

Brief of India-Ireland Bilateral Relations

India-Ireland interactions go back to the nineteenth century, when a significant number of Irishmen joined the British Civil Service, colonial medical and engineering services and colonial army regiments in India. During this period, Irish missionaries and educationists also spread out into all regions of India. These links were further strengthened by the connections between the nationalist movements of the two countries since the early years of the 20th century. Leaders of freedom movements of both countries inspired each other. The Prime Minister of India made an official visit to Ireland on September 23, 2015 and met Taoiseach Enda Kenny. The Prime Minister also met the Indian Community in Ireland at a Community Event organised by the Embassy.

Formal diplomatic links between India and Ireland were established in 1947. India opened an Embassy in Dublin in 1951. The Irish Embassy in New Delhi was set up in 1964 and the Honorary Consulates in Mumbai and Bengaluru in 1976 and 2000 respectively. New Honorary Consulates have been established in Chennai and Kolkata in 2010.

The people to people relations between the two countries were further strengthened after the crash of an Air India aircraft – Kanishka – off the southwestern coast of Ireland on June 23, 1985 in a terrorist bombing. The extraordinary level of solidarity, support and assistance extended by the local population to the victims' families created a unique bond. A commemorative stone plaque was installed at the village of Ahakista which lies near the site of the crash and annual commemoration ceremony is organized by locals there. Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr.(Gen) V.K. Singh (Retd) attended the 30th anniversary of the crash held at Ahakista on June 23, 2015.

Since 2005, an Irish Minister has visited India on St. Patrick's Day, the last such visit was that of Minister for Public Expenditure Reforms, Mr. Brendan Howlin in March 2016. Other visits during 2013-15 included visits of Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. James Reilly in March 2015, Minister for Children Ms. Frances Fitzgerald (St Patrick's Day) in March 2013, Minister of State for European Affairs, Mr. Paschal Donohoe to participate in the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi in November 2013, Minister of State in the Department of Education and Skills, Research and Innovation, Mr. Damien English in November 2014 and Minister for

Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mr. Richard Bruton in November 2013 and April 2014.

Major agreements signed between the two countries include (i) Agreement on Air Transport signed in February 1991; (ii) Agreement on Foreign Office Consultations signed in October 1993; (iii) MOU on Joint Working Group on Information Technology signed in April 2000; (iv) Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation signed in November 2000; (v) Agreement on Cooperation in Culture; (vi) Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation and (vii) Agreement on Cooperation between Science Foundation Ireland(SFI) and Indian National Science Academy signed in 2006.

The last Foreign Office Consultations were held in Dublin in February 2015. Bilateral trade between India and Ireland touched US \$ 1.2 billion in 2014-15 as compared to US\$972 million in 2013-14. As compared to 2013-14, exports from India to Ireland increased by 83.34% (total US \$ 760 million) and imports registered a decrease of 4.51% (total US \$ 533 million). Main items of Indian exports to Ireland include textiles, garments and clothing accessories, pharmaceuticals, light engineering goods and chemicals. Major items of Irish exports to India include telecommunications equipment, computer accessories, precision equipment and pharmaceuticals.

Major Indian companies which have presence in Ireland include Wockhardt, Sun Pharma, Reliance GeneMedix Ltd., Infosys, CG Global, First Source, Tata Consultancy Services, HCL, WIPRO, Deepak Fasteners, Jain Irrigation Europe, Aditi Technologies and Synowledge.

Major Irish companies which have presence in India are CRH Taxback Group; Connolly Red Mills, Globoforce, ICON, Kerry Group, Diageo, Glanbia.

Of late, Ireland is becoming a significant destination for Indian students seeking higher education, particularly post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral students in the areas of engineering, technology, medicine, and management. . There are over 1400 Indian students in Irish higher educational institutions.

There is an ICCR Chair on politics and international relations in the Dublin City University. Premier institutions of both countries have been cooperating with each other in the field of science and technology.

About 12,000 Irish tourists visit India every year. Likewise, Ireland has also become major tourist attraction for Indian tourists particularly after the introduction of common British Irish visa scheme. Electronic Tourist Visa facility was extended to Ireland w.e.f. 15 August 2015.

An ICCR-sponsored choir group, Nagaland Singing Ambassadors visited Ireland in November 2014 and another ICCR-sponsored 4-member musical group, Madras String quartet visited Dublin in July 2015.

The 1st International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21st June at St. Anne's Park, Clontarf, Dublin by the Embassy in collaboration with local Yoga institutes and the Indian community. The 2nd International Day of Yoga was celebrated at Áras an Uachtaráin in the presence of Irish President and First Lady. Another celebration was organised at Dartmouth Square Park, Dublin and the third event was held at Wexford, Ireland.

There are about 26,000 Indians or Persons of Indian Origin in Ireland, of whom about 17,000 are Indian citizens. The bulk of the community is in healthcare (doctors and nurses), IT, engineering and senior management positions. The community is well-regarded locally and has integrated well into Irish society.

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

Useful resources: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiainIreland>

Twitter: <https://mobile.twitter.com/IndiainIreland>

August 2016