India-Russia Relations

Bilateral ties 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 President 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 Russian President to India in December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a “Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership”. The 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Russian Federation was marked on 13 April 2012.

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 13 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The 13th Annual Summit was held in New Delhi, on 24 December 2012, between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Russian President Vladimir Putin. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and Russian President Vladimir Putin met again on the sidelines of the 5th BRICS Summit in Durban (South Africa) on 27 March 2013. Home Minister Mr. Sushilkumar Shinde, Commerce Minister Mr. Anand Sharma and External Affairs Minister Mr. Salman Khurshid paid official visits to Moscow in April 2013. Commerce and Industry Minister Mr. Anand Sharma led the Indian delegation to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) from 20-22 June 2013.

During President Putin’s visit to New Delhi for the 13th Annual Summit on 24 December 2012, agreements were signed for cooperation in areas such as foreign office consultations, cultural exchange, science, technology & innovations, mutual investments, space and telecommunications. Two Inter-Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister and another on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC- MTC) co-chaired by Russian and Indian Defense Ministers, meet annually. The latest round of IRIGC-MTC and IRIGC-TEC meetings were held in New Delhi on 10 October and 15 October 2012 respectively.

India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a simple buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research and development, joint production and marketing of advanced defence technologies and systems.
BrahMos Missile System, Joint development of the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft and the Multi Transport Aircraft, as well as the licensed production in India of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, are examples of such flagship cooperation.

Russia is India’s standing partner in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and it recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. Construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) Units 1 & 2 (VVER 1000 MW units) is an example of fruitful cooperation between India and Russia. KKNPP Unit 1 has become operational in July 2013, while its Unit 2 is at an advanced stage of construction. Negotiations for the construction of two additional NPPs at Kudankulam (Units 3 & 4) are at an advanced stage.

India and Russia also collaborate in several high-technology space projects. Under the 2004 Inter-Governmental Agreement on “Cooperation in the area of exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes”, Russia and India cooperate in Moon Mission projects such as “Chandrayaan-2”. In April 2011, the jointly developed Indian-Russian Student Satellite “Youthsat” was successfully launched by India on a PSLV rocket.

Commercial relations

Bilateral Trade has been growing steadily from US $ 7.5 bn (2009) to US $ 8.5 bn (2010), to US $ 8.9 bn (2011) and to US $ 11.04 bn (2012). During January - May 2013, the bilateral trade amounted to US $ 3.9 bn. India’s exports to Russia amounted to US $ 1.3 bn while imports from Russia amounted to US $ 2.6 bn. The two-way investment between the two countries stands at approximately US$ 7.8 billion.

Both sides acknowledge vast potential for an increase in bilateral trade volumes and investment, given the respective sizes of the Indian and Russian economies, as also the untapped economic complementarities. In 2009, both sides set the target of US $ 20 bn bilateral trade by 2015. Special efforts are being made in the fields of energy, pharmaceuticals, IT, steel, hydrocarbons, diamonds aerospace, fertilizers, and food products.

India - Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister of India and the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, is the main institutional mechanism supervising economic cooperation. It integrates six working groups on economic and trade cooperation, modernization and industrial cooperation, energy, tourism and culture, science and technology, and IT. The 18th IRIGC-TEC meeting was held in New Delhi on 15 October 2012. An inter-sessional meeting of IRIGC-TEC was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Mr. Salman Khurshid and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Mr. Dmitry Rogozin on 29 April 2013 in Moscow.
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. The last meeting of the India - Russia Forum on Trade and Investment was held on 15 October 2012 in Moscow. 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 the Business Council for Cooperation with India of Russia) and India - Russia Chamber of Commerce (with focus on SMEs) supplement the efforts to build direct business - to - business ties. In June 2013, the 4th India-Russia Business Dialogue was held within the framework of the annual St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF). A meeting of India - Russia CEOs’ Council was also held in June 2013 in St. Petersburg.

Science & Technology Cooperation

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 which supports collaborative research in basic and applied sciences has resulted in establishment of 9 thematic centers in India and Russia and implementation of about 500 projects. In 2010, ILTP was extended for another 10 years with a renewed mandate “innovation led technology programme”. 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 transfer of technologies developed jointly or independently by the scientists of the two countries.

Cultural Cooperation

The strong tradition of Indian studies continues in Russia. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center at the Embassy of India, Moscow (JNCC) maintains close cooperation with all 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, Kazan Federal University, Kazan and Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok. There is a Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Indian Philosophy at the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow, while a Chair of Contemporary Indian Studies is at the Russian State University for Humanities, Moscow. Proposals to establish Chairs of Indian studies at Kazan Federal University, Kazan and Volgograd State University, Volgograd are currently under ICCR’s consideration.

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. Year of Russia was celebrated in India in 2008 and the Year of India was marked in Russia in 2009. 150\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore and a mini Festival of Indian Culture were celebrated in Russia in 2011. During 2012, the Embassy of India, Moscow organized several academic, cultural and other events to mark the 65\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the Russian Federation. A Festival of Russian Culture was organized in India in 2012. “Days of Moscow in New Delhi” were held from 26- 29 October 2012.

**Indian Community**

Indian Community in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 15,000. In addition, about 1,500 Afghan nationals of Indian origin live in Russia. About 500 Indian businessmen reside in Russia including about 200 businessmen who 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 AMMA, DISHA, Indian Business Alliance, Overseas Bihar Association, 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 360 students.

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