

India – Norway Bilateral Relations

1. Political:

Beginning with the first official contact on 21 February 1947 through a telegraphed message from Foreign Minister Halvard Lange to India's Special Envoy V.K. Krishna Menon in Stockholm confirming the Norwegian Government's 'in principle' agreement to establish bilateral relations, India and Norway have been enjoying a cordial and friendly relationship. The two countries respect each other for their commonly shared values such as democracy, human rights and rule of law. In recent years, both countries have been increasingly tapping their bilateral economic and technical complementarities.

Indo-Norwegian bilateral ties are marked by regular **exchanges of high level visits** between the two countries. **President Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid a state visit** to Norway from 12-14 October 2014, first ever state visit from India to Norway. There have also been several **Ministerial level visits from India** to Norway, including those of Shri P. Chidambaram, the then Finance Minister in October 2007; Shri Anand Sharma, MOS for External Affairs Ministry in June 2008 to attend the 3rd India-Norway Joint commission meeting. Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of HRD in July 2008; MOS for S&T and Earth Sciences Shri Prithviraj Chavan in June 2010; Dr. C.P. Joshi, Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in September 2010; Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal, Minister of Earth Sciences, Science and Technology & Parliamentary Affairs, in May 2011; Minister for Shipping Shri G.K. Vasan in May 2011; Shri Pallam Raju, MOS for Defence, in September 2011; and, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister for New & Renewable Energy in October 2011. Shri Kishore Chandra Deo, Minister of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, visited Norway in September 2012 as a follow-up on the MoU signed between the two countries on local governance; Shri B.K. Chaturvedi, Member, Planning Commission visited Oslo to attend a high level meeting on 'Energy and the Post-2015 Agenda' in April 2013; Shrimati Jayanthi Natarajan, Minister of State (Independent Charge), for Environment and Forests visited Norway in May 2013 to attend the Seventh Trondheim Conference on Biodiversity and COP Bureau meeting; Shri Salman Khurshid, Minister of External Affairs, visited Tromso, Svalbard, Oslo in June 2013; Shri V.S Sampath, Chief Election Commissioner visited Norway in September 2013 to observe the Norwegian parliamentary elections.

Visits from the Norwegian side included those of Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg in February 2010 for the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS); Minister of Agriculture and Food Lars Peder Brekk in February 2010; Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Støre in March 2010 to co-chair the India-Norway Joint Commission Session; Minister of Environment and International Development Erik Solheim in March 2010, November 2010 and February 2012; Trade and Investment Minister Trond Giske in October 2010 and May 2012; Minister of Higher Education and Research Ms. Tora Aasland in February 2011; Minister of Local Government and Regional Development, Ms. Liv Signe Navarsete in January 2012; Minister of Government Administration, Reform and Church Affairs, Ms. Rigmor Aasrud in February 2012; Minister of Agriculture Mr. Trygve S. Vedum in August 2012; Deputy Minister for International Development, Mr Arvinn Gadgil in January-February 2013 for the DSDS; Foreign Minister Borge Brende in November 2013 for the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting; Mr Oystein Bo, State Secretary, Ministry of Defence in December 2013; and Mr. Vidar Helgesen, Minister for European Affairs and Chief of Staff to the Norwegian PM and State Secretary Morten Høglund in the Foreign Ministry attended the Norway-Asia Business Summit in Delhi in April 2015. In February 2015, 12 Members of Parliament from Storting (Parliament), led by Mr. Geir Pollesand, Chairman of Standing Committee on Business and Industry visited India. **Norwegian Foreign Minister Mr. Børge Brende** visited India on 2-3 November 2015 for the **5th JCM**, held in New Delhi

India-Norway **Joint Commission** sessions are held under the chairmanship of the respective Foreign Ministers. The Fifth Session of India-Norway Joint Commission was held in New Delhi on 2 November 2015 in Delhi.

Foreign Office Consultations between the two Foreign Ministries are held on an annual basis, alternately in New Delhi and Oslo, at the level of Secretaries. The seventh Session of India-Norway Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was held in Oslo on 24 November 2016.

Director General of the UN Department in the Norwegian Foreign office held first official UN consultations with AS (IO) in New Delhi in January 2014. The second round took place in May 2015 in Oslo.

Norway has extended its support to India's bid for a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. It had also been supportive of India's candidacy for a non-permanent seat in the Security Council for the period 2011-2012.

Joint Working Groups: A number of **Joint Working Groups (JWGs)** have been set up under the auspices of the India-Norway Joint Commission which include: (i) JWG on **Environment**; (ii) JWG on **Science and Technology**; (iii) JWG on **Higher Education**; (iv) JWG on **Hydrocarbons**; (v) JWG on **Culture** (vi) JWG on **Mutual Cooperation on Local Governance** (vii) JWG on **Maritime Matters** and (viii) JWG on **Fisheries**. The JWGs meet regularly for deliberations on mutually beneficial issues in the relevant areas.

Agreements and MOUs: The following Agreements and MoUs have been signed between the two countries:-

S.No	Agreements
1	Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) in 1986; (Revised DTAA signed in February 2011)
2	Air Services Agreement (signed in 1995 with an MoU ratified in 2008)
3	Cultural Agreement (1961)
4	Agreement on Social Security (2010)
5	Agreement on exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports (10/2014)

S.No	MOUs
1	MoU between Foreign Service Institutes of the two countries(2005)
2	MoU on Science & Technology (2006)
3	MoU on Norway – India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) (2006)
4	MoU on Polar Research (2008)
5	MoU on Education and Research (2008)
6	MoU on Cooperation on Climate Change and CDM (2009)
7	MoU on Cooperation in Fisheries (2010)
8	MoU for Mutual Cooperation on Local Governance (2010)
9	MoU between RBI and Financial Services Authority of Norway on cooperation in banking supervision (7/2012)
10	MoU between Indian Ministry of Culture and Munch Museum of Norway (10/2014)
11	MoU between Ministry of Earth Sciences and Research Council of Norway in the field of Earth System Sciences(10/2014)
12	MoU between IISER, Thiruvanthapuram and SINTEF Materials and

	Chemistry(10/2014)
13	MoU between University of Oslo and University of Hyderabad (10/2014)
14	Statement of Intent between DRDO and Norwegian Defence Research Establishment(FFI) (10/2014)
15	MoU between University of Oslo and IIT Kanpur(10/2014)
16	MoU between Council for Scientific and Industrial Research and SINTEF(10/2014)
17	MoU between Indian Council for Medical Research and Research Council of Norway (10/2014)
18	MoU between IIT Kanpur and NILU
19	MoU between University of Hyderabad and University of Bergen(10/2014)
20	MoU between University of Hyderabad and NTNU(10/2014)
21	MoU between University of Agder and Indira Gandhi Tribal University(10/2014)

A Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Norway for the period 2010-15 was signed in Oslo in May 2010. Social Security Agreement signed in 2010 entered into force on 1 January, 2015.

Agreements / MoUs under negotiations: The following Agreements/MOUs are currently under negotiation: (i) Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters (ii) Trade and Investment Agreement between India and EFTA (Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein, Switzerland);

2. Commercial:

Trade: Exports from Norway to India include electronic goods, general industrial machinery, scientific control equipment, artificial resins, plastic materials, non-ferrous metals, while the main items of **export from India** to Norway include transport equipment, apparels, cotton yarn and fabrics, miscellaneous manufactured articles, metals, non-metal mineral items, paper products, cashew, furniture, travel goods, leather items, coffee, tea, spices and footwear.

There has been a substantial growth in economic and commercial relations between India and Norway in recent years especially in areas such as oil and gas, shipping and maritime industries, renewable energy, offshore projects and service sectors. Total Bilateral trade between India and Norway increased from US\$ 974.22 million in 2013-2014 to US\$ 1,264.52 million in 2014-2015. (Source: Ministry of Commerce, GOI, India.)

Investments: Around 90 Norwegian companies are engaged in India either through joint ventures with Indian partners or through wholly owned subsidiaries. Over 100 Norwegian companies have shown interest in possible business prospects in areas such as **ship building, petroleum related services, marine/sub-sea drilling equipment, hydropower, clean energy, and IT services**. ONGC and Reliance Industries have tie ups with Norwegian companies in the petroleum and energy sector. There has also been a trend of Norwegian IT companies to either offshore their business to India or acquire shares in Indian companies.

Norwegian expertise in **maritime operations**, have been in demand in India and the Norwegian **shipping industry** has likewise discovered the potential and economic viability of building vessels in Indian ship yards. More than 30 ships are in the pipeline, being built or delivered from Indian shipyards on orders from Norwegian ship owners. Telenor, Norway's largest **telecom** company, is the majority shareholder in the Indian mobile operator, UNINOR. After severing its ties with Unitech Wireless, Telenor has invested

USD1200 million through its wholly owned subsidiary Telewings Communications in joint venture with M/s Lakshdeep Investments. Other major Norwegian investors in India are (i) SN Power which invested about USD 270 million in 2 **hydroelectric** power projects in Himachal Pradesh, funded by Statkraft & Norfund and (ii) Norway's largest **paint manufacturer**, Jotun which invested approx. USD60 million. DNBNor, the largest Norwegian Bank opened its Representative Office in Mumbai in February 2009.

Indian IT majors like TCS, Infosys, HCL, L&T Infotech, Cognizant and Tech Mahindra have increased their presence in Norway over the last few years due to the existing potential of IT outsourcing contracts in the country.

Indian companies have also invested in Norway over the last few years. One of the largest investments was by Chennai-based Aban Offshore which took over Norwegian drilling company Sinvest in early 2007, in a deal worth around \$ 1.3 billion. Another Chennai-based company, Siva Ventures acquired the Norwegian shipping company, J.B. Ugland Shipping AS for US \$ 300 million in 2008; it also acquired a Norwegian bottled-water company, Isklar AS, in 2010. Tata Motors have bought a 50.3% stake in Norwegian company Miljo Grenland/Innovasjon, which specialises in developing hi-tech batteries for electric vehicles.

FDI: FDI inflows from Norway through RBI/FIPB during April 2000-May 2015 *amounted to* Rs.934.54 crores (approx. 180 million). Norway ranks 37th position representing 0.07% of total cumulative inflows into India. Highest FDI equity inflows have been in Chemicals (other than Fertilizers) at over 40% followed by Printing of Books (Including Litho Printing Industry) at over 13%, Trading at over 10%, Services sector (6%) and Electrical equipments (4%).

GPFG: The market value of Norway's Government Pension Fund Global (GPFG) in 2014 was estimated at Norwegian Kroners (NOK 6431 billion) (approx. US\$1020.8 billion), making it the largest pension fund in Europe and the second largest in the world. Over the last three years, Norwegian Government took policy initiatives to considerably increase investments by GPFG in India at approximately USD 9 billion. At present, these are largely in Equity (58.4%) and Fixed Income Bonds (41.6 %) (*Source: Norges Bank Investment Management, dated 13 March, 2015*).

Science & Technology: During the second meeting of the Joint Working Group on Science & Technology held in Oslo in May 2009, a Programme of Cooperation was signed by the two sides. Three Arctic Missions from India have so far visited Norway, in 2007, 2008 and 2009. **India's Polar Research Station "Himadri"** was inaugurated by S&T Minister Shri Kapil Sibal at Ny Alesund in Svalbard in July 2008. The Research Station was also visited by S&T and Earth Sciences Minister Shri Prithviraj Chavan in June 2010 and his successor Shri Pawan Kumar Bansal in May 2011. External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid visited the "Himadri" research station in June 2013. Teams of our research scientists are regularly visiting the station for conducting research between April and October of each year. The third meeting of the Indo-Norwegian JWG on S&T met in October 2012 at Bergen, Norway. A programme of cooperation for the period 2013-15 was concluded during the JWG.

Health: In pursuance of its commitment to achieving Millennium Development Goals 4 & 5 to bring down infant mortality and improve maternal health, Norwegian Government is supporting programmes in Indian states to the tune of US\$ 80 million over the 2006-2011 period, as part of the Norway India Partnership Initiative. Separately, under bilateral Bio-

Technology co-operation, Norway is providing NOK 50 million for human vaccines research and NOK 15 million for animal and fish vaccines research.

3. Cultural Relations:

Nobel Peace Prize: 2014 Nobel Peace Prize was awarded to Indian child rights activist Shri Kailash Satyarthi, (jointly with Pakistan's Malala Yousafzai) by the Norwegian Nobel Committee on 10 December 2014 in Oslo, for "struggle against the suppression of children and young people and for the right of all children to education."

International Day of Yoga-2016: On 24 June, 2016, Embassy of India celebrated International Day of Yoga-2016 in Oslo. Two Norwegian Yoga teachers led the Yoga performances on stage with around 600 participants, including representatives from diplomatic community, Norwegian MFA as well as Indian and Norwegian community. Apart from Yoga, other activities included a short film on Yoga, a Flute and Tabla recital and local Kathak dance performances. 25 Oslo-based Yoga Schools also participated and put up their stalls to promote Yoga. Overall, the event was highly appreciated.

4. Indian Community

The size of the Indian community in Norway as on January 2014 was **12924 (9485 PIOs and 3439 NRIs)**. Most of the Indians living in Norway are professionals and highly successful in their respective fields. According to Norwegian Immigration Department figures, India has become the leading source of foreign skilled professionals working in Norway. The number of skilled professionals from India has gone up from just 100 in 2005 to around 2000 in 2014.

Visas: More Norwegians are travelling to India for tourism and business purposes. **E-Tourist Visa (eTV)** for Norway has been operationalized with effect from 27 November 2014 and so far, 2884 Norwegians have utilized this facility.

Diplomatic passport-holders are exempt from visa requirement, following the signing of a bilateral Agreement in October 2014.

Useful Links:

Important Links:

Embassy website: <http://www.indemb.no/>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/Indemb_Norway

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/indiainnorway/?ref=hl>

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