India-Poland Relations

The historical perspective

A 1596 letter from Goa by K. Pawlowski has the first reference to India in Polish. In 1820, Polish historian Joahim Lelewel completed his “The Ancient History of India”. The Society of the Friends of India was founded in Warsaw in 1936, and soon after the Polish-India Cultural Association established in Kolkata under the patronage of Rabindranath Tagore.

2. Since the 15th century, a number of Polish writers, soldiers and missionaries have visited India. During the 19th century, several Sanskrit classics were translated into Polish and a "History of Ancient India" in Polish published in Europe. A Chair of Sanskrit was set up at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow in 1891 and a strong tradition of Indological studies and research in Indian languages and literature has developed at the Universities of Krakow, Warsaw, Wroclaw and Poznan. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Polish painter Norblin was commissioned by the Maharaja of Jodhpur to decorate the Umaid Bhavan Palace, where his paintings can still be seen. Feliks Topolski’s oil painting of Mahatma Gandhi’s assassination has adorned Rashtrapathi Bhawan for decades.

3. Indo-Polish relations are thus longstanding, and friendly, based on pragmatism and cooperation. There are no areas of disagreement. The Poles admire Indian culture, spirituality, traditions. Thousands of Poles visit India every year for a firsthand encounter with the world’s largest democracy.

4. Two prominent Poles Maurice Frydman (Swami Bharatananda) and Wanda Dynowska (Umadevi) were close to leaders of our independence struggle (both became Hindus and passed away in India). They started the Indo-Polish Library, translating Indian classics into Polish thus introducing a whole generation of Poles to the civilization of India.

5. Poland is the largest country in Central Europe, a member of NATO since 1999 and of the EU since May 2004. With its transition to a democratic polity and market economy, high growth over the last decade, its size and strategic location and Poland’s deep sense of history and culture, Poland seems destined to play a key role in the region and in Europe’s future.

6. Poland markets itself as an attractive gateway to the EU and CIS markets. It is already India’s largest trading partner in Central Europe.

7. There are Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi streets in Warsaw and Krakow. During World War II, the then Jam Sahib (Ruler) of Nawanagar (now Jamnagar) sheltered some 6,000 Polish women and children “released” from Siberia, They lived in India for six years in total freedom and dignity, establishing their own schools and businesses. This is the genesis of the World Association of Poles from India, with over 400 members in several countries. The Association organizes a
Congress biennially, the last in August 2010 in Poznan.

**Political Relations**

8. With diplomatic relations established in 1954, India opened its Embassy in 1957. During the Communist era, bilateral relations were close and cordial, with regular high level visits, planned trade and economic interaction through state trading organisations underpinned by the rupee clearing arrangements, inter-governmental cooperation in defence and science and technology and cultural exchanges.

9. After emerging from the Eastern Block, Poland’s priorities are NATO and EU. However, Polish officials reiterate that they regard India as a mature democracy and wish to deepen relations with it.

10. Poland supports India’s claim to Permanent membership of a reformed and expanded UNSC.

**Important bilateral treaties and agreements:**

i) *Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments* (7 October 1996, Warsaw)

ii) *Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation* (21 June 1981, Warsaw)


iv) *Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology* (12 January 1993)

v) *Agreement on Cultural Cooperation and subsequent Cultural Exchange Programmes (CEP):* (March 1957, New Delhi).

vi) *Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Organised Crime and International Terrorism:* (February 2003)

vii) *Agreement on Defence Cooperation* (February 2003)

viii) *Extradition Treaty* (February 2003)

ix) *Agreement on Economic Cooperation between India and Poland* (19 May 2006, Warsaw)

x) Bilateral Agreement on Shipping (1960)

xi) Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health Care and Medical Science (April 2009, Warsaw)

xii) Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Tourism (April 2009, Warsaw)
**Bilateral visits**

**Head of State/Government**

**To Poland:**

June 1955: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru  
October 1967: Prime Minister Indira Gandhi  
June 1970: President Varahagiri Venkata Giri  
June 1979: Prime Minister Morarji Desai  
November 1986: President Giani Zail Singh  
October 1996: President Shankar Dayal Sharma  
April 2009: President Pratibha Devisingh Patil

**To India:**

1957: Prime Minister Jozef Cyrankiewicz  
January 1973: Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz  
1977: First Secretary of PUWP Edward Gierek  
February 1985: First Secretary of PUWP Gen. Wojciech Witold Jaruzelski  
March 1994: President Lech Walesa  
January 1998: President Aleksander Kwasniewski  
March 1999: President Aleksander Kwasniewski (on transit)  
February 2003: Prime Minister Leszek Miller  
February 2004: President Aleksander Kwasniewski (on transit)  
September 2010: Prime Minister Donald Tusk

**Recent Visits:**

11. Foreign Minister of Poland Mr. Radoslaw Sikorski visited India on 11-12 July 2011 and held discussions with External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna and Commerce and Industry Minister Shri Anand Sharma.

12. Minister of Coal Shri Sriprakash Jaiswal visited Poland on 20-22 June 2011 and held discussions with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Poland Mr. Waldemar Pawlak.

**Trade & Economic relations:**

**BILATERAL TRADE IN US$ MILLION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>INDIA’S EXPORTS</th>
<th>INDIA’S IMPORTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>140</td>
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<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>94</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>367</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>473</td>
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<td>Year (Jan-Sep)</td>
<td>Value 1</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>700</td>
<td>162</td>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>1035</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 (Jan-Sep)</td>
<td>1064</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Central Statistical Organisation, Poland

Not included in these figures are Indian items imported into Poland by multinational companies, international corporations and hypermarket chains through their centralised buying agencies in Western Europe. Some importers prefer to source Indian goods through Dubai or Germany.

**INDIAN INVESTMENTS IN POLAND:**

13. Major recent Indian investments in Poland include Arcelor Mittal Steel Poland SA in Katowice, Videocon (acquired from Thomson –TV picture tube mfg facility in Piaseczno near Warsaw.), Escorts (Farmtrac Tractors Europe Sp.z o.o), Strides Arcolab in Pharmaceuticals, Uflex in packaging material plant, Rishabh Instruments (acquired in June 2011 Lumel, a state owned Polish company in the field of Industrial Automation equipments) Reliance Industries (Trevira- manufacturing polyester fibres), Ranbaxy, VSNL Teleglobe, Essel Propack. (speciality packaging tubes), I Services companies like KPIT Cummins, Zensar Technologies Ltd, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), HCL Technologies, Infosys and Wipro, Genpact – GE money, Jindal Stainless, Tata Tetley Lambda Therapeutics Research, Uflex Limited, Berger Paints India, Sylvania Havells India Ltd., Tata Motors, VVF Ltd., Mumbai, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd, Novo Tech Sp. z o.o,

14. Polish companies that operate in India include Toruńskie Zakłady Materialów Opatrunkowych (TZMO) in Dindigul (manufacturing hygiene sanitary products), Can-Pack Poland in Aurangabad (manufacturing metal packaging) and Geoﬁzyka TORUN (group PGNiG) doing oil extraction/exploration services.

**Science and Technology**

15. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) have ongoing scientific exchange programmes with the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN).

**Education**

16. There is a strong tradition of Indology studies in Poland. Polish scholars translated Sanskrit classics into Polish in the 19th Century, with the first Chair of Sanskrit established at Jagiellonian University (Krakow) in 1893. The University has an active Indology Department with a popular 5-year post-graduate course in Indology. Hindi is also taught.
17. The Indology Department of the Oriental Institute at the University of Warsaw, established in 1932, is the biggest centre for Indian studies in Poland. The ICCR funds two Indian professors teaching Hindi and Tamil at Warsaw University and a Tamil Professor at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. The first Indology Conference for Central and East European Countries was held in Warsaw in September 2005.

18. Centre for Contemporary India Research and Studies (CCIRS) inaugurated in January 2010 is an interdisciplinary institute of international relations under University of Warsaw. It is based on cooperation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), European and Indian universities and institutes. The project funded by the EU is aimed at strengthening knowledge about contemporary India business and politics.

Culture

19. The Embassy, in cooperation with the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, regularly organises cultural performances in Poland, including a painting exhibition ‘Women by Women’ in six cities in Poland from October 2006 to August 2007. Recent Indian cultural troupes include Aditi Mangaldas (Kathak), Santoor (Tarun Bhattacharjee), Music Ensemble Group (Pt. Amarnath), Divya and Diksha Upreti (Kathak), Pragati Sood (Kathak), Mohiniattam (Dr. Deepti Omcherry Bhalla), Bharatnatyam (Rajyashree Ramesh), Kathak (Ms. Uma Sharma), Bhojpuri (Seema Tiwari).

20. Apart from regular gifts of books to Polish universities, in 2008 the Embassy gifted two computer sets each to Jagiellonian University and Centre Dom Kultury Podgorza in Krakow, apart from paying for the publication of Hindi poet Kunwar Narain’s selected works in Polish.

NRI/PIO

21. There are some 2,000 Indians in Poland, mainly in private business. Others work in multinational companies and banks.

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