

Embassy of India
Minsk

India-Belarus Bilateral Relations

Political Relations

India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial. India was one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as independent country in 1991. Formal diplomatic relations were established and the Indian diplomatic mission in Minsk was opened in 1992 and Belarus opened its Mission in New Delhi in 1998. Belarus has an Honorary Consulate in Kolkata and Mumbai.

India and Belarus enjoy good understanding and commonality of views on various matters and cooperate with each other in multilateral fora on issues of mutual interest. Belarus has been supportive of India's candidature for a permanent seat at the UNSC. Belarus supported India's candidature for the non-permanent seat of UNSC for the years 2011-12. Belarus also supported India at the NSG Session in Seoul in June 2016. India supported Belarus for its membership in the NAM and other international and multilateral fora like IPU. India's supportive stand on various Resolutions in Geneva and New York targeting Belarus for violation of human rights and restrictions on freedom of expression has been appreciated by Belarus. Belarus recognizes India as an emerging global power and seeks to develop a "strategic relationship" with India.

India and Belarus have maintained high level contacts. Late PM Rajiv Gandhi visited Minsk in 1985 when Belarus was still a part of the Soviet Union. There have been several high level visits from both sides including visits of President Alexander Lukashenko to New Delhi in 1997 and again in 2007 and the Vice President of India to Minsk in 2005 apart from other ministerial level visits and parliamentary exchanges. The Lok Sabha Speaker, Mrs. Meira Kumar visited Belarus in May 2013. EAM visited Minsk in Sept 2009; MoS (Communications & IT) came to Belarus in Jan 2012 to inaugurate the Digital Learning Centre in Minsk and MoS (Commerce & Industry) in 2006, 2012 and 2015. Industry Minister of Belarus visited India in July 2013 for the IGC meeting in New Delhi and Mumbai in Feb 2016 to participate in the 'Make in India' conference. Belarusian First Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Vladimir Semashko accompanied by the Belarusian Minister of Industry visited India to participate in the 4th Global Ministerial Level Conference on Renewable Energy in New Delhi in Oct 2010. Belarusian Foreign Minister visited India in April 2015 for bilateral discussions. In May 2016, a Belarusian Parliamentary Delegation led by Mr. Mikhail Myasnikov,

Chairman of the Council of the National Assembly of Belarus visited India. Recent high level interaction was a meeting between Hon'ble PM and Belarusian President in Tashkent on June 24, 2016 on the sidelines of the 15th Summit of SCO Heads of State. In 2015, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, Hon'ble President of India paid a successful visit to Minsk in June - the first ever Presidential visit from India to Belarus. A number of documents for cooperation in broadcasting, standardization, textiles, securities and a Roadmap for future cooperation were signed during the visit. Also signed were business agreements and MoUs for cooperation in the field of education. India's decision to grant **Market Economy Status** to Belarus and a **US\$ 100 million Line of Credit** were announced during the visit.

The 5th meeting of India-Belarus Foreign Office Consultations (FoC) was held in Minsk on November 22, 2016. Secretary (West), MEA Ms. Sujata Mehta led the Indian delegation to the FoCs. Secretary (West) also met Belarusian FM Vladimir Makei.

Commercial Relations

India and Belarus maintain **comprehensive partnership**. Both countries have established mechanisms for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues through Foreign Office Consultations, Inter-governmental India-Belarus Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology (IGC), Commission on Military Technical Cooperation and Commission on S&T cooperation. The 7th IGC meeting was held in Minsk in Sept 2015. Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (I/C) for Commerce and Industry led the Indian delegation to the meeting. The 7th meeting of India-Belarus Intergovernmental Commission on Cooperation in Science and Technology was held in April 2016 in Hyderabad. The first meeting of India-Belarus Joint Working Group on Textile was conducted on 11th May 2016 in New Delhi.

Two countries have signed a number of Agreements/MoUs on various subjects, namely, trade and economic cooperation, cultural, educational, media and sports, S&T, foreign office consultations, IGC, Avoidance of Double Taxation, Promotion and Protection of Investments and defence and technical cooperation.

Bilateral trade between the two countries remains modest. Two-way bilateral trade in 2015 amounted to US\$ 445 million. The trade balance remains in favour of Belarus primarily on account of imports of Potash. Indian PSU, BHEL, was awarded a contract worth US\$ 55.5 million for the supply and installation of equipment and machinery for the Grodno Power Project. India extended a Line of Credit for the project.

The project completed in 2013 and is running well. In 2011, BelAZ signed an MoU with an Indian company Enrika for establishing a joint venture for servicing the Belarusian dumper trucks in India. Belarus participated in the India International Trade Fair in November 2012 as 'Partner Country' and Belarus was the focus country in the India International Trade Fair (IITF) held from 14-27 November 2016. Representatives of over 50 Belarusian enterprises led by the Deputy Chairman of the Bel Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Belarus visited India to participate in the IITF 2016 in New Delhi. The delegation led by Deputy Chairman, State Executive Committee for Science and Technology of Belarus visited India to participate in the IITF 2016 and also participated in the Day of Belarusian Science held in Delhi in collaboration with the DST.

Department of Commerce sponsored Pharmexcil and Assocham delegations to Minsk in February and March 2016 respectively – Pharmexcil for a Buyer-Seller Meet with Belarusian pharmaceuticals companies and Assocham delegation for participation at Belarus Medica 2016 where India was invited as 'guest of honour'.

Defence cooperation is an important aspect of India's bilateral relations with Belarus. There is an India-Belarus Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation which last met (8th meeting) in May 2016 in New Delhi.

On the sidelines of 5th Session of FOC, an India-Belarus Business Forum was also held which provided a platform for the business communities of two countries to further strengthen the existing trade and economic relations and find out new areas to diversify these relations.

Cultural Relations and Indian community

The Embassy, in association with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus, organized performances by ICCR sponsored Kalbelia Folkdance Group (Dance group from Rajasthan State in India) in Minsk and Molodechno on 30th and 31 August respectively.

India has been assisting Belarus in its human resource development under Gol's ITEC program. ITEC Day 2016 was celebrated on October 07, 2016 at Chancery. Deputy Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Valentin Rybakov, was the Chief Guest at the event. So far, over 270 Belarusian officials and others have been benefitted from this program. For 2016-17, 30 ITEC training slots have been allotted to Belarus.

A diplomat from Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus participated in the FSI conducted 62nd Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) from 27 July to 26 August 2016.

Ms. Anastisia Bulankova, a Belarusian national who studied Hindi in Moscow and later at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra, participated in the Regional Hindi Conference held from 26-27 October organized by the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center, in Moscow.

The Indian community in Belarus is minuscule with 10 families and over 250 students, mostly studying medicine in Belarusian medical universities.

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