

Celebrating India's independence and India-Việt Nam comprehensive strategic partnership

Indian ambassador Sandeep Arya wrote for Việt Nam News on the occasion of India's Independence Day (15/8/1947-15/8/2024). India celebrates 77 years of Independence today marked by a steady path of national progress and vision of Viksit Bharat (Developed India) @2047 driven by determination and aspirations of our people.

The world's most populous country held smooth electoral exercise for 968 million registered voters a few months ago to elect the government for the next five years. The last fiscal year saw GDP increase of 8.2 per cent, industrial growth of 9.5 per cent, capital expenditure at 21 per cent of total government spending led by significant infrastructure spending and stable macroeconomic parameters: modest core inflation of 4.3 per cent, stable currency, rising forex reserves, low external debt and good fiscal discipline. The Managing Director of the IMF observed that India is providing about 15 per cent of global growth, calling it a "bright spot".



(Prime Minister Phạm Minh Chính and Prime Minister Narendra Modi adopted the Joint Statement on Strengthening the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two countries in India on August 1. Photo Courtesy of the embassy)

Digital transformation, renewable energy, infrastructure and logistics, financial inclusion, robust capital market, startup and innovation, futuristic technologies and Global Capability Centres are driving India's growth and development. The service sector comprises 54.7 per cent of GDP, service exports reached US\$ 341 billion last year, and Indian telecom, computer and IT exports were the second largest in the world. Renewable energy contributed 45 per cent of total installed power capacity in India and emission intensity of GDP has declined 33 per cent from 2005 level.

Việt Nam is a long-standing and deep-rooted friend of India with political ties dating back seven decades to President HỒ Chí Minh and his message of brotherhood of our people. During the State visit of Việt Nam's Prime Minister H.E. Phạm Minh Chính at the invitation of Prime Minister H.E. Narendra Modi to India two weeks ago, the leaders agreed that the current geo-political realities called for closer cooperation between India and Việt Nam. The two countries developed a Plan of Action for strengthening cooperation in all areas during 2024-28.

As two rapidly growing economies focused on national growth and development, India and Việt Nam have rising opportunities for expanding trade, investment, business collaboration, developmental exchanges and working together in emerging areas of technology, innovation, etc. The ongoing review of ASEAN-India Trade in Goods

Agreement of 2010 is aimed at simpler, user-friendly and trade facilitative regime with Việt Nam and other ASEAN countries to enhance bilateral trade from the current level of about \$15 billion.

India and Việt Nam have identified sectors for focused attention for promoting investment between the two countries from about \$2 billion, by drawing upon respective strengths and priorities such as infrastructure, power, automobiles, IT, digital applications, pharmaceuticals, food processing, minerals and emerging technologies. Existing investors are expanding their projects in various fields and our conglomerates are developing their investment plans in each other's economies in key sectors of promise.

India's development objectives under Viksit Bharat @2047 and Việt Nam's vision to be a high-income developed country by 2045 offer synergy for exchange and cooperation between the two governments, our agencies and businesses. In this direction, digital applications, energy transition, industrial corridors and urban transport are areas of common priority. Our central banks are considering arrangements for cross-border digital payment interface.

The Centre of Excellence for Software Development and Training at Post and Telecommunications Institute of Technology, HỒ Chí Minh City is a successful example of cooperation to share capabilities bilaterally. An Army Software Park at Telecommunications University, Nha Trang was inaugurated virtually by the two Prime Ministers on August 1, 2024. Quick impact projects under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation support communities across provinces. Hundreds of officials, scholars and students attend sponsored ITEC training and ICCR educational degree courses in India every year.



(Army Software Park at Telecommunications University, Nha Trang, Việt Nam built with Indian assistance was jointly inaugurated by the Prime Ministers of Việt Nam and India on August 1, 2024. Photo Courtesy of the Embassy)

We believe that India-Việt Nam defence cooperation contributes to greater stability in the wider Indo-Pacific region and we agree to further enhance this collaboration. Apart from healthy ongoing activities, India and Việt Nam signed credit line agreements for \$300 million for bilateral projects.

Civilisational and spiritual connections nurture warmth and friendship between our people. Ongoing Buddhist studies, pilgrimage, and exchanges between our institutions are growing. We have agreed to undertake next phase of project for restoration and conservation of heritage in Việt Nam by the Archaeological Survey of India. Traditional medicine is going to be another area of cooperation decided by the two governments.

Tourism and culture are sectors of steady expansion between the two countries. The periodic increase of direct flights totalling about 56 per week presently will carry a higher number of travellers and tourists in both directions. Our media organisations, academic and research institutions will deepen mutual understanding between our scholars and people.

India and Việt Nam value convergences in our world view and our coordination and cooperation in various international forums. We welcome Việt Nam's joining of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure based in Delhi. Our bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership resonates with India-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership. Our support for greater voice and role for Global South in international affairs provides another area of joint work ahead.

I wish stronger and more prosperous India as well as Việt Nam and deeper India-Việt Nam partnership. VNS
