

## **India-Finland Relations**

### **Political Relations**

Finland and India have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations. In the recent past, there has been a perceptible increase in the level of engagements, both political and commercial, which saw the exchange of the visits of the Prime Ministers of the two countries during the same calendar year (2006). This was followed by a visit by the President of Finland Mrs. Tarja Halonen in January 2007, February 2009, February 2011 and February 2012. Finnish Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen visited India in February 2008 and February 2010, to attend the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI.

In 2013 from Finland, Ms. Krista Kiuru, Minister for Housing and Communications visited India on 15-19 January. During the visit Ms. Kiuru had meetings with Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister of Communications and Information Technology, Shri Kamal Nath, Minister of Urban Development and Parliamentary Affairs, and Mr. Sam Pitroda, Chairman of National Innovation Council of India. Ms. Marja Rislakki, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy and Employment, accompanied by a big delegation, visited India from 15 to 19 April to participate in the Fourth Clean Energy Ministerial (CEM4) held in Delhi on 17-18 April. Ms. Rislakki had meetings with Dr. Farooq Abdulla, Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Mrs. Lakshmi Panabaka, MoS for Petroleum and Natural Gas and senior officials in the Ministry of Power and Ministry of Environment and Forests. Foreign Minister Dr. Erkki Tuomioja visited India on 5-7 May. During the visit he met with EAM and Finance Minister. MOS (PK) hosted a lunch. English version of his book 'Delicate Shade of Pink' was also released in New Delhi. Shri Shashi Tharoor, MoS for Human Resource Development was the Chief Guest at the Book Release event.

In 2013 from India, Minister of State for External Affairs Mrs. Preneet Kaur visited Finland from 10-12 June. She had meetings with Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, Minister for European Affairs and Foreign Trade Mr. Alexander Stubb, Deputy Finance Minister Ms. Tuire Santamäki-Vuori and Vice Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee Mr. Pertti Salolainen. Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Smt. Lakshmi Panabaka visited from 11-14 June. During the visit she had meetings with Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Vapaavuori and State Secretary Ministry of Employment and Economy Ms. Marja Rislakki. From 17-19 June Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Anand Sharma visited and had meetings with Minister of Economic Affairs, Mr. Jan Vapaavuori and Minister for European Affairs & Foreign Mr. Alexander Stubb.

Finland sees in India a large market for its products and a favourable investment destination for its high technology industries whereas India views Finland as an important member of the EU and a repository of modern technology.

## Bilateral Agreements:

India and Finland have the following agreements:

- i. Trade Agreement (1967); replaced by the Economic Cooperation Agreement signed in March 2010.
- ii. Setting up of the India-Finland Joint Commission (1974) (17 meetings have been held so far. The 17<sup>th</sup> session was held in New Delhi on November 24, 2011.)
- iii. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (1983); last amended in January 2010.
- iv. Cultural Agreement (1983)
- v. MOU on Textiles (1993)
- vi. Air Services Agreement was signed in 1995, modified in May 2006.
- vii. Bilateral agreement on Promotion & Protection of Investments was signed in 2002.
- viii. Agreement for Cooperation in the Fields of Science & Technology in 2008.
- ix. Memorandum of Understanding on Information Security in January 2010.
- x. Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Road Transport on May 10, 2010.
- xi. The Social Security Agreement with Finland was signed on June 12, 2012 and ratified by the President of India on June 25, 2012.

## Commercial Relations

Indo-Finnish economic and trade relations have grown steadily in recent years with bilateral trade reaching Euro 1295 million in 2011, after declining a little bit in 2009 due to global slowdown. Following are figures for the past few years:

Value: € million

	2009	2010	2011	2012
Exports from India to Finland	230	349	670	347
Imports by India from Finland	450	599	625	481
Total	680	948	1295	828

Source: Finnish National Board of Customs

Main export items from India have been garments, made ups and textiles accounting for about a third of the exports. Other major items include metals, iron and steel, chemicals, petroleum products and leather. Major imports from Finland include telecommunication equipment, power generating machinery, eclectic and other machinery.

## Investment:

On the investments side, large Finnish companies like Nokia, Nokia-Siemens, Kone elevators, Wartsila, Ahlstron, Elcoteq, Metso, Fortum, UPM have set up manufacturing facilities in India and Finnnode has opened its office in India. Over 120 Finnish companies have operations in India and 30 Indian companies, mainly in the software and consultancy sector, are working in Finland.

## **Cultural Relations:**

The ICCR deputed Yoga teacher is running Yoga classes successfully.

## **Tourism:**

Favoured Finnish tourist destinations in India are Goa and Kerala, though other destinations are also becoming increasingly popular. With the commencement of direct Finnair flights from Helsinki to New Delhi in 2006 the number of Finnish visitors has increased. Finland is among the five countries for which visa on arrival scheme has been made applicable w.e.f. 1st January, 2010. During the winter months (October-March) Finnair operates two to three charter flights a week to Goa, depending on demand. Finnish Tourist Board organised a special workshop on 17 September 2012 to improve cooperation between Indian and Nordic tour operators.

## **Indian Community:**

There are about 5000 Indians in Finland and mainly in the capital Helsinki and the surrounding regions. Majority of the Indians who have settled in Finland are from Punjab. They are mainly engaged in the restaurant business. There are dozens of restaurants serving western food but owned by Indians/PIOs and some restaurants serve Indian food. Few are in garments, textiles, artificial jewelry, Indian provisions and groceries and gift items business. In recent years, a number of young Indians, mainly computer professionals, have joined Finnish high-tech companies such as Nokia, etc. Presently there are about 500 Indian professionals working in Finland for Finnish high-tech companies and Indian software companies like TCS and others based in Finland.

There are also a small number of Indian/PIO academics working in Finnish universities. The number of Indian students at Finnish universities has grown in recent years and currently about 350 Indian students are pursuing higher education in Finland.

### **Important visits from India to Finland**

Prime Minister Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru	1957
Speaker (Lok Sabha) Shri G.S. Dhillon	1957
President Shri V.V. Giri	1971
EAM Shri Swaran Singh	1973
MOS Commerce Shri D.P. Chattopadhyay	1974
MOS Commerce Shri Arif Baig	1978
EAM Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao	1981
Commerce Minister Shri Shivraj Patil	1982
Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi	1983
(Lok Sabha) Shri Balram Jakhar	1986
President Shri R. Venkataraman	1988
MOS Environment & Forest Shri Kamal Nath	1992
MOS Civil Aviation Shri Gulam Nabi Azad	1993
Commerce Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee	1993
Minister of Steel and Mines Shri B.P. Vashya	1997
Speaker (Lok Sabha) Shri P.A. Sangma	1997
EAM Shri Jaswant Singh	1999
Minister for Communication Shri Ram Vilas Paswan	2000

Minister of Power Shri Suresh Prabhu	2002
Speaker (LS) Shri Manohar Joshi	2003
Minister of IT & Communication Shri Dayanidhi Maran	2005
Speaker (Lok Sabha) Shri Somnath Chatterjee	2006
Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh	October 2006
Minister of S&T and Earth Sciences, Shri Kapil Sibal	February 2008
Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri Anand Sharma	June 2008
Minister of Commerce and Industry, Shri Anand Sharma	March 2010
Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shri Kamal Nath	May 2010
Minister for New & Renewable Energy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah	April 2011
Minister of State (I/C) for Environment and Forests, Mr. Jairam Ramesh	May 2011
Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Science & Technology Shri P.K. Bansal led a 10-member Goodwill Delegation of Indian Parliamentarians	June 2011
Minister for Communications, Information and Technology and Human Resource Development, Shri Kapil Sibal	September 2011
Minister of Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh	April 2012
Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt. Preneet Kaur	June 2013
Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Smt. Lakshmi Panabaka	June 2013
Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Anand Sharma	June 2013

### **Important visits from Finland to India**

Prime Minister Mr. Sukselainen	1960
President Mr. Kekkonen	1965
Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Laine	1975, 1985, 1987
Prime Minister Mr. Kalevi Sorsa	1984
Foreign Minister Mr. Väyrynen	1984, 1987
President Koivisto	1987
Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Pertti Salolainen	1988, 1992, 1995
Foreign Minister Mr. Paasio	1991
Foreign Minister Mrs. Tarja Halonen	1996
President Martti Ahtisaari	1996
Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Kimmo Sasi	2000
Environment Minister Ms. Satu Hassi	2001
Environment Minister Mr. Jouni Backman	2002
Foreign Trade Minister Mr. Jari Vilen	2002
Foreign Minister Mr. Erkki Tuomioja	2004, Feb. 2005
Foreign Trade Minister Ms. Paula Lehtomäki	February 2005
Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen	March, 2006
President Mrs. Tarja Halonen (Private)	January, 2007
Minister for Foreign Trade, Mr. Paavo Väyrynen	October 2007
Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen (Private)	February, 2008
President Mrs. Tarja Halonen (Private)	February, 2009
Minister of Economy, Mr. Mauri Pekkarinen	November, 2009
Minister of Communications, Mrs. Suvi Lindén	January 2010
Prime Minister, Mr. Matti Vanhanen (Private)	February 2010
Minister of Defence, Mr. Jyri Hakamies	April 2010

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Alexander Stubb	May 2010
Minister for Foreign Trade & Development, Dr. Paavo Väyrynen	October 2010
Minister of Communications, Mrs. Suvi Lindén	December 2010
Minister of Migration and European Affairs, Ms. Astrid Thors	January 2011
Minister of Environment, Ms. Paula Lehtomäki	February 2011
Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Jyri Häkämies	September 2011
Minister for International Development, Ms. Heidi Hautala	December 2011
President of Finland, Ms. Tarja Halonen (Private)	February 2012
Minister for International Development, Ms. Heidi Hautala	February 2012
Speaker of Finnish Parliament, Mr. Eero Heinäluoma	April 2012
Minister for Housing and Communications Ms. Krista Kiuru	Jan 2013
Minister for Foreign Affairs Dr. Erkki Tuomioja	May 2013

\*\*\*\*\*

**August 2013**