

INDIA-ITALY BILATERAL RELATIONS

Italian port cities were important trading posts on the ancient spice route. The Venetian merchant Marco Polo, during his travels to the east, travelled to India in the 13th century and wrote about his experiences.

2) Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore visited Italy in May-June 1926. Mahatma Gandhi visited Rome in December 1931 on his way back to India from the Round Table Conference in London. Indian troops, serving with the British Indian Army, were deployed in Italy during World War II, fighting against the Germans and Mussolini's forces.

POLITICAL RELATIONS

3) India and Italy are ancient civilizations with rich cultural heritage. Diplomatic relations between India and Italy were established in 1947. In 2023, both countries celebrated the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. The list of high level VVIP visits exchanged last year is below.

4) In October, 2021 Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid his first official visit to Italy to attend the G20 Summit in Rome. PM met then Italian Prime Minister Draghi. Both sides announced a Strategic Partnership on Energy Transition and a Statement of Intent on Textiles cooperation. PM visited Piazza Gandhi and paid floral tributes to Gandhiji's bust.

5) On the 2-3 March 2023, PM Meloni paid her first ever state visit, to India, and was Chief Guest at Raisina Dialogue. During the visit, India-Italy bilateral relations were elevated to a Strategic Partnership. Both sides agreed to collaborate in cyber security, innovation, defence, outer space, green economy, energy security and transition, defence co-production and co-innovation, blue economy. A start-up bridge between Indian and Italian start-ups were established.

6) PM Meloni participated in the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September, 2023. She met PM Modi and discussed enhancing cooperation in defence & new and emerging technologies.

7) PM Modi held a telephone conversation with PM Meloni on the occasion of 79th anniversary of Italian Liberation Day in April, 2024. PM thanked for the invitation extended to G7 Summit Outreach Session in Apulia, Italy in June, 2024 and conveyed his whole hearted support to Italy's G7 Presidency.

8) Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani participated in G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in New Delhi, and met EAM and reiterated commitment to implement the Joint Plan of Action 2020-2024.

Political consultations

9) External Affairs Minister of India (EAM), Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Italy from 02-03 November 2023, his first bilateral visit to Italy. EAM and FM Tajani reviewed the Strategic Partnership. Both sides signed agreements on Migration and Mobility Partnership, and Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation for the period 2023-27.

10) The last Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in Rome in February, 2022 co-chaired by Secy (West) from Indian side. Hon'ble President of Italian Senate, Mr. Ignazio La Russa and Hon'ble President of the Chamber of Deputies, Mr. Lorenzo Fontana participated in the Parliamentary Speakers' (P20) Summit in New Delhi. The India-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Group was reconstituted in 2022 with Senator Giulio

Terzi as the new Chairman. Senator Terzi participated in the Raisina Dialogue in Delhi in February 2024.

Cooperation in Multilateral bodies

11) Italy is the first non-tropical country to join ISA, CDRI, India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA) and IPOI.

Economic Relations

12) Italy is India's 4th largest trading partner in EU after Germany, Belgium and Netherlands. Bilateral trade in 2022-23 crossed US\$ 14.253 billion with our exports at US\$ 8.691 billion. Italy ranks 17th in terms of FDI inflows into India during April 2000 to March 2023 with a US \$ 3.5 bn (DGFT data) and Euro 6.8 bn (ISTAT data). The top sectors attracting FDI - Automobile (29.8%), Trading (17.1%), Industrial Machinery (5.6%), Services (5.1%), Electrical Equipment (4.6%).

Bilateral Trade

(Values in USD million)

Year	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (April - February)
India's exports to Italy	4,735.74	8,180.76	8,691	7,940
India's imports from Italy	3,862.05	5,048.47	5,562	5,280
Total Trade	8,597.79	13,229.22	14,253	13,220
Trade Balance	873.69	3,132.29	3,129	2,660

13) Indian companies in Italy are mainly in IT, electronics and engineering sectors. Major Indian companies in Italy are: Titagarh Industries, TCS, Mahindra, Ranbaxy, Zydus Cadila, Himatsingka Seide, Varroc Group, Endurance Technologies, Gammon, Aditya Birla, Sun Pharma etc. Around 600 Italian companies are present in India, representing sectors such as fashion and garments, textiles and textile machinery, automotive and automotive components, infrastructure, chemicals, energy, confectionery, insurance, etc.

14) In April, 2023, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce and Industry (CIM), Shri Piyush Goyal visited Italy to discuss bilateral trade and investment opportunities.

15) Hon'ble Minister of State for Textiles and Railways (MoSTR), Smt Darshana Jardosh, visited Italy in June 2023 to participate in Integrated Textile and Garment Manufacturing Value Chain (ITMA) 2023. A large business delegation anchored by Confederation of Indian Textiles Industries (CITI), participated in the exhibition.

DEFENCE

16) Indian Army has a unique historical connect with Italy. The 4th, 8th and 10th Indian Divisions, with more than 50,000 troops, played a significant role in advances of the allied forces for the liberation of Italy in the Second World War. Out of the twenty Victoria Crosses awarded in Italian Campaign, six were awarded to Indians.

17) Defence cooperation has expanded to service to service exchanges and visits of respective ships to ports in India and Italy.

18) Our Raksha Mantri (RM) visited Italy in October, 2023 and held bilateral discussions with his Italian counterpart H.E. Mr. Guido Crosetto. Both sides signed an MoU on defence cooperation which enhanced the bilateral strategic partnership. RM

interacted with CEOs from leading Italian companies. He paid tributes at Naik Yashwant Ghadge Memorial and interacted with Indian community in Montone.

19) On 5 February, India - Italy Defence Industry Seminar in Rome saw participation of H.E. Mr. Matteo Perego di Cremona, Undersecretary of State to Ministry of Defence was Chief Guest along with, AIAD - the Industry Association of Italy, Italian MoD and CEOs of major defence industries participated.

20) In 2023, Italy joined Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI)'s Science and Technology Pillar, the Italian Navy Ship (*ITS Morosini*) made a port call in Mumbai in August, 2023. Indian Navy Ship INS Sumedha held Maritime PASSEX Exercise along with ITS Morosini off the coast of Sardinia in April, 2023. Italian Navy also participated in the MILAN 2024 Naval Exercises held off the coast of Vishakapatnam in February, 2024.

21) Lt Gen Luciano Portolano, Secretary General of Defence visited India from 11-15 March 2024 to co-chair with Defence Secretary the 10th Joint Defence Committee (JDC) & MCG meetings in New Delhi.

Tourism & Connectivity

22) ITA Airways (previously Alitalia) operates direct flights from Rome to New Delhi everyday Spice Jet (Milan-Amritsar) and Air India operate direct flights between Delhi and Milan. Italian low-cost airline Neos Air began direct flight operations from Bergamo to Amritsar thrice a week and Rome to Amritsar once a week.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

23) Department for Science and Technology (DST) in collaboration with International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste instituted the DST-ICTP Ramanujan Prize in Mathematics for developing countries annually. Prof. Mohamad Moustafa of Senegal was awarded the prize for 2022.

CULTURAL COOPERATION

24) Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation for the term 2023-27 was signed in 2023.

25) The Embassy organized the 9th International Day of Yoga in the iconic Circo Massimo with participation of the diplomatic corps, Indian and Italian community. IDY celebrations were also organized in Bucine, Florence and Turin.

26) A 8-member ICCR cultural troupe, "*Panihari Lok Sangeet*" performed Rajasthani folk dances in Terranova, Aprilia, Bologna and Anzio cities for the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in July, 2023.

27) The first ever Diwali concert was organized in the Presidential Office/Residence in Quirinale last year. The Italian Hinduist Union organized similar celebrations in the Italian Senate. The River to River Film Festival which showcases Indian films, was held in December, 2023 in Florence.

EDUCATION

28) Currently, more than 6,709 Indian students are pursuing higher education in Italy. Embassy has been regularly interacting with the Indian student community in Italy by organizing Indian Students Annual Day event in Rome.

29) There is a long standing tradition in Italy with several scholars taking keen interest in studying Indian languages like Hindi, Tamil, Sanskrit, etc. Many Italian

Universities are offering courses in Indian disciplines.

Indian Diaspora:

30) The Indian community in Italy is estimated at 2 lakhs including PIOs. According to official Italian data (2019), there are 1.62 lakhs legal Indian migrants accounting 4.4% of the non-EU citizens and 5th largest foreign community in Italy. Most of the Punjabi/Sikh diaspora are employed in dairy farming and agriculture. A significant amount of NRI remittances were also recorded from Italy to India in recent years.

31) There are many religious institutions, including Temples and Gurdwaras (around 80) and Sikh Jathebandis. Sikh community is the largest Indian diaspora followed by Kerala community. The Kerala community members are largely employed in service sector at hotels, restaurants, and as care-takers for elderly people. Many are engaged in theological studies in the Vatican.

32) The Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) was signed during EAM's visit to Italy in November, 2023 to facilitate safe and legal migration of seasonal and non-seasonal workers, researchers, professionals and academicians. The 2nd India-Italy Consular Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 29 February, 2024.

ANNEXURE-I

Some of the High Level Ministerial visits from India to Italy and vice-versa in the last one year are as follows:-

Incoming visits:-

- (i) Shri Piyush Goyal, Hon'ble Commerce and Industries Minister, 12-14 April, 2023.
- (ii) Smt. Darshana Jardosh, MoS for Textiles and Railways, 7-11 June, 2023.
- (iii) Shri. Nityananad Rai, MoS for Home Affairs, 29-30 September, 2023.
- (iv) Shri. Rajnath Singh, Hon'ble Minister for Defence, 9-10 October, 2023.
- (v) Dr. S. Jaishankar, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister, 1-2 November, 2023.

Outgoing visits:-

- (i) Dr Matteo Perego di Cremona, Undersecretary of State to the Ministry of Defence, February, 2023.
- (ii) Mr. Giancarlo Giorgetti, Minister for Economy and Finance, G20 Finance Ministers meeting in Bengaluru, 24-25 February, 2023.
- (iii) PM Giorgia Meloni, State visit, March, 2023.
- (iv) Mr. Antonio Tajani, DPM and Foreign Minister, 2-3 March, 2023.
- (v) Mr. Francesco Lollobrigida, Minister for Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, 19 June, 2023.
- (vi) Mr. Giuseppe Valditara, Minister for Education and Merit, 22 June, 2023.
- (vii) Mr. Gennaro Sangiuliano, Minister for Culture, 26 August, 2023.
- (viii) PM Giorgia Meloni, G20 Leaders' Summit, September, 2023.
- (ix) Mr. Ignazio La Russa, President of the Italian Senate and Mr. Lorenzo Fontana, President of the Italian Chamber of Deputies, 13-14 October, 2023.
- (x) Mr. Edoardo Rixi, Deputy Minister for Infrastructure and Transport, 16-17 October, 2023.