

## Singapore a strategic partner: PM

India and Singapore on Friday agreed to deepen their economic and defence ties as they signed eight agreements, one on logistics cooperation between their Navies, after wide-ranging talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong.

“India-Singapore relations fulfil the criterion of strategic partnership in the true sense. There is no uneasiness in our relationships, rather it has only warmth, harmony and faith,” Mr. Modi said at a joint press statement after the meeting.

The two countries signed an implementation agreement between their Navies on mutual coordination, logistics and services support for visits of naval ships, submarines and naval aircraft — including ship-borne aviation assets.

“Both Prime Ministers welcomed the exchange of the Implementing Arrangement between the Navies of both countries concerning mutual coordination, logistics and services support, and called for the early renewal of the Army Bilateral Agreement,” the joint statement said.

### Maritime exercises

Appreciating India’s leading role in the Indian Ocean region, both sides agreed to New Delhi’s proposal for continuous and institutionalised naval engagements in their shared maritime space, including establishing maritime exercises with like-minded regional or ASEAN partners, it added.

“We welcome the continuous increase in these relations. I congratulate the Navies of India and Singapore on the 25th anniversary of SIMBEX. Soon we will start the tripartite naval exercises too,” Mr. Modi said.

### CECA review

“We have been able to conclude successfully the second review of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), but we agreed this is not just our target and goal but only a means to an end,” he said. “Our officials will soon begin discussions on upgrading and reforming this agreement.”

Mr. Modi and Mr. Lee exchanged views on the regional and global challenges, and reiterated their principled position on maritime security and expressed commitment to a “rules-based” Order.

The two leaders also agreed on the need to maintain an open, stable and fair international trade regime.

They also reiterated their strong commitment to combat terrorism.

Mr. Modi welcomed the progress towards realisation of the ASEAN community and expressed full support for ASEAN’s unity, centrality and leadership in the evolving regional architecture.

Mr. Lee said India and Singapore were collaborating on technology, smart cities and skills development. He reaffirmed Singapore’s continuing support for India as a permanent member in a reformed United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Modi earlier made a courtesy call on President Halimah Yacob.

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