

PRESS RELEASE

For the Next 50 years, Policymakers Must Redraw a New Framework for Stronger Ties.

Last year, India and Singapore completed 50 years of bilateral relations. Over the period of time both countries have developed deep and close engagements in the fields of politics, economics, commerce, defence, security, space & technology, education and culture. Celebrating the spirit of five long decades of cooperation, the **Ananta Aspen Centre** organised a book discussion on '*India & Singapore in the New Millennium*' in New Delhi.

New Delhi, 23rd June 2016: The symbiotic relationship between India and Singapore is rooted in economic complementarities and an emerging strategic dimension. On the economic front, India must be willing to deepen ties with Singapore by signing new Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), improving ease of business in India, and intensifying trade with ASEAN. In regards to political and military cooperation, India should help Singapore promote security in the Asia-Pacific by becoming a balancing power in the region.

Ananta Aspen Centre in collaboration with Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore, published this volume titled "**Looking Ahead: India- Singapore in the New Millennium – Celebrating 50 Years of Diplomatic Relations**". This volume is supported by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), New Delhi. The Centre invited an esteemed panel of speakers who contributed to the book to discuss various areas of cooperation that will strengthen partnership between India and Singapore and shed some new perspectives on enhancing the mutually beneficial relationship between two countries.

A K Bhattacharya, Editor, Business Standard, gave an outline of this book that comprises of 19 essays by eminent scholars and public personalities who have participated in the making of India and Singapore relations, focussing on 6 different broad categories ranging from economics, politics, culture, innovation etc. He pointed out 10 key takeaways from this volume, some of them are "durability of relations, opening up of Indian economy in 1990 for foreign investors, emphasis on more industry level cooperation, creation of an India- Singapore joint task force on entrepreneurship and others."

Tarun Das, Founding Trustee, Ananta Aspen Centre & Former Chief Mentor, Confederation of Indian Industry applauded the work ethics and discipline of Singaporeans and important role played by Singapore in the bridging the relationship between India and ASEAN. He emphasised that "Singapore is the easiest place to do business, when we (India) are talking about ease of doing business. Registration of companies in Singapore is a hassle free process." It can become a reference model for India, if the country wants to move up on rankings of ease of doing business from number 102 to 2.

C. Raja Mohan, Director, Carnegie India asserted on the idea of strategic partnership between the two countries. He further added that "Singapore is the very heart of indo-pacific, essentially linking two oceans. Singapore naturally becomes an eastern anchor for look east policy." The re-establishment of Nalanda University has helped in extending India's ties with other countries in South Asia.

Shyam Saran, Chairman, Research & Information System for Developing Countries stressed on the two important aspects of this relationship, "Singapore has become a platform of choice for Indian companies to do business in the region. Second, is the changing nature of geopolitical dimension and India can play a significant role in maintaining the balance of power equation in the backdrop of the

'South-China Sea' dispute." The former diplomat also added that Singapore is literally building an underground Singapore which in future may become a logistic centre for the region and the world. It will be the next big thing in a rapidly transforming world with the ability to stay ahead of others.

The book discussion concluded on an optimistic note that the next 50 years should be dedicated to recognise the areas of strength, identify the areas of opportunities and use that knowledge to take relationship to the next level. The mutual benefits of this strong relationship between India and Singapore can drive the policymakers in governments of both countries to get down to the task of redrawing a new framework of stronger ties.

About Ananta Aspen Centre

An independent organization, Ananta Aspen Centre is registered under the Indian Trust Act. It focuses on leadership development and encourages frank and open dialogue on the most important issues facing Indian society, to help foster its transformation. The Centre also engages civil society, business, governments and other key stakeholders on issues of importance to India's development, foreign policy, strategic affairs and national security.

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