Affairs. During the two-sided gatherings, peace, boundary and border related issues and security matters; advancements in the Rakhine State, including return of displaced people, India's improvement help to Myanmar, continuous projects, and different issues of mutual interest were discussed. The Minister additionally met the Commander in Chief of the Myanmar Defense Services, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, during the visit. Seven Agreements/MOUs were marked amid the visit.^{xix} These included:

- (i) Agreement on Land Border Crossing,
- (ii) MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on Restoration and Preservation of Earthquake Damaged Pagodas in Bagan,
- (iii) MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on help to the Joint Ceasefire Monitoring Committee

- (iv) MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on Training of Myanmar Foreign Service Officers,
- (v) MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on Setting up Industrial Training Center (ITC) at Monywa,
- (vi) MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on ITC at Thaton and
- (vii) (Memorandum of understanding) Exchange of Letters on expanding a maintenance contract for ITC Myingyan.

The Agreement on Land Border Crossing is a milestone in two-sided relations between the two nations as it will empower people from the two nations to cross the land boundary with international ID and visa, including for getting to health and education services, pilgrimage and tourism. The MoU on rebuilding of pagodas at Bagan underlines the continuing cultural and historical connections between the two nations. Alternate MoUs on technical assistance and capacity building reflect India's proceeding with help to Myanmar according with this current nation's very own advancement plans and needs. The External Affairs Minister likewise repeated India's preparation and duty to helping the Government of Myanmar (GOM) in addressing issues related to Rakhine State. She respected GOM's proceeded with duty to implementing the Rakhine Advisory Commission's recommendations and noticed that, under the aegis of the two-sided Rakhine State Development Program, India had been at that point in the implementation p had es of different projects that would respond to the requirements of various sections of the Rakhine State population. The main major project is the development of manufactured housing in Rakhine State to address the issues of displaced people. The Minister additionally emphadized the requirement for safe, speedy and sustainable return of displaced people to Rakhine State. The External Affairs Minister(EAM) expressed her thanks to the GOM for its hospitality and noticed that the warm reception and the talks underlined the exceptionally close and friendly relations between the two neighboring nations.

Amid the visit, the External Affairs Minister will have talks with the Myanmar authority on different bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of shared interest. The exchanges are relied upon to review progress made on decisions taken amid the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Myanmar in September 2017 so as to additionally strengthening two-sided ties.

Sushma Swaraj to visit Myanmar next week, likely to announce more aid for Rohingya refugees

The External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, India sees Bangladesh and Myanmar as key partners in its plans to interface up with nations of South-East Asia. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will visit Myanmar next week and could announce an expansion in Indian assistance went for encouraging the arrival of Rohingya displaced people from Bangladesh during the tour. Swaraj's visit follows one by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in September and the foreign minister is relied upon to audit the advancement settled on in implementing the decisions taken during Modi's touring, Indian foreign ministry representative Raveesh Kumar said. "A few key understandings covering different parts of our bilateral relations are to be signed," Kumar said Rohingya insurgent attacks on security posts in Rakhine on 25 August 2017 started a Myanmar military task that prompted the mass migration of about 700,000 Rohingya to Bangladesh. Myanmar had for a considerable length of time denied Rohingyas citizenship, blaming them for being illegal migrants from Bangladesh. Nevertheless, Bangladesh says the Rohingyas are not its nationals. During his visit to Myanmar, Modi had said India comprehends the issues being faced by Myanmar and offers its concern over "extremist violence" in the Rakhine state, particularly the loss of lives of regular citizens and military work force. This had been viewed as a signal of assistance for Myanmar's beleaguered State Councilor Aung San Suu Kyi, who had been under global pressure over the treatment of Rohingya refugees.^{xx}

Modi's remarks blended discussion in Bangladesh, which had been around 700,000 refugees, provoking New Delhi to move rapidly to diminish sentiments in Dhaka with food and other relief material to support the Rohingyas. New Delhi views Bangladesh and Myanmar as key accomplices (partners) in its planning to connect up with nations of South-East Asia. The two nations are additionally partners in India endeavors to ensure militants targeting on India's north-eastern states don't discover sanctuary in either nation. In December, India and Myanmar had consented an agreement for socio-economic improvement of the Rakhine state from where a huge number of for the most part Muslim Rohingyas have fled to Bangladesh. The agreement had been marked during then Indian foreign secretary S. Jaishankar's Myanmar visit and is the primary government-to-government understanding marked by the ministry of social welfare, relief and resettlement of Myanmar and is centered on the socio-

economic improvement and livelihood initiatives in Rakhine state. In January, Myanmar and Bangladesh achieved an agreement to repatriate the exiles inside two years. India trusts that "normalcy in the Rakhine state will be reestablished with the return of the displaced people," Kumar said. The socio-economic improvement of Rakhine state had been likewise key he stated, including that India respected the Bangladesh-Myanmar agreement for repatriating the Rohingyas.^{xxi}

Conclusion

A fundamental convergence existed between India's recognition of Myanmar's geo-strategic centrality and Myanmar's quest for an independent' fresh policy and a balance in its relations with neighbors and other major partners. Therefore, a whole set of factors that pushed the two countries towards a close and co-operative relationship would remain potent and unchanged, despite political changes that would occur in Myanmar, in the foreseeable future. Those in power in New Delhi and Naypyitaw were obliged to respect the realities and move towards building on the strong foundations, which had been laid in the past decade and half especially.

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- ^{xvi} The Hindu ,5-7 September 2017
- ^{xvii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xviii} *Ibid.*
- ^{xix} The Hindu, 11 May 2017
- ^{xx} The Hindu , New Delhi, 25 August 2017
- ^{xxi} *Ibid.*