

India-Sweden Relations

The ties between India and Sweden were established in 1949, based on the strong foundation of shared democratic values. High level contacts between the two countries go back to 1957 when Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Sweden. The most recent high level visits from India was the first-ever State Visit by the President of India from May 31-June 3, 2015, which has taken the relationship to new heights. From the Swedish side the most recent Head of State/Government was that of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to India from February 13-14, 2016 for the 'Make in India Week' in Mumbai, which followed the visit of former Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt in November 2009 for the India-EU Summit and bilateral talks. Besides, a number of bilateral Ministerial visits have taken place in the last five years which have promoted cooperation in a number of important areas. Parliamentary contacts have also gathered momentum, adding further substance to the relations between the two democracies.

Mutual economic interests have emerged as the driver of the relationship. Bilateral trade crossed US \$ 2 billion in 2009-10. It stood at nearly US \$ 2.2 billion in 2015-16. Most of the major Swedish companies entered India decades ago but in recent years their investments have increased and Indian companies have also begun to invest in Sweden. There is significant potential for enhancing bilateral collaboration in key areas like green technologies, renewable energy, smart infrastructure, healthcare and defence.

Political Relations

President of India Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid a landmark visit to Sweden from May 31 to June 2, 2015. He was also accompanied by high-level educational and business delegations comprising several Vice Chancellors and Directors of leading Indian Universities and representatives of about 35 Indian companies. Six intergovernmental Agreements/MOUs in important areas including sustainable development and 15 agreements between educational institutions were signed during the visit.

The momentum which the Presidential visit imparted to India-Sweden relations was maintained by the visit of Prime Minister Stefan Löfven to India from February 13-14, 2016 for the 'Make in India Week' in Mumbai. He was accompanied by a high level official and business delegation. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13. The Joint Statement issued after the meeting, inter alia, identified defence, infrastructure, urban development, education, S&T, environment, health and space sectors for further cooperation. The two Prime Ministers endorsed the creation of an India-Sweden Business Leader Round Table which was launched on February 14. A Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in Railways was also signed.

Earlier VVIP visits include a State visit by His Majesty and Queen Silvia of Sweden in 1993. Thereafter, the King led a Technology Mission to India in November 2005. Prime Minister Göran Persson visited India in January 2004 and Prime Minister Fredrik Reinfeldt in November, 2009.

The most recent visit from India was that of Minister of State for Power, Coal, Mines, and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Piyush Goyal, who visited Sweden from November 1-3, 2016. His delegation included senior government officials from the Ministry of Power, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy and a large business

delegation and representation from CII and FICCI. Minister of Communication & Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad visited Sweden from May 15-18, 2016. Chief of Air Staff and the Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee Air Chief Marshal Arup Raha paid a goodwill visit to Sweden from June 7-11, 2016. From the Swedish side, Justice and Migration Minister Morgan Johansson visited India from May 12-14, 2016. Swedish Policy Coordination and Energy Minister Ibrahim Baylan along with a business delegation visited India from October 4-8, 2016. Minister of Enterprise and Innovation Mr. Michael Damberg visited India from November 10-11 leading a high-level business delegation for India-Sweden Business Leaders' Round Table.

Several other important high-level contacts cemented bilateral ties in 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Löfven met in New York on September 25, 2015 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (Dr.) V.K. Singh met Foreign Minister of Sweden Ms. Margot Wallström in Luxembourg in November 2015 on the sidelines of ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

Earlier in 2015 the Minister for Infrastructure Anna Johansson visited India (in March) and the State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office Mr. Hans Dahlgren (in April) and the Swedish Defence Minister Mr. Peter Hulquist (in June). State Secretary in Prime Minister's Office Mr. Hans Dahlgren visited India again in October 2015 for the first round of the revived Strategic Dialogue with the Indian National Security Adviser. Ms. Ann Linde, State Secretary for Home Affairs and member of the delegation led by Mr. Dahlgren, called on the MoS for Home Affairs, Mr. Kiren Rijju, on October 6. Mr. Mehmet Kaplan, Swedish Minister of Housing, Urban Development & Information Technology visited India from October 13 to 18, 2015 and met the Indian Minister of Urban Development, Housing & Poverty Alleviation as well as the Minister for Communications & Information Technology. In 2014, the Swedish Minister for Healthcare, Public Health and Sports, Mr. Gabriel Wikström, visited India in November.

From the Indian side, in 2015, the Minister for Women & Child Development Ms Maneka Gandhi visited Stockholm in May. Besides meeting her counterpart, she inaugurated the Indian cultural festival 'Namaste Stockholm' and participated in conferences related to Gender and to Travel. There were many important visits from states including delegations led by (i) Mr. Devendra Fadnavis, the Chief Minister of Maharashtra in April 2015, (ii) Dr. Raghuram Rajan, Governor of the Reserve Bank of India visited Stockholm on June 24 to give the Keynote address at the macro-prudential policy conference organised by the Riksbank, the Central Bank of Sweden, (iii) Mr. Satyendar Kumar Jain, Minister of Health, Home, Power, PWD and Industries of Delhi in October and (iv) Dr. Rajiv Sharma, Chief Secretary of Telangana, also in October. In 2014, a delegation from Karnataka led by Additional Chief Secretary Ms. K. Ratnaprabha paid a study visit to Sweden.

The first ever India Friendship Group was set up in Swedish Parliament in February 2006. A six-member delegation from this Group visited in September 2013. The Friendship Group has been reconstituted in 2015.

A number of bilateral Institutional Dialogue Mechanisms and Agreements are in place to foster cooperation in different areas. These include Avoidance of Double Taxation Agreement and Bilateral Protection Agreement (BIPA) which provide the necessary umbrella for close economic collaboration. Another important MOU is on

Cooperation in the field of Healthcare and Public Health signed in February 2009 which provides mutually beneficial interaction between concerned agencies on both sides. There are also MOUs in the key areas of defence, environment, science & Technology, health and renewable energy. Regular meetings are held to review and foster cooperation in these areas. A Bilateral Social Security Agreement was signed on November 26, 2012. Six new intergovernmental Agreements/MOUs were signed during the Presidential visit pertaining to Sustainable Urban Development; Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises; Visa Exemption for Diplomatic Passports; Polar and Ocean Research; Ageing and Health; and Pharmaceutical products.

The leading institutional mechanism of inter-Governmental dialogue between India and Sweden is the Joint Economic Commission (JEC) at the level of the Ministers of Commerce and Industry. The last round (17th) was held in Stockholm on January 30, 2015. The first India-Sweden Joint Working Group Meeting under the MoU on Sustainable Urban Development was held in New Delhi from October 14-17, 2015. There is a mechanism for regular dialogue between the two Foreign Ministries through Foreign Office Consultations. The fifth round was held in Stockholm on April 26, 2013. An India-Sweden Business Leaders Roundtable was created in February 2016 during the visit of the Swedish Prime Minister to India, with CII and Sweden-India Business Council as its coordinating agencies. The first Roundtable took place on 11 November 2016 in New Delhi.

Strategic & Defence Cooperation

An MoU for Defence Cooperation was signed in 2009 and the Joint Working Group established. As part of the MoU, there exists an India-Sweden Joint Working Group under the Co-Chairmanship of a JS level officer in the Department of Defence Production in MoD. The last meeting of the JWG was held in New Delhi in September 2015. The main focus of the JWG is now on '**Make in India**' programme in defence sector and to identify more areas for cooperation in research and development for co-production.

There have been some prominent visits from Defence perspective from both the countries which includes the visit of Swedish Defence Minister to India in June 2015 and visit of the Indian Chairman of Chiefs of Staff Committee & Chief of Air Staff to Sweden in Jun 2016. In both the visits, the two countries noted the scope for further enhancing bilateral defence cooperation to a higher level. The Swedish side expressed its willingness to work with India under 'Make in India' initiative and to pursue defence equipment cooperation. The Strategic Dialogue between the two countries was also revived during the Presidential visit to Sweden and the Swedish State Secretary in Prime Minister's Office Mr. Hans Dahlgren visited India in October 2015 for the first round of Strategic Dialogue with the Indian National Security Adviser.

Economic & Commercial relations

Bilateral trade stood at about US\$ 2.2 billion in 2015-16 reflecting a decline of 12% compared to 2014-15. India is Sweden's 19th largest export market and third largest trade partner after China and Japan in Asia. The main Swedish exports to India are pharmaceuticals, paper & pulp products, chemicals, engineering products and telecom equipment. The main items of Indian exports are chemical products, food products, and semi manufactured and manufactured goods. Recent trade figures are tabulated below:

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Year					
India's Exports to Sweden	825.00	686.1	733.4	740.5	683.62
India's Imports from Sweden	1992.00	1681.4	1679.5	1748.0	1484.89
Total	2817.00	2367.5	2412.9	2488.5	2168.51

Source: Department of Commerce, India. Figures ARE in US \$ million and year refers to financial year, i.e, April-March

According to the International Trade Centre, Indian service exports to Sweden were US \$ 797 million and Swedish service exports to India were US \$ 598 million in 2015.

Many Indian IT companies have opened representative offices in Sweden. Indian Pharma and Biotech companies are also present. Aditya Birla Group, Wipro and Bharat Forge are among the other major Indian investors in Sweden. According to rough estimates, the cumulative Indian investment in Sweden is in the range of US \$ 700-800 million.

Many Swedish companies such as Ericsson, Swedish Match (WIMCO), SKF and ASEA (later to become ABB) came to India even before it became independent. Since then numerous other Swedish companies like Atlas Copco, Sandvik, Alfa Laval, Volvo, Astra Zeneca, SAAB, etc., have invested in India. Other leading Swedish MNCs such as transport solution provider Scania, the hygiene and forest products company SCA and retail giants IKEA and H&M are among the more recent entrants. At present there are over 170 Swedish joint ventures wholly owned subsidiaries in India and according to Swedish Statistics, the size of investment is about US\$ 1.2 billion (April 2000 to March 2016).

Cultural & Educational Relations

Indian music, dance, art, literature, films and cuisine are widely appreciated in Sweden. In the absence of a Cultural Exchange Agreement between the two countries, cultural ties are promoted mainly by local associations and by the Embassy with the support of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.

The establishment of Chairs on India Studies at major Swedish Universities – Lund (now discontinued), Gothenburg and Uppsala – have given an impetus to the academic interest in India. Several Swedish universities have established links with Indian educational institutions and regularly send students to India for different programmes. Many Indian students study in Swedish Universities. However, the number has declined after fees were introduced for non-EU foreign students in 2011.

Indian Community

As per latest statistics, there are about 22,800 persons of Indian origin, including 9000 PIO/OCI card holders, and 12,800 Indian passport holders are living in Sweden. They are working in the academic/professional fields or in business/trading.

Useful resources:

Mission's Web: www.indianembassy.se

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EmbassyofIndiaSweden>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/eoistockholm>

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/eoistockholmsweden>

Newsletter: <https://issuu.com/eoistockholm>

Government offices of Sweden: <http://www.government.se>

Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.government.se/government-of-sweden/ministry-for-foreign-affairs>

Swedish Statistics Agency: <http://www.scb.se/en>

Sweden Abroad: <http://www.swedenabroad.com>

Swedish Armed Forces: <http://www.forsvarsmakten.se/en/>

Global India Episode on Sweden: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b1fPppfAja8>