

India-Netherlands Bilateral Brief

General

Indo-Dutch contacts go back to more than 400 years. Official relations, established in 1947, have been cordial and friendly. India's economic growth, its large market, its pool of knowledge workers are of interest to the Netherlands. The two countries also share common ideals of democracy, pluralism and the rule of law. Bilateral ties have been marked by strong economic and commercial relations.

Since the early 1980s, the Dutch Government has identified India as an important economic partner. Bilateral relations underwent further intensification after India's economic liberalization in the early 1990s. In 2006, former Prime Minister Balkenende's Government declared India, along with China and Russia, as priority countries in Dutch foreign policy. The successful visit of the Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte to India (5-6 June 2015) set the stage to take bilateral ties to the next level and realize the full potential of the relationship. The highlight of 2017, which was the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic relationship between India and the Netherlands, was the visit of PM Modi to the Netherlands in June 2017. The visit provided a significant boost to the bilateral ties which have become multifaceted and encompass cooperation in various areas.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte visited India from May 24-25, 2018 along with a high-level delegation comprising of Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management, Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation, Minister for Medical Care and Mayor of the city of The Hague. PM Rutte was accompanied by largest ever Dutch trade mission to India comprising over 130 companies/institutions and nearly 200 trade representatives. During this visit, the Netherlands signed the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and became the 64th signatory member country.

Political and Economic Relations

As can be seen above, there have been regular high level visits from both sides. Other important visits in recent times are as follows.

Queen Máxima visited India on May 28-30, 2018 in her capacity as the UN Secretary-General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development. She met Prime Minister Modi in New Delhi and discussed various initiatives taken by the Government of India for enhancing financial inclusion in India. She also met EAM Ms. Sushma Swaraj and discussed the progress that India has achieved in the area of financial inclusion since her previous visit to India in 2014.

On the sidelines of the G20 in Buenos Aries, Prime Minister Modi met Dutch Pime Minister Mark Rutte and Queen Maxima on December 01, 2018.

Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands Mr. Bert Koenders visited India from 6-9 May 2017.

Earlier visits to India by the Dutch HOS/G included: Queen Beatrix (1986 & 2007) and Prime Ministers R.F.M. Lubbers (1987 & 1993), WimKok (1999) and Jan Peter Balkenende (2006). Her Majesty Queen Maxima visited India in June-July 2014, in her capacity as UN Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for

Development. Visits to the Netherlands by Indian HOS/G included: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (1957); Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (1985); President R. Venkataraman (1988); and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh (2004). EAM Shri I.K. Gujral visited the Netherlands in 1990. Foreign Minister Rosenthal visited India in July 2011. Foreign Minister Timmermans visited India in November 2013 on the margins of ASEM FMM. EAM Shri Salman Khurshid led the Indian delegation for the Third Nuclear Security Summit (NSS) hosted by Netherlands in The Hague from 24-25 March 2014. There have been regular Ministerial level visits from both sides (list of visits is attached at **Annex. I**).

There is a mechanism for Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) between India and the Netherlands. The last Foreign Office Consultations was held on May 04, 2018 in The Hague. The earlier FOCs were held in June 2016 in New Delhi, May 2015 in The Hague, June 2014 in New Delhi, January 2011 in The Hague and September 2007 in New Delhi.

A number of Bilateral Agreements and MoUs have been concluded in diverse areas covering economic and commercial cooperation, culture, science and technology and education (The list is attached at **Annex. II**).

In terms of trade and investment, India has strong economic interests in the Netherlands. There are over 200 Indian companies operating in the Netherlands. The Netherlands emerged as the 3rd largest investor in India in 2017-2018 with investments valued at US\$ 2.67 billion across variety of sectors such as services sector, trading, automobile industry, fermentation industries, chemicals and water management. It was the second largest destination for foreign investment by Indian companies, after Singapore with investments worth Rs. 835 billion (approximately US\$ 12.8 billion) in 2017. The top five sectors attracting FDI equity flows from the Netherlands were services sector, computer software and hardware, trading, automobile industry and fermentation industries.

India and the Netherlands have a bilateral trade of US\$ 8.77 billion (April 2017-March 2018). Indian Exports to the Netherlands grew at 14.7%, while Indian Imports grew at 18.2%. During the current financial year, FY 2018-2019 (April to September), total two-way trade stood at US\$6.28 billion. The Netherlands was India's 4th largest trading partner in the EU, after the UK, Germany and Belgium.

The main items of Indian Exports to the Netherlands are Petroleum and related products, apparel and clothing, textile yarn, fabrics, made-up articles, manufactures of metals and iron & steel, organic chemicals and medicinal and pharmaceutical products, electric machinery, telecommunication equipment, general industrial machines and road vehicles, vegetables & fruit, marine products, rice and coffee, tea, cacao, spices etc. Bilateral trade between India and Netherlands grew in India's favour during April-March 2018.

The successful implementation of the electronic Tourism Visa (eTV) in the Netherlands w.e.f. 15 August 2015 has contributed greatly to increased business and tourism flows and people to people contacts. From a single direct flight in 2015, the number of daily non-stop flights between India and the Netherlands increased to 5 in 2018 connecting Amsterdam to Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru. Jet Airways and KLM operate a total of 31 flights per week from the above sectors. Jet Airways has entered into a code-sharing pact with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Delta Airlines.

The Netherlands has identified 9 sectors as key sectors viz. Agriculture, Water management, Ports and logistics, Inland waterways, Healthcare, Science & technology, Urban development, Shipping and Renewable energy. As the Dutch strengths in these sectors match India's needs, these are priority sectors for bilateral cooperation.

Culture and Education

In May 1985, a Cultural Agreement was signed between the two countries, which provides for cooperation and exchanges in education and science, art and culture. An MoU on Cultural Cooperation was signed in June 2017.

Indian Cultural Centre named "The Gandhi Centre" in The Hague was inaugurated on 2 October 2011. The Centre promotes Indian culture through its active calendar of programmes including regular Yoga, Tabla and Hindi classes. In addition to this, the Centre organizes a wide range of diverse cultural activities and programmes, such as music, dance, workshops, movies, documentaries, lectures, celebrations of Indian festivals. It also partners with other local Dutch cultural organizations to promote Indian culture.

The Fourth International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 18 June 2018 at the Museumplein, Amsterdam. The highlight of the event was a talk and meditation session led by His Holiness Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, group session of the Common Yoga Protocol, and a yoga workshop. There was also a separate 'Yoga Hut' featuring seven different schools of yoga, competitions on yoga. Stalls providing advice on yoga, wellness and healthy living and food trucks with vegetarian and vegan food catered to the visitors. The grand finale was a captivating performance titled 'The Soul Shanti Concert' by violin maestro Dr. L. Subramaniam and Bollywood playback singer Kavita Krishnamurthy.

An MoU was signed between ICCR and Leiden University in December 2010 leading to the establishment of an ICCR Chair of Contemporary India Studies at Leiden University since September 2011. Besides Leiden Institute of Area Studies (LIAS), International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) also promotes research on India. An MoU for the extension of the Chair of Contemporary India Studies at Leiden University was signed between ICCR and Leiden University in November 2017. In May 2018, an MoU on collaboration in the field of on the training of diplomats was signed between Indian Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Netherlands Institute of International Relations Clingendael. The Amity Group from India has set up an international school in Amsterdam.

Diaspora

The Netherlands hosts the second largest Indian Diaspora (after UK) in Europe and the largest Indian diaspora community on mainland Europe, totaling around 2,35,000 comprising 35,000 Indians and 2,00,000 Suriname-Hindustani community of Indian origin. The Indian nationals in the Netherlands broadly comprise of businessmen, IT and other professionals and students. The Suriname-Hindustani community is well integrated into Dutch society and is active in all spheres in the Netherlands, including in politics. The former Deputy Mayor of The Hague Municipality, Mr. Rabin Baldewsingh, an influential and charismatic leader belonging to the Suriname-Hindustani community, has been conferred with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) for the year 2014, making him the first member of the Suriname-Hindustani community in the

Netherlands to be awarded the prestigious PBSA. PBSAs have also been conferred on two prominent members of the Indian Diaspora, viz. Mr. Ram Lakhina and Mr. Wahid Saleh, in 2009 and 2011 respectively.

The diaspora forms an important link between the two countries and facilitates people-to-people contacts. The e-Tourist Visa scheme, Know India Programme, Tracing the Roots Programme, India Corporate Internship Programme etc. have played an important role in enhancing and deepening people-to-people contacts.

There are approximately 3,000 Indian students pursuing Bachelors, Masters and Research Courses in various universities in The Netherlands.

Apart from the Dutch, the Indian diaspora evinces keen interest in different aspects of Indian culture. Indian Film Festivals, Food Festivals, Music and Dance Shows organized by local organizers are very popular and attended in large numbers by both the Indian and Suriname-Hindustani community. The diaspora also actively participates actively in events such as the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, which was organized on January 7, 2018 by the Embassy in The Hague.

December 2018

Annex. I

Visits from the Netherlands:

- 1986: Queen Beatrix
- 1987: Prime Minister R.F.M. Lubbers
- 1993: Prime Minister R.F.M. Lubbers
- 1999: Prime Minister Wim Kok
- 2006: Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende
- October 2007: Queen Beatrix
- November 2007: Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Frank Heemskerk.
- February 2008: Transport & Water Mgmt Minister Mr. Camiel Eurlings
- February 2009: Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Frank Heemskerk
- October 2009: Social Affairs & Employment Minister Mr. Piet H. Donner
- February, 2011: Mayor of Rotterdam Mr. A. Aboutaleb
- April 2011: Infrastructure & Environment Minister Ms. Melanie Schultz van Haegen-Maas Geesteranus
- May 2011: Mayor of Amsterdam Mr. E. van der Laan
- July 2011: Foreign Minister Dr. Uri Rosenthal
- November 2011: Minister of Agriculture and Foreign Trade Mr. Henk Bleker.
- December 2011: Mayor of The Hague Mr. Jozias van Aartsen
- March 2012: Mayor of Amsterdam, Mr. E. van der Laan
- May 2012: Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports Ms. Edith Schippers
- September 2013: Minister of Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ms. Lillianne Ploumen
- November 2013: Foreign Minister Mr. Frans Timmermans
- January 2014: Minister of Health, Welfare and Sports Ms. Edith Schippers
- June-July 2014: Her Majesty Queen Maxima, in her capacity as a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Financial Inclusion
- November 2014: Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ms. Lillianne Ploumen
- March 2015: Mayors of Amsterdam (Mr. Eberhard van der Laan) and Amstelveen (Ms. M.M. van 't Veld)
- June 2015: Prime Minister Mark Rutte (accompanied by Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ms. Lillianne Ploumen and Minister for Agriculture Ms. Sharon Dijksma)
- May 2017 : Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Bert Koenders
- May 2018: Prime Minister Mark Rutte (accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Food Quality Ms. Carola Schouten, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Ms. Sigrid Kaag, Minister of Infrastructure and Water Management Ms. Cora van Nieuwenhuizen and Minister for Medical Care Mr. Bruno Bruins
- May 2018: Her Majesty Queen Maxima, in her capacity as a Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General on Financial Inclusion

Visits from India:

- 1957: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru
- 1985: Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi
- 1988: President R. Venkataraman
- 1990: External Affairs Minister Shri I.K. Gujral
- 2004: Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh
- March 2008: Minister of Science, Technology & Earth Sciences Shri Kapil Sibal
- May 2008: Minister of State Food Processing Industries Shri Subodh Kant.

- June 2008: Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Vayalar Ravi
- September 2008: Minister of Law & Justice Shri H.R. Bhardwaj
- November 2008: President ICCR Dr. Karan Singh.
- November 2008: Finance Minister Shri P. Chidambaram
- September 2009: Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Vayalar Ravi.
- May 2010: Minister of State for Communication & IT Shri Sachin Pilot
- September 2011: Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs Shri Vayalar Ravi.
- April 2012: Minister of Shipping, Shri G.K.Vasan
- May 2012: Minister for Agriculture & Food Processing Industries Shri Sharad Pawar
- October 2012: Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri Ghulam Nabi Azad
- May 2013: Minister for Urban Devpt. & Parliamentary Affairs Shri Kamal Nath
- June 2013: Minister of Communications & IT and Law & Justice Shri Kapil Sibal.
- June 2013: Minister of State for Youth Affairs & Sports Shri Jitendra Singh.
- July 2013: Minister of State for Shipping Shri Milind Deora.
- March 2014: External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid
- August-September 2014: Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Shri AkhileshYadav
- November 2014: Minister for Road Transport, Highways & Shipping Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari
- February 2015: Minister for Tourism of the Government of Goa, Shri Dilip Parulekar
- June 2017: Prime Minister Modi
- June 2017: Chief Minister of West Bengal, Ms. Mamata Banerjee
- August 2017: Minister of Food Processing Ms. Harsimrat Kaur Badal
- August 2018 : Minister for AYUSH Mr. Shripad Yesso Naik
- September 2018 : Minister of Food Processing Ms. Harsimrat Kaur Badal

List of Agreements

- Air Services Agreement (May 1951)
- Treaty for the Mutual Surrender of Fugitive Criminals (Anglo–Dutch Treaty of 1898 effected in 1971)
- Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (February 1983)
- Cultural Agreement (May 1985)
- Agreement on Scientific Cooperation (November 1985)
- MoU for cooperation in the field of telecommunications (September 1987)
- MoU on environmental cooperation (January 1988)
- Avoidance of Double Taxation Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (July 1988)
- MoU on cooperation in agriculture and animal husbandry (September 1990)
- Agreement for the promotion and protection of investments (November 1995)
- MoU for investment promotion (February 2004)
- MoU on Cultural Cooperation (October 2007)
- MoU in the field of Ports and Maritime Transport and Logistics (February 2008) - further extended in May 2011 for 3 years.
- MoU on Cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation (March 2008).
- Social Security Agreement (October 2009).
- MoU for establishment of “Long-Term Chair for study of Contemporary India” at Leiden University between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Leiden University (December 2010)
- Letter of Intent (LOI) for Cooperation in areas of Corporate Governance and CSRs (June 2011)
- Revised Protocol amending Convention between India and Netherlands on Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (May 2012).
- MoU on Food Safety between Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and Consumer Product Safety Authority under Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation, Kingdom of the Netherlands (November 2012).
- MoU in the field of Spatial Planning, Water Management and Mobility Management (May 2013).
- MoU on Cooperation in the field of Healthcare and Public Health (January 2014).
- MoU on technical cooperation in the field of the development of sports infrastructure (January 2014).
- MoU on cooperation in Renewal Energy (February 2014).
- MoU on Joint Trade & Investment Committee (November 2014).
- Joint Program of Cooperation on strengthening the bilateral cooperation in the area of Electric Mobility (June 2015).
- MoU on cooperation in the field of Water Management (June 2017)
- MoU on Cultural Cooperation (June 2017)
- Protocol amending the Agreement on Social Security (June 2017).
- Extension of MoU on Technical Cooperation in the field of Spatial Planning, Water Management and Mobility Management (April 2018)
- MoU between Foreign Service Institute (FSI) and the Clingendael Institute (May 2018).

Useful Resources

1. [Website of Embassy of India, the Netherlands:](#)
2. [Embassy of India, the Netherlands on Facebook :](#)
3. [Embassy of India, The Netherlands on Twitter :](#)