

India-Netherlands: Bilateral Brief

India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in 1947. Since then, the two countries have developed strong political, economic & commercial relations, and various sectoral co- operations.

High Level Visits

There has been a number of high level visits in the recent years. Prime Minister Mark Rutte visited India in June 2015. He was accompanied by the Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ms. Lilianne Ploumen, the Minister for Agriculture Ms. Sharon Dijksma, as well as representatives from 100 Dutch companies.

The visit of PM Modi to the Netherlands in June 2017 provided a significant boost to India-Netherlands bilateral cooperation. During the visit, PM called on the King and Queen of the Netherlands and held bilateral discussions with PM Mark Rutte and other members of his Cabinet. He participated in a round table with CEOs of 16 key Dutch companies. He also addressed a large gathering of around 3000 members of the Indian community.

The momentum of bilateral ties was carried forward by the visit of Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte to India on May 24, 2018. He led the largest ever Dutch trade mission to India which comprised over 130 companies/institutions and nearly 200 trade representatives. He was also accompanied by a high-level Ministerial delegation including Ms. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management; Ms. Carola Schouten, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality; Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation; Mr. Bruno Bruins, Minister for Medical Care and Ms. Pauline Krikke, Mayor of The Hague. The visit covered entire gamut of bilateral relations, with special focus on Water and Waste Management, Spatial Planning, Agriculture and Food Processing, People-to-People contacts and Connectivity.

The momentum of high-level visits was sustained by the State Visit of King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima of the Netherlands to India from October 14-18, 2019. They led a high-powered ministerial delegation including Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Stef Blok, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Ms. Sigrid Kaag; Minister for Medical Care, Ms. Bruno Bruins; and State Secretary for Economic Affairs & Climate Policy, Ms. Mona Keijzer, and a trade delegation of over 250 persons representing more than 140 companies and organizations from various sectors including technology and innovation, agriculture, water, health-care and climate. This was the largest ever Dutch trade delegation to India surpassing the trade mission led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte in May 2018. During the visit, the Royalties met President Ram Nath Kovind, and Prime Minister Modi. External Affairs Minister called on the King and the Queen. The Royalties attended the Inaugural Session of 25th Technology Summit in New Delhi. The King and the Queen also visited Mumbai and the State of Kerala.

Dr Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister (EAM) visited the Netherlands during November 9 -11, 2019. EAM held talks with Mr. Stef Blok, Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the visit EAM also interacted with Members of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Dutch House of Representatives.

Dr. S Jaishankar, EAM spoke telephonically with the Dutch Foreign Minister in June and November 2020. Shri Piyush Goyal, Commerce & Industry Minister held a telecom with Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands in May 2020.

Trade and Commercial Relations

Trade and commercial relations constitute the bedrock of bilateral ties between the two countries. The Netherlands was the third largest investor in India, after Mauritius and Singapore for FY 2019-20 with FDI inflows of USD 6.5 billion. From the period between April 2000 to December 2020, the Dutch investments in India comprise USD 36.28 billion standing at the fourth position. In FY 2019-20, the Netherlands was the fourth largest destination for overseas direct investment (ODI) from India with investments estimated at USD 1.23 billion. For FY 2020-21 (up to Jan 2021), the Netherlands was also the fourth largest ODI destination with investments of \$909.9 million.

The Netherlands was India's 5th largest trading partner in Europe, after Germany, Switzerland, the UK and Belgium in FY 2019-20 with a total two-way trade of US\$11.75 billion with export from India amounting to US\$ 8.36 billion and imports from the Netherlands at US\$ 3.39 billion. In FY 2020-21 (April-Dec), bilateral trade stood at US\$6.55 billion with Indian exports to the Netherlands at US\$4.33 billion and Indian imports from the Netherlands at US\$ 2.22 billion.

There are over 200 Dutch companies present in India, including major Dutch companies like Royal Dutch Shell, Unilever, Philips, Akzo Nobel, DSM, KLM and Rabobank. There are over 200 Indian companies present in the Netherlands, including all the major IT companies such as TCS, HCL, Wipro, Infosys, Tech Mahindra as well as Sun Pharmaceuticals and Tata Steel. Food major LT Foods has a rice processing plant in Rotterdam, United Phosphorus Limited (UPL Ltd) has a plant in Rotterdam with a production capacity of 45,000 tonnes of crop protection products and Tata Steel owns an integrated steel making plant in IJmuiden which employs 9,000 people with an annual production of seven million tonnes of steel.

During the state visit by the King and Queen of the Netherlands to India in October 2019, the largest ever Dutch trade delegation to India comprising over 140 Dutch companies/institutions and nearly 250 business representatives accompanied the Royals. The delegation visited New Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and Kochi. A virtual (online) Trade Mission between India and the Netherlands took place from 8 to 12 February 2021. Over 100 participants from the Netherlands and over 300 from India participated. The themes were food (solutions in food waste, horticulture, dairy and aqua culture), energy (renewable energy in solar energy, hydrogen and biofuels and energy transition; e-mobility) and water (water safety and security). Shri Piyush Goyal, Commerce and Industry Minister and Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development

Cooperation of the Netherlands inaugurated the virtual (online) Trade Mission.

Science & Technology

The Netherlands was India's partner country in the Technology Summit 2019 (15-16 October 2019) held in New Delhi. King Willem Alexander of the Netherlands attended the Inaugural Session of Summit on October 15, 2019. The focus areas of the Tech Summit were the water, agri-food, healthcare, technology and maritime sector. A number of MoUs were signed during the Summit. The Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) collaborates with Department of Science and Technology (DST), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) and Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR).

There is an ongoing project titled "Local Treatment of Urban Sewage Streams for Healthy Reuse (LOTUS)", which is an India-Netherlands joint collaboration of universities and companies funded by the India's Department of Biotechnology and the Dutch NWO-TTW. The focus of the study is on technologies including for anaerobic sewage treatment. As part of the project, a demonstration plant for cleaning the Barapullah drain in Delhi was set up on 9 May 2017. It was inaugurated by Dutch Foreign Minister Bert Koenders and Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Indian Minister of Science & Technology. The second phase of LOTUS-HR programme was launched in October 2019. It was jointly inaugurated on October 14, 2019 by the King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima in presence of Union Science and Technology minister Dr Harsh Vardhan and Lt Governor Anil Bajjal.

Mr. Maarten Camps, Secretary General, Ministry of Economic Affairs visited India from 23-26 July, 2019 and participated in the launch of the Global Innovation Index at New Delhi. He delivered a key mote address. Minister of Commerce & Industry Piyush Goyal and Principal Science Advisor Prof Vijay Raghavan were in attendance. He also met with Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Science and Technology on July 24, 2019.

A delegation comprising of officials of the City of The Hague led by the Deputy Mayor, Ms Saskia Bruins visited Karnataka and Telangana from 17-20 November 2019. The MoU between city of The Hague and the State of Karnataka was renewed. Topics of collaboration and discussion in the MoU include Tech innovation facilitation; Startups and soft-landing; Talent and areas in Health, Cybersecurity, Agri-tech, Peace & Justice and other sectors. The delegation also attended the Bengaluru Tech Summit 2019.

The Netherlands was partner country with India for the Global Bio India 2021 Virtual Summit which was organized by the Department of Biotechnology, Government of India from 1-3 March 2021.

Water Management

Dutch water expertise is amongst the best in the world. Over the decades, the Dutch have mastered the art of flood protection and water supply and treatment. The water sector has three primary focus areas: water technology; maritime technology; and delta technology.

In order to find solutions for water related challenges a platform called Dutch Indo Water

Alliance Leadership Initiative (DIWALI) has been developed in which India and Netherlands could participate for designing solution for water challenges.

The Dutch government, in collaboration with Dutch organizations Solidaridad, PUM (an organization founded by VNO-NCW and Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and chemical company Stahl (through the Sustainable Water Fund) is working with the local government as well as several leather tanneries in Kanpur (on the Ganga River) and Unnao in the area of cleaner business processes by promoting fewer discharges into the river. Cooperation on conservation of water through efficient agriculture practices in the sugarcane industry of Uttar Pradesh is also ongoing. PUM is also working with textile and leather manufacturers in Gujarat to help them address the solid waste and waste water issues. Similar activities are ongoing with textile finishing cluster in Ludhiana, Punjab. The West Bengal Government and PUM are engaged on a pilot project in the Sundarbans region to start reusing some of the old creeks by replacing the salty water in them by fresh water.

The Dutch government is also involved in the Hindon basin project in Ganga basin through the multi-year Ganges program of "de Werkplaats". A Dutch consortium, in collaboration with paper mills, municipalities, the World Bank and the state of Uttar Pradesh is working on two investment projects aimed at converting waste and waste water into energy, to be sold to the government and paper mills. This includes Nijhuis Industries (engaged in sustainable water use and resource recovery), GC, Trinity Natural Gas and "Netherlands International Works". The two Waste to Value projects are located at Ghaziabad/Noida and Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh.

Chennai is one of the participating cities in the "Water as a leverage for Resilient Cities Asia" program. As part of the programme, the Dutch government is financing a design trajectory where infrastructural proposals will be further developed into implementable projects with the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Netherlands Development Finance Company (FMO). Two Dutch experts were part of the UN-ADB-World Bank team which conducted Post Disaster Needs Assessment after Kerala Floods. Subsequently, a 4-member Dutch Risk Resilience Team (DRR) visited Kerala to work on integrated river management and flood management from 8-23 March 2019 and presented a report on flood prevention in the Kuttanad Region, Kerala.

Mr Henk Ovink, Special Envoy for International Water Affairs led the delegation on water sector during the State Visit in October 13-18, 2019. The delegation focused on water, delta technology and solid waste sectors. During the virtual (online) Dutch Trade Mission held from 8 to 12 February 2021 water was a core theme (water safety and security). The 2nd JWG on water cooperation took place in October 2020 between Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management in an online format. Follow up online meeting took place in February 2021.

Ports/Shipping/Inland Waterways

The Netherlands, with its evolved network of inland waterways, possess some of the largest ports in the world as well as has deep knowledge of logistics. This enables them to be in a position to cooperate with India in many of its flagship programmes in the sector.

Maritime Sector was one of the focus areas for the Dutch trade mission during the State Visit in October 2019. About 20 organizations and companies in this sector participated in the Mumbai and Kerala leg of the State Visit. The 3rd edition of the Indo-Dutch Forum on Smart and Sustainable Port led development took place in Mumbai in October 2019. During the State Visit, Port of Rotterdam Authority signed MoUs with the Maharashtra Maritime Board and with Kerala State Government for maritime development in the State. Erasmus Center for Urban Port and Transport Economics (UPT) & STC International signed an agreement with Indian Port Association and Mumbai Port Trust for inter-cultural maritime education.

In the private sector, a number of Dutch companies are active in India including Royal Haskoning DHV, dredging company Boskalis, Royal IHC, APM Terminals and STC Nestra. In 2017 Boskalis won a major contract for dredging in India. Indian companies regularly buy dredgers from Royal IHC. In February 2021, Cochin Shipyard signed MoUs with Dredging Corporation of India and Royal IHC Holland BV to make world-class dredgers. MoUs were signed in Delhi in the presence of Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (I/C) for Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

There is an EU-Ganga Platform to coordinate efforts among European partners with Netherlands taking the lead. Dutch consultant Arcadis is involved in the programme management unit of the Ganga programme. Dutch Institute Deltares is carrying out the river modeling plan. Dutch companies including Port of Rotterdam and Port of Amsterdam took part in the online Maritime India Summit held from 2-4 March 2021. Leading maritime Dutch company CEOs were also part of the CEO Ports Forum and interacted with Minister Mansukh Mandaviya.

Agriculture

Agriculture is one of the core sectors identified by the Netherlands for enhancing bilateral cooperation with India. The 5th Joint Agriculture Working Group (JAWG) meeting on Agriculture took place in New Delhi on 13 March 2018. Under the JAWG, an Action Plan was signed which envisages cooperation in establishing Centres of Excellence (CoE) in horticulture, animal husbandry & dairy, fisheries and food processing as well as in skill development & capacity building in the fields of cold chain, supply chain management etc. The first CoE for vegetables at Baramati, Maharashtra under Indo-Dutch Joint Agro-Action Plan was inaugurated on 2 November 2017. In November 2020, the second CoE for vegetables and flowers under the Indo-Dutch Joint Agro-Action Plan was inaugurated at Wayanad District, Kerala in the presence of Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare, Narendra Singh Tomar. The following CoEs are currently under consideration: CoE for flowers in Talegaon (Maharashtra), CoE for flowers Ludhiana (Punjab); CoE for potatoes at Jalandhar (Punjab), CoE for temperate fruits in Srinagar and CoE for tropical fruits in Jammu.

In April 2019, a delegation comprising of over 10 leading dairy Indian companies visited for understanding dairy practices in the Netherlands. Secretary, Animal Husbandry and Executive Director, National Dairy Development Board were also part of the delegation.

From 8-12 May 2019, a delegation led by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan visited the Netherlands. He met with Mr Jan Kees Goet, Secretary General Ministry of

Agriculture and interacted with agriculture companies at VNO-NCW. He visited an experimental station of University of Wageningen at Westmaas and Greenhouses to understand latest agricultural techniques in horticulture and floriculture.

From 12-16 June 2019, a delegation led by Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur visited the Netherlands. He met Jan Kees Goet, Secretary General Ministry of Agriculture. He visited the University of Wageningen to understand latest agricultural techniques in horticulture and the GreenTech exhibition at Amsterdam. Dutch Greenhouse Delta and a delegation from Assocham attended the Himachal Pradesh Global Investors Meet from 7-8 November 2019 at Shimla. An MoU between Government of Himachal Pradesh and Dutch Greenhouse Delta was also signed during the Investors Meet.

In August 2019, the CEO National Rainfed Area Authority visited Netherlands, briefed the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture on India's initiatives to double farmer's income and visited Wageningen University and UPL factory. In September 2019, a delegation of scientists from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) visited the Netherlands and had sessions at the Wageningen University and Dutch Ministry of Agriculture.

Healthcare cooperation

An MoU for Cooperation in the Field of Healthcare and Public Health was signed in January 2014 to promote greater research collaboration in emerging health challenges associated with communicable diseases and antimicrobial resistance. The first meeting of the JWG was held in The Hague in September 2015. The 2nd JWG Meeting took place in December 2018 in New Delhi during which discussions were held on Anti-Microbial Resistance, including One Health Pilot Project in Krishna District, Andhra Pradesh, as well as regulatory matters relating to food products, medicines and medical products.

A digital health mission from the Netherlands comprising of 10 companies visited New Delhi and Bangalore from 23-29 June 2019. They interacted with leading hospitals and medical organizations. The innovation mission was led by officials from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport. Life Sciences and Health was one of the focus areas for the Dutch trade mission during the State Visit to India in October 2019. Over 35 organizations and companies in this sector were part of the delegation who visited New Delhi and Bangalore. Minister of Health, Mr Bruno Bruins led the delegation.

In June 2020. Mr Martin van Rijn, Dutch Minister of Medical Care and Sport wrote to Ambassador of India to the Netherlands thanking the Government of India for allowing shipments of hydroxychloroquine produced in India to be exported to the Netherlands.

Urban Development and Smart Cities

In May 2013, an MoU in the field of Spatial Planning, Water Management and Mobility Management was signed between the Ministry of Urban Development and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Environment of the Netherlands. In April 2018, the MoU was extended for an indefinite period. The 3rd Joint Working Group meeting on Urban Development was held from 30 April - 2 May 2018 in The Hague. There was strong

Dutch participation in the 2016, 2017 and 2018 Smart Cities Expos in India. During the State Visit in October 2019 it was announced that the Johan Cruijff Arena will establish a Living Lab for IIIT Hyderabad on the university campus in the style of Amsterdam Innovation Arena. The project has been commissioned by the Indian Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

Sports

One Million Hockey Legs (1MHL) project was initiated with the objective of popularizing hockey in India at the grass-roots level. One Million Hockey Legs visited India in December 2018 for the Indian Mens Hockey World Cup. It was reported that 1MHL set up a competition in Khunti (Jharkhand), in which more than 70 and 5000 children participated. Thirty boys and thirty girls with talent and enthusiasm have been selected from this pool for training on synthetic turf. 1MHL, together with Tata Trusts, has established a professional hockey academy in Jamshedpur.

Dutch Minister for Medical Care and Sports, Mr. Bruno Bruins visited India in May 2018 as part of the delegation led by Dutch PM Mark Rutte. He met Minister Youth Affairs and Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore and discussed possible cooperation on football, field hockey and sports innovations.

KoninklijkeNederlandse Hockey Bond (KNHB) and Hockey India are cooperating on different projects related to field hockey. Indian hockey players Devinder Walmiki and Harjeet Singh were signed up by Dutch club HGC for the 2019-20 Season and featured in the Euro Hockey League matches.

Renewable Energy

In May 2018, during the visit of PM Rutte to India, the Netherlands signed the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The Dutch ratified the revised ISA Framework Agreement in May 2020. Prime Minister Mark Rutte sent a video message for the 3rd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (RE-Invest 2020) organized by the Indian Ministry for New and Renewable Energy which took place from 26 to 28 November 2020. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the Climate Adaptation Summit 2021 hosted by the Netherlands on 25 January 2021. He called on the Global Commission on Adaptation to work with CDRI to enhance infrastructure resilience globally. On 28 September 2020, Niti Aayog and Embassy of the Netherlands in New Delhi signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to support the decarbonisation and energy transition agenda for cleaner and more energy and sustainable growth.

Cultural Cooperation

An ICCR Cultural Centre "The Gandhi Centre" was established in The Hague on 2 October 2011. The Centre has an active calendar of programmes including Yoga, Tabla and Hindi language classes, in addition to various programmes related to Indian culture such as music, dance, workshops, movies, etc.

The sixth International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated online in the Netherlands with a four hour long program by the Mission in The Hague. Dutch Defence Minister Ank

Bijleveld joined the sixth IDY online celebrations with a video message. The Minister thanked India for the wonderful gift of yoga to the world. She said finding inner peace is crucial for men and women in uniform and yoga is a beautiful way to find the balance. The Minister stated that yoga has formed a part of the training for the Dutch Armed forces for last 15 years and there are 130 yoga instructors. The representatives of Dutch Army joined by the Dutch Police personnel demonstrated their yoga skills as part of the online celebrations.

The fifth International Day of Yoga was celebrated on June 16, 2019 at prestigious Dam Square in Amsterdam. The Square is the historical centre of Amsterdam with the neoclassical Royal Palace, the 15th-century Gothic Nieuwe Kerk (New Church), the Madame Tussauds Amsterdam and the National Monument erected in 1956 for the victims of World War II. Representatives of the Royal Dutch army also joined the celebrations for the first time. Dutch Ministry of Defence has introduced yoga exercises for armed forces to enrich their training program and reduce stress.

An MoU was signed during the Kerala leg of the State Visit of the King and Queen of the Netherlands to India in October 2019 between the State Archives Department of the Government of Kerala and the National Archives of the Netherlands on Execution of the Shared Cultural Heritage Programme to digitize and mutually exchange such records pertaining to the Dutch and Dutch East India Company which are archived in the State Archives Department of the Government of Kerala and the National Archives of the Netherlands.

Indian Community and Diaspora

The Netherlands hosts the second largest Indian Diaspora (after UK) in Europe and the largest on mainland Europe, including 2,00,000 strong Surinami-Hindustani community of Indian origin.

Surinami-Hindustanis are the best-integrated immigrants in the Netherlands and speak fluent Dutch. They are engaged in a wide spectrum of activities including academicians, professionals, businessmen, politicians, diplomats and footballers. A number of community members have been elected to various municipalities in the Netherlands. The community is an important element that helps foster India's closer ties with the Netherlands.

A delegation led by JS (CPV) and Joint Secretary (Foreigners), Ministry of Home Affairs visited The Hague in 2018 and held discussions on possibility of relaxing OCI rules to permit members of fourth and fifth generation of Surinami Hindustani diaspora to obtain the OCI cards. Government of India has now decided that descendants up to sixth generation of the original Indian immigrants who had arrived in Suriname and later migrated to the Netherlands would be considered for availing OCI facility. OCI card scheme is getting popular and approximately 20,000 OCI cards have been issued till date.

The Netherlands is also home to 48,000 NRIs/PIOs. They are mainly businessmen, knowledge workers, professionals and students.

Both the Surinami-Hindustani community and PIO/NRIs have been active in promoting cultural cooperation through well-established institutions. Indian classical music both vocal and instrumental is widely practiced and promoted through musical events. Indian dance forms are widely popular. There is an impressive following for Yoga. Indian Bollywood movies are popular and there are also radio channels that broadcast Hindi/ Surnami songs throughout the day. Each year, a large number of people from the community participate in Indian Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations. The community members are deeply attached to the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi Jayanti is a major event. There are busts and statues of Gandhi Ji at several locations in the Netherlands. Festivals like Diwali and Holi are celebrated with the participation of many of the community members.

Education

There are approximately 3,500 Indian students pursuing Bachelors, Masters and Research Courses in various universities in the Netherlands. The largest concentration of Indian students is at Technical University (TU) Delft and TU Eindhoven, conducting research on cutting edge technologies. Indian students are the largest expatriate community in these two Technical Universities.

April 2021