

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 15 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia with the 15th Annual Summit held in New Delhi during the visit of President Putin to India on 11 December 2014. During the Summit, 20 documents were signed covering cooperation in nuclear energy, defence, hydrocarbons, science & technology, trade and investment etc. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Putin also adopted a Joint Statement "Druzhba-Dosti: A Vision for strengthening the Indian-Russian Partnership over the next decade." Besides the Annual Summit meeting in December 2014, our PM met the Russian President on the sidelines of the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa in Russia on 8 July 2015. The Indian President participated in the commemoration of the 70th anniversary of victory in the World War II on 9 May 2015 in Moscow, and on the sidelines held a bilateral meeting with President Putin.

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, meet annually. External Affairs Minister visited Moscow to co-chair the 21st session of the IRIGC-TEC on 20 October 2015. During the visit, EAM met her Russian counterpart. The Foreign Ministers of India and Russia had met earlier this year on the sidelines of the Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Ministers meeting in Beijing on 2 February 2015. Foreign Secretary visited Moscow, on 19 October 2015, and held Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) with the Russian First Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov and Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov.

Chairman of the State Duma (Lower House of the Russian Parliament) visited India in February 2015 to co-chair with Lok Sabha Speaker the 3rd session of the India-Russia Inter-Parliamentary Commission. He also called on the President and Vice-President of India. In March 2015, Russian Minister of Telecom and Mass Communication, Nikolay Nikiforov visited Delhi, where he met his Indian counterparts the Minister of Communication and IT, and the Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting. In April 2015, Indian Minister of State for Defence visited Moscow and attended the 4th Moscow Conference on

International Security and also addressed the Assocham-Sberbank Conference on Defence Industry Cooperation. The Chief Justice of India and the Minister of Law and Justice participated in the St Petersburg International Legal Forum in May 2015. In June 2015, Commerce and Industry Minister visited St Petersburg to participate in the 15th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPEIF) and also met the Russian Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr. Denis Manturov. In September, Russian Interior Minister, Vladimir Kolokoltsev visited India and held a bilateral meeting with our Home Minister.

Russia assumed the BRICS Presidency in April 2015, and since then, it has been organizing a number of events and meetings under the BRICS format. The Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change visited Moscow for the BRICS Environment Ministers' Meeting on 21 April; Secretary (East) attended the BRICS Consultations on Middle East and North Africa in Moscow on 22 May; National Security Adviser visited Moscow to participate in the 5th Meeting of BRICS High Representatives for Security Issues from 25 - 26 May; and Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs participated in the BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Moscow on 8 June 2015. PM participated in the 7th BRICS Summit in Ufa in Russia on 8-9 July, as well as the SCO Plenary, where a decision on starting the process for India's entry into the Organization was taken. In October, Indian MoS for Home Affairs and Agriculture visited Russia to participate in BRICS events. During her visit to Moscow on 20 October, EAM participated in the BRICS Industrial Ministers meeting.

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, 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. Last year in June, the Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the Russian-built aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya at a special ceremony off the coast of Goa. The two countries also hold exchanges and training exercises between their armed forces annually. An Indian contingent participated in the military parade in Moscow on 9 May 2015 during the 70th anniversary of the victory in the World War II.

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, Sergei Shoigu visited New Delhi for the last meeting (14th session) of the Commission on 21 January 2015 to review the ongoing cooperation and future opportunities for progressing bilateral defence cooperation. In December 2014, the two governments signed the Agreement for Training of Indian Armed Forces Personnel in the Military Educational Establishments of the Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation.

Economic Relations

Enhancing trade and economic cooperation between India and Russia is a key priority for the two governments. During 15th Annual Summit, the two leaders set a target of US\$30 billion bilateral trade by 2025. Bilateral trade during in 2014 amounted to US\$

9.51 billion, with Indian export amounting to US\$ 3.17 billion (an increase of 2.6 % over 2013) and imports from Russia amounting to US\$ 6.34 billion (decline of 9.2 % over 2013). Major items of export from India include pharmaceuticals, miscellaneous manufactures, iron & steel, apparels, tea, coffee and tobacco. Major items of import from Russia include defence and nuclear power equipment, fertilizers, electrical machinery, steels and diamonds.

Indian investment in Russia are estimated to be about US\$ 8 billion which include Imperial Energy Tomsk; Sakhalin I; Volzhsky Abrasive Works Volgograd; and Commercial Indo bank. Russian investments in India total about US\$ 3 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 21st session of the IRIGC-TEC was held in Moscow on 20 October 2015.

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. The 8th India-Russia Forum on Trade & Investment was held in New Delhi on 5 November 2014. During the 15th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF) 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 May 2014, ONGC and Rosneft signed an MoU for bilateral cooperation in subsurface surveys, exploration, appraisal and hydrocarbons production in the offshore Arctic region of Russia. In June last year, a Russian company Gazprom International signed an MoU with Oil India Limited for cooperation in the oil and gas sector which include joint exploration, training, development of oil fields and sharing of information. In December 2014, Rosneft signed an MoU regarding the possibility of a long-term contract with the Essar group for supply of crude oil. In July 2015, Essar and Rosneft announced the signing of a preliminary agreement to acquire 49% stakes in Essar's Vadinar Oil refinery and supply of crude oil to Essar over 10 years. In September 2015, OVL signed an agreement with Rosneft to acquire 15% stakes in Vankorneft project.

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 is in the process of commissioning in the later part of 2015. India and Russia have signed a General Framework Agreement on KKNPP Units 3 & 4 and subsequent contracts are under preparation. Secretary, DAE visited Moscow on 9 June to review the wider cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Space Cooperation

India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. This year marks 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.

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.

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, Kazan Federal University, 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 are planned as part of 'Namaste Russia' across various parts of Russia over 2015. On 21 June 2015, the first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was organized across Russia covering more than 60 regions with over 250 events and involving about 45000 Yoga enthusiasts.

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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