

India-Russia Relations

Relations with Russia are a key pillar of India's foreign policy and Russia has been a longstanding time-tested partner of India. Since the signing of "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in October 2000 (during the visit of President Vladimir Putin to India), India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, trade and economy, defense, science and technology and culture. Under the Strategic Partnership, several institutionalized dialogue mechanisms operate at both political and official levels to ensure regular interaction and follow up on cooperation activities. During the visit of Russian President to India in December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership".

Political Relations:

Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism under the Strategic Partnership between India and the Russian Federation. So far 14th Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The last (14th) Annual Summit was held in Moscow on 21 October 2013 when PM Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Moscow and had a meeting with President Putin. A Joint Statement "Deepening the Strategic Partnership for Global Peace and Stability" was adopted during the Summit. Bilateral agreements concluded during the Summit included a Treaty on sentenced persons; MoUs on standardisation and on energy efficiency; and Programmes of Cooperation in science & technology and in biotechnology. PM Dr. Manmohan Singh also visited St. Petersburg on 4-7 September for participating in the G-20 Summit and met President Putin on the sidelines of the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban (South Africa) on 27 March 2013.

There are regular high-level interactions between the two countries. Two Inter-Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister (EAM) and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and another on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC- MTC) co-chaired by Russian and Indian Defense Ministers, meet annually. The 19th session of the IRIGC-TEC and the 13th session of IRIGC-MTC were held in Moscow on 4 October and 18 November 2013 respectively. EAM Shri Salman Khurshid visited Moscow for intersessional meeting of IRIGC-TEC in April 2013 and then in October 2013 for the IRIGC-TEC meeting with Deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin and meeting with Foreign Minister of Russia, Mr. Sergey Lavrov. At the invitation of the Russian Minister for Interior, Home Minister of India Shri Sushil Kumar Shinde visited Moscow in April 2013. Commerce and Industry Minister, Shri Anand Sharma visited Moscow in April 2013; St. Petersburg in June 2013 to attend St. Petersburg International Economic Forum; St. Petersburg in September 2013 to attend the India-Russia Trade and Investment Forum. Culture Minister Smt. Chandresh Kumari Katoch

visited Russia from 10-12 November 2013. Chairperson of the Federation Council (Upper House of Russian Parliament) Ms. Valentina Matvienko visited India in February 2013, at the joint invitation of Chairman, Rajya Sabha and Speaker, Lok Sabha. Foreign Minister Mr. Sergei Lavrov visited India from 9-11 November 2013 for the India-Russia-China FMs meeting and Asia-Europe Ministerial meeting.

Defence:

India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a simple buyer - seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems. BrahMos Missile System, Joint development of the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft and the Multi Transport Aircraft, as well as the licensed production in India of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, are examples of such flagship cooperation. The two countries also hold exchanges and training exercises between their armed forces annually. The Inter Governmental Commission and its Working Groups and Sub-Groups review defence cooperation between the two countries.

Commercial Relations:

Trade, investment and economic cooperation between India and Russia has been growing steadily. In 2012, bilateral trade increased by 24.5% to reach US\$ 11 billion out of which Indian exports amounted to US\$ 3 billion while Russian exports were valued at US\$ 8 billion. In January-September 2013, bilateral trade amounted to US\$ 6.94 billion. Exports from India to Russia amounted to US\$ 2.33 billion while imports from Russia stood at US\$ 4.61 billion. The two-way investment between the two countries stands at approximately US\$ 8 billion. In 2009, both sides set the target of US \$ 20 bn bilateral trade by 2015. Priority areas for expanding bilateral economic cooperation are pharmaceuticals, IT, steel, diamonds, aviation, fertilizers, infrastructure, heavy engineering and food products.

IRIGC-TEC is the main institutional mechanism to review economic cooperation. It integrates seven working groups on trade and economic cooperation, modernization and industrial cooperation, energy, investment projects, tourism and culture, science and technology, and communications & IT. India - Russia Forum on Trade and Investment co-chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister of India and the Russian Minister for Economic Development, and India - Russia CEOs' Council are the two primary mechanisms to promote direct bilateral business-to-business contacts between India and Russia. Mechanisms such as India - Russia Business Council (partnership between FICCI of India and CCI of Russia), India - Russia Trade, Investment and Technology Promotion Council (partnership between CII of India and RUIE of Russia), India - Russia Business Dialogue (partnership between CII of India and Russia's Business Council for Cooperation with India) and India - Russia Chamber of Commerce

(with focus on SMEs) supplement the efforts to build direct business - to - business ties. In June 2013, the 4th India-Russia Business Dialogue was held within the framework of the annual St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). India-Russia CEOs' Council met in St. Petersburg in June 2013 and in Moscow in October 2013. Seventh India-Russia Forum on Trade & Investment was held in St. Petersburg in September 2013.

Energy:

Russia is an important partner in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and it recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. Construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) Units 1 & 2 (VVER 1000 MW units) is an example of fruitful cooperation between India and Russia. KKNPP Unit 1 has become operational in July 2013, while its Unit 2 is at an advanced stage of construction.

India and Russia also have ongoing cooperation in the field of hydrocarbons and power. ONGC Videsh Limited has substantive investments of over US\$ 5 billion in two major oil and gas projects – Sakhalin-1 and Imperial Energy Limited (Tomsk). Russian companies are engaged in several power plant and oil and gas projects in India.

Outer Space:

India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. The two countries are currently engaged in cooperation on GLONASS and other space applications.

Science & Technology:

The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral Science and Technology cooperation, while the Science Academies of the two countries promote inter-academy exchanges. ILTP which supports collaborative research in basic and applied sciences has resulted in establishment of 9 thematic centers in India and Russia and implementation of about 500 projects. In 2010, ILTP was extended for another 10 years with a renewed mandate “innovation led technology programme”. India-Russia Science and Technology Centre with a branch each in Delhi-NCR and Moscow was set up in 2011-12 in order to promote transfer of technologies and their commercialization. Two Programmes of Cooperation in the field of science and technology and in biotechnology were signed in October 2013 and are in the process of implementation.

Cultural:

There is a strong tradition of Indian studies in Russia. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center at the Embassy of India, Moscow (JNCC) maintains close cooperation with

leading Russian institutions including the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow, Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, Institute of Asian and African Studies at the Moscow State University, School of International Relations at the St. Petersburg University, Kazan Federal University, Kazan and Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok. There is a Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Indian Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow, while a Chair of Contemporary Indian Studies is at the Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow. About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly teach Hindi to 1500 Russian students. Apart from Hindi, languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions. There is general interest among Russian people in Indian dance, music, yoga and ayurveda. JNCC conducts classes in yoga, dance, music and Hindi for approximately 500 students every month. There are regular cultural initiatives to promote people-to-people contacts between India and Russia. A Festival of Indian Culture covering 10 cities of Russia took place in 2013.

Indian Community:

Indian Community in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 15,000. In addition, about 1,500 Afghan nationals of Indian origin live in Russia. About 500 Indian businessmen reside in Russia including about 200 businessmen who work in Moscow. An estimated 300 registered Indian companies operate in Russia. Majority of Indian businessmen/companies in Russia are involved in trading while some represent Indian banks, pharmaceuticals, hydrocarbon and engineering companies. Tea, coffee, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, rice, spices, leather footwear, granite, I.T. and garments are amongst the products being imported by these companies from India. There are approximately 4,500 Indian students enrolled in medical and technical institutions in the Russian Federation. About 90% of them pursue medical studies in about 20 universities/institutions across Russia. Hindustani Samaj is the oldest Indian organization in Russia functioning since 1957. Other Indian organizations in Moscow include AMMA, DISHA, Indian Business Alliance, Overseas Bihar Association, Textile Business Alliance, Bhartiya Sanskritik Samaj, and Ramakrishna Society Vedanta Centre. Embassy of India School in Moscow is affiliated to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan in New Delhi with teachers deputed from India. The School has classes from I to XII and has about 360 students.

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