

India-Russia Relations

Relations with Russia are a key pillar of India's foreign policy, and Russia has been a longstanding time-tested partner of India. Since the signing of "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in October 2000 (during the visit of Russian President H.E. Mr. Vladimir Putin to India), India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, trade and economy, defense, science and technology and culture. Under the Strategic Partnership, several institutionalized dialogue mechanisms operate at both political and official levels to ensure regular interaction and follow up on cooperation activities. During the visit of the Russian President to India in December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership."

Political Relations

Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism under the Strategic Partnership between India and the Russian Federation. So far seventeen Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Goa from 15-16 October 2016 for the 17th Annual Summit, which produced 19 documents covering cooperation in defence, space, information security, foreign policy, trade & investment, hydrocarbons, shipbuilding, railways, and science and technology. Prime Minister Modi and President Putin also adopted a Joint Statement "Partnership for Global Peace and Stability" and the "Roadmap of Events" to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between India and Russia next year on 13 April. PM Modi and President Putin met earlier this year in Tashkent, on 24 June 2016, on the sidelines of the SCO Summit (Uzbekistan), where they had a separate bilateral meeting.

There are regular high-level interactions between the two countries. Two Inter-Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister (EAM) and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister (DPM), and another on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC- MTC) co-chaired by Russian and Indian Defense Ministers, have been meeting annually. DPM Rogozin visited India to co-chair with EAM the 22nd session of the IRIGC-TEC on 13 September 2016. Earlier, Deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin visited India on 20 August 2016, when he called on PM and also met NSA. Russian Defence Minister, Sergei Shoigu visited India on 26 October 2016 to co-chair the 16th IRIGC- MTC.

On the sidelines of the 14th Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Ministers meeting in Moscow on 18 April 2016, EAM held separate bilateral meetings with DPM Rogozin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. Pursuant to the signing of the Protocol for Consultations between the foreign ministries for the period 2015-16, Secretary (West), Secretary (ER) and Secretary (East) visited Russia for bilateral consultations this year, and the Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov visited India on 7 October 2016 and held consultations with Foreign Secretary, Dr. S Jaishankar. In addition, official level consultations (Secretary/Joint Secretary level) have also been held this year on issues such as disarmament & non-proliferation, Central Asia, European issues, information security, South Asia, UN, BRICS, SCO and RIC. During the 17th Annual Summit, the sides concluded a Protocol for Consultations between the foreign ministries for the period 2017-18.

In order to provide further impetus to the parliamentary ties, Chairman of the State Duma (Lower House of the Russian Parliament) visited India in February 2015 and participated in the 3rd session of the India-Russia Inter-Parliamentary Commission. He also called on the President and Vice-President of India. In April 2016, the then Minister of State for Defence visited Moscow and attended the 5th Moscow Conference on International Security. The Chief Justice of India and the then Minister of Law and Justice participated in the St Petersburg International Legal Forum in May 2016. In June 2016, Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas participated in the 16th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPEIF) and also met his Russian counterpart. In March 2016, the Russian Minister for Emergency Situation co-chaired the first meeting of the India-Russia Joint Commission for cooperation in preventing emergency situation in New Delhi.

During Indian Presidency of BRICS from February 2016, Russia actively participated in various BRICS Ministerial and high official level meetings in India. The Russian President, Vladimir Putin participated in the 8th BRICS Summit and BRICS-BIMSTEC Outreach Summit in Goa on 15-16 October 2016, where the member states adopted the *Goa Declaration*.

Defence Cooperation

India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a simple buyer - seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems. BrahMos Missile System as well as the licensed production in India of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, are examples of such flagship cooperation. During the 17th Annual Summit, the sides concluded agreements on supply of S-400 air defence systems, construction of frigates of the Project 1135.6 and the Shareholders Agreement on the formation of a joint venture to manufacture Ka-226T helicopters in India. The two countries also hold exchanges and training exercises between their armed forces annually. The joint military exercise 'Indra 2016' was held in the Ussiriysk District in Vladivostok from 22 Septmebr-02 October 2016.

The Inter- Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC) co-chaired by the two Defence Ministers and its Working Groups and Sub-Groups review defence cooperation between the two countries. The Russian Defence Minister visited New Delhi for the 16th session of the IRIGC-MTC on 26 October 2016. Air Chief Marshal, Arup Raha visited Russia from 24-29 October 2016.

Economic Relations

Making economic partnership as strong a pillar as other pillars of the strategic partnership between India and Russia is a key priority for the two governments. To promote smoother and greater movement of businessmen, the two countries signed a protocol on 24 December 2015 to simplify visa procedures for businessmen.

In December 2014, the leaders of the two countries set a target of US\$30 billion bilateral trade by 2025. Bilateral trade during in 2015 amounted to US\$ 7.83 billion (decline of 17.74% over 2015), with Indian export amounting to US\$ 2.26 billion and imports from Russia amounting to US\$ 5.57%. Major items of export from India include pharmaceuticals, tea, coffee and tobacco, nuclear reactors & boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, organic chemicals, and electrical machinery and equipment. Major items of import from Russia include pearls, precious and semi-precious stones & metals, nuclear power equipment, electrical

machinery and equipment, mineral oil & products, iron & steels, and optical, precision and surgical equipment.

Indian investment in Russia are estimated to be about US\$ 13 billion which include Vankorneft and TAAS-Yuryakh Tass fields; Imperial Energy Tomsk; Sakhalin I; Volzhsky Abrasive Works Volgograd; and Commercial Indo bank. Russian investments in India total about US\$ 10.5 billion, including Kamaz Vectra in Hosur; Shyam Sistema Telecom Ltd, Sberbank and VTB.

Inter- Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC) is the apex G2G forum to review economic cooperation. It reviews sectoral cooperation under working groups on trade and economic cooperation, priority investments, modernization and industrial cooperation (sub-groups on civil aviation, mining, fertilizer, and modernization), outstanding issues, energy & energy efficiency, science and technology, communications & IT, tourism and culture, and sub-groups on banking & financial matters and on conservation of tigers & leopards. The 22nd session of the IRIGC-TEC was held in New Delhi on 13 September 2016, which was co-chaired by EAM and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin.

India - Russia Forum on Trade and Investment co-chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister of India and the Russian Minister for Economic Development, and India-Russia CEOs' Council are the two primary mechanisms to promote direct bilateral business-to-business contacts between India and Russia. Mechanisms such as India-Russia Business Council (partnership between FICCI of India and CCI of Russia), India-Russia Trade, Investment and Technology Promotion Council (partnership between CII of India and RUIE of Russia), India-Russia Business Dialogue (partnership between CII of India and Russia's Business Council for Cooperation with India) and India-Russia Chamber of Commerce (with focus on SMEs) supplement the efforts to build direct business - to - business ties. In June 2015, India and Eurasian Economic Union (EaEU) signed a joint statement to undertake joint feasibility study for the FTA between India and EaEU.

Hydrocarbons is an active area for exploring cooperation between the two countries. In the second and third quarter of 2016, Indian companies have invested close to US\$ 5.5 billion in Russia's Oil and Gas sector, which included acquisition of 23.9% stake in Vankorneft [at a cost of US \$ 2020.35 million] and 29.9% in Taas-Yuryakh by an Indian Consortium of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (OIL) and Bharat Petro Resources Limited (BPRL) and acquisition of 15% [at a cost of US \$ 1.284 billion] and 11% stake [at a cost of US \$ 930 million] by ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) in Vankorneft from Rosneft Oil Company of Russia. During the 17th Annual Summit, the sides concluded documents between Engineers India Ltd and Gazprom on the Joint Study of a gas pipeline to India and other possible areas of cooperation; Agreement in the area of Education and Training between ONGC Videsh Ltd and Rosneft Oil Company; and Programme of Cooperation (PoC) in the Field of Oil and Gas for the period 2017-18; and the Sale and Purchase Agreement between Rosneft and Essar for acquisition of 49% stake in Essar Oil Limited. The sides are working towards realization of an '*Energy Bridge*' between the two countries, which is based on robust civil nuclear cooperation, LNG sourcing, partnership in the Oil and Gas sector, and engagement in renewable energy sources.

In December 2015, Tata Power signed an agreement with the Russian Ministry of Far East Development for investment projects in energy sector in the region. In October 2016,

Indian and Russian railways signed an agreement on high speed rails in India. In December 2015, Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC), Ranchi concluded agreements with Russian company CNIITSMASH on establishing a Centre of Excellence in India and modernization of HEC's facilities; and Solar Energy Corporation of India signed an MoU with Russian counterpart for constructing solar plants in India.

India participated in Russia's one of the major flagship industrial exhibitions, 'INNOPROM 2016' in Ekaterinburg (Russia) from 11-14 July 2016 as a partner country, where the Indian delegation was led by Commerce and Industry Minister and the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan. They also held a roundtable meeting with the Russian Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev. Ahead of the Annual Summit in Goa in October 2016, Russian Trade & Industry Minister Denis Manturov visited the states of Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra to discuss various investment opportunities across sectors.

Nuclear Energy

Russia is an important partner in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and it recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. In December 2014, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Russia's Rosatom signed the Strategic Vision for strengthening cooperation in peaceful uses of atomic energy between India and Russia. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) is being built in India with Russian cooperation. KKNPP Unit 1 became operational in July 2013, and attained full generation capacity on 7 June 2014, while its Unit 2 attained criticality on 10 July 2016.

On 10 August 2016, PM Modi and President Putin alongwith the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J. Jayalalithaa via video-conference jointly dedicated the Unit-1 of KKNPP to the bilateral friendship between the two countries. On 15 October 2016, the two leaders participated in joint dedication ceremony of Unit-2 of KKNPP and first concrete pour ceremony for Units 3&4. An agreement on localization in India of nuclear equipment was also concluded during the Annual Summit on 24 December 2015. The sides are working to finalize the General Framework Agreement and Credit Protocol for Unit 5&6 by the year end.

Space Cooperation

India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. Last year marked the 40th anniversary of the launch of India's first satellite "Aryabhata" on a Russian (then USSR) launch vehicle 'Soyuz.' In 2007, India and Russia signed a framework agreement on cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, including satellite launches, GLONASS navigation, remote sensing and other societal applications of outer space. In June 2015, the space agencies have signed an MoU on expansion of cooperation in the field of the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes. An agreement was signed between C-DAC and GLONASS for cooperation in technologies based on satellite navigation. On 15 October 2016, ISRO and Roscosmos signed an MoU to establish ground measurement gathering stations for GLONASS and NAVIC in India and Russia.

Science & Technology

The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral Science and Technology cooperation, while the Science Academies of the two countries promote inter-academy exchanges. ILTP during its 25-year long implementation period, supported over 500 joint R&D projects and

setting up of 9 thematic centers in India and Russia that resulted in generation of over 1500 joint publications and many new products, processes, facilities, and research centers besides developing over 10,000 scientific contacts. India-Russia Science and Technology Centre with a branch each in Delhi-NCR and Moscow was set up in 2011-12 in order to promote two-way transfer of technologies and their commercialization.

Two new Programmes of Cooperation in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation and in Biotechnology concluded in October 2013 have become active mechanisms; these have already supported first batch of 11 joint R&D projects in 2014. In December 2014, Indian Council of Medical Research and Russian Foundation of Basic Research entered into an MoU for cooperation in health research. On 8 May 2015, Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Russian Science Foundation signed an agreement to support basic and exploratory research. During the 16th Annual Summit, C-DAC, IISc (Bangalore) and Moscow State University signed an agreement on cooperation in high performance computing. During the 17th Annual Summit, DST and FASO (Federal Agency for Scientific Organization) signed an MoU for cooperation in the field of science and technology.

Cultural Cooperation

There is a strong tradition of Indian studies in Russia. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre at the Embassy of India, Moscow (JNCC) maintains close cooperation with leading Russian institutions, including the Institute of Philosophy (Moscow); Russian State University for Humanities (Moscow); Institute of Oriental Studies (Moscow); Institute of Asian and African Studies at the Moscow State University; School of International Relations at the St. Petersburg University; Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (St Petersburg); Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology & Ethnography (Kunstkamera)- St Petersburg; Far Eastern Federal University (Vladivostok); and Russian Institute for Cultural Research (Krasnodar). There is a Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Indian Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow. About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly teach Hindi to 1500 Russian students. Apart from Hindi, languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions. There is general interest among Russian people in Indian dance, music, yoga and ayurveda. JNCC conducts classes in yoga, dance, music and Hindi for approximately 500 students every month.

There are regular cultural initiatives to promote people-to-people contacts between India and Russia, including reciprocal Years of each others' culture. The President of India inaugurated the Year of Indian Culture 'Namaste Russia' in Moscow on 10 May 2015. About 15 performances in 8 cities were held as part of 'Namaste Russia' across various parts of Russia over 2015. The Embassy with support from regional governments organized week-long celebrations marking the second International Day of Yoga (IDY) covering 70 regions spanning 11 time zones and involving over 50,000 Yoga enthusiasts. During the previous Summit in October, the leaders adopted a 'roadmap of events' to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the establishment of the diplomatic relations between India and Russia with yearlong celebrations beginning early next year.

Indian Community

Indian Community in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 30,000. In addition, about 1,500 Afghan nationals of Indian origin live in Russia. About 500 Indian businessmen reside in Russia out of which around 200 work in Moscow. An estimated 300 registered Indian companies operate in Russia. Majority of Indian businessmen/companies in Russia are involved in trading while some represent Indian banks, pharmaceuticals, hydrocarbon and engineering companies. Tea, coffee, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, rice, spices, leather footwear,

granite, I.T. and garments are amongst the products being imported by these companies from India. There are approximately 4,500 Indian students enrolled in medical and technical institutions in the Russian Federation. About 90% of them pursue medical studies in about 20 universities/institutions across Russia. Hindustani Samaj is the oldest Indian organization in Russia functioning since 1957. Other Indian organizations in Moscow include, Indian Business Alliance, Overseas Bihar Association, AMMA (All Moscow Malayalee Association), DISHA (Indian-Russian Friendship Society), Textile Business Alliance, Bhartiya Sanskritik Samaj, and Ramakrishna Society Vedanta Centre. Embassy of India School in Moscow is affiliated to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan in New Delhi with teachers deputed from India. The School has classes from I to XII and has about 350 students.

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Useful Resources:

Website: <http://www.indianembassy.ru/>

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

Vkontakte: https://vk.com/jncc_moscow

<https://vk.com/eoimoscow>

<https://vk.com/id357635739>

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

Publications:

INDISKY VESTNIK <http://www.indianembassy.ru/index.php/en/indiskiy-vestnik>

Economic & Commerce Newsletter: <http://www.indianembassy.ru/downloads/economic/2015-10-30-e-newsletter-Sept-Oct%202015.pdf>