

India - Poland Relations

Relations between India and Poland have traditionally been close and friendly, characterized by strong mutual goodwill. The countries have frequent high-level contacts and enjoy robust cooperation in international fora.

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. A "History of Ancient India" in Polish was one of the first books of its kind to be published in Europe in 1820. A Chair of Sanskrit was set up at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, as far back as in 1893. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Polish painter Norblin was commissioned by the Maharaja of Jodhpur to decorate the Umaid Bhawan Palace, where his works can still be seen. Feliks Topolski's oil painting of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination is displayed even today in Rashtrapati Bhawan.

During World War II, the then Jam Sahib of Nawanagar had extended hospitality to some 6,000 Poles, mainly orphans released from Siberia. The survivors have formed the World Association of Poles from India. Despite their advancing years, the members of the Association had donated funds for relief and rehabilitation after the Gujarat earthquake in January 2001, and continue to visit India frequently.

India and Poland established diplomatic relations in 1954 and the Indian Embassy in Warsaw was opened in 1957. The two countries have shared common ideological inclinations, based on their opposition to colonialism, imperialism and racism.

Diplomatic Relations: India and Poland have had robust exchanges at the level of Heads of State and Government. Earlier major visits from India to Poland include: Presidents V.V. Giri (1970), Zail Singh (1986), S.D.Sharma (1996) and Prime Ministers Jawaharlal Nehru (1955), Indira Gandhi (1967) and Morarji Desai (1979). From the Polish side, visits include: Presidents Alexander Kwasniewski (1998), Lech Walesa (1994) and (1998), Prime Ministers Cyrankiewicz (1957) and Jaroszewicz (1973) and Polish United Workers' Party First Secretaries Gierek (1977) and Gen. Jaruzelski (1985).

The Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski paid a state visit to India in January 1998. The Polish PM Leszek Miller paid a state visit to India in February 2003. The President of India Smt. Pratibha Patil visited Poland in April 2009. The Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk paid a state visit to India in September 2010.

Bilateral relations have been cemented through a number of other visits. Significant exchanges in the last three years include the following:

- Minister of Information & Broadcasting Smt. Ambika Soni visited Poland on 02-04 July 2012.
- Minister of State for External Affairs Smt. Preneet Kaur visited Poland in January 2013. Shri Suresh Goel, DG, ICCR, visited Poland in June 2013. Shri Janardan Dwivedi, MP and Hindi scholar, visited Poland in June 2013.

- Minister of Steel Shri Beni Prasad Verma led a delegation to Poland in October 2013 to explore opportunities between the two countries in areas of coal mining and technology. He met the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Poland Mr. Jerzy Witold Pietrewicz.
- Foreign Minister of Poland Mr. Radoslaw Sikorski visited India to attend the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers' meeting held in New Delhi from 11-12 November 2013. Mr. Sikorski met External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid on the sidelines of ASEM FMM11 on 10 November 2013.
- Minister of Environment and Forests Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan led a delegation to attend the UN Climate Change Conference COP 19 and CMP 9 in Warsaw in November 2013.
- Polish Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Katarzyna Kacperczyk, visited India in February 2014 to attend the India-Poland Energy Summit. She also met Secretary (West) Shri Navtej Sarna in New Delhi.
- Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Mr. Tadeusz Nalewajk, led a delegation to India in September 2014.
- Deputy Minister of Economy of Poland Mr. Jerzy Pietrewicz headed a business delegation to India in December 2014 and met with the Union Minister of Steel and Mines Narendra Singh Tomar, and representatives of Indian business in Delhi.
- Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy of Poland, Mr. Janusz Piechocinski, led a large business delegation to India in January 2015 to attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in Gandhinagar and met with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Chief Minister of Gujarat. Ms. Katarzyna Kacperczyk, Under Secretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, accompanied the Deputy Prime Minister.
- An Indian delegation led by Comptroller and Auditor General of India Shri Shashi Kant Sharma attended the 24th meeting of International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions (INTOSAI) working group of IT Audit from June 28 to 30 in Warsaw.

The legal and institutional basis of the relationship has been strengthened with the signing of a number of bilateral agreements. The following is a list of operational bilateral agreements:

- (i) Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (1957)
- (ii) Bilateral Agreement on Shipping (1960; still valid but moribund)
- (iii) Air Services Agreement (1997) - being upgraded
- (iii) Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (1981)
- (iv) Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology (1993)
- (v) Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (1996)
- (vi) Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments (1996)
- (vii) Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Organised Crime and International Terrorism (2003)
- (viii) MOU on Defence Cooperation (2003; JWG meets regularly), an addendum to this was signed on 30 May 2011 by which this agreement has been indefinitely extended.
- (ix) Extradition Treaty (2003)
- (x) Agreement on Economic Cooperation (2006)
- (xi) Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health Care and Medical Science (2009)
- (xii) Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Tourism (2009)
- (xiii) Agreement on Audio-visual Co-production (2012)

Commercial Relations

After the signing of the new Economic Agreement in May 2006, the first meeting of the new Joint Commission was held in India in May 2008, the second session in Poland on May 25, 2011 and the third session on 8 October 2013 in New Delhi. The fourth session is planned in June 2015.

Bilateral trade in 2014 has crossed the US\$ 2 billion mark. India's major exports have been cotton, textiles, chemical products, electromechanical appliances, vehicles, air ships and vessels. Major imports from Poland have been electromechanical appliances, mineral products, and chemical products. Bilateral trade figures for the last few years are:

(In US\$ Million)

Year	India's Export	India's Import	Total
2010	1035	357	1392
2011	1350	523	1873
2012	1240	665	1905
2013	1470	491	1961
2014	1711	550	2261

Source: Central Statistical Organisation, Poland

Indian investments in Poland are valued at over US\$ 3 billion and include ArcelorMittal (global Luxembourg-based investment), Videocon, Escorts, Strides Arcolab, Reliance Industries, Ranbaxy, Essel Propack, KPIT Cummins, Zensar Technologies Ltd, Infosys and Wipro, Jindal Stainless, Berger Paints India, UFLEX, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, Flemingo Duty Free, Rishabh Instruments. The Polish companies that operate in India include Torunskie Zaklady Materialow Opatrunkowych (TZMO) in Dindigul (manufacturing hygiene sanitary products) Can-Pack Poland in Aurangabad (manufacturing metal packaging), Inglot (cosmetic products), and Geofyzika (seismic surveys for oil companies).

Make in India and Go India: In March 2015, the Make in India campaign was formally launched in Warsaw. Speaking to a distinguished gathering at a Make in India evening, the Chief Guest, Polish Deputy Minister of Economy, Mr Jerzy Pietrewicz, applauded India's outreach programmes in Poland and underlined the Polish government's complete support. Mr Pietrewicz said that he was personally enthused by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision for transforming India into an economic behemoth. In response to India's initiative, Poland's Deputy Prime Minister Piechocinski, announced a 'Go India' programme in April 2015, that will facilitate and incentivise Polish companies to engage with India.

The fourth Session of the India-Poland Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) was held in Warsaw, on June 15, 2015. The commission was co-chaired by Shri Amitabh Kant, Secretary, and Mr Jerzy Pietrewicz, Secretary of State, Ministry of Economy of Poland. The highlight of the protocol was the setting of an ambitious trade target of USD 5 billion by 2018 (2014 level: USD 2.3 billion). The Commission detailed a plan for stepping up investments and identified a series of actions to raise bilateral economic cooperation. On June 12-13, 2015, the three newly created bilateral Joint Working Groups on Coal, IT and Food Processing also met and identified specific areas of cooperation in their respective domains.

IT Forum in Krakow: The first India Poland IT Forum was held in Krakow (July 2015) to highlight the growing engagement in IT sector between India and Poland and find synergies for future cooperation. Speaking at the Forum, Dr. N.R. Narayana Murthy, co-founder of Infosys, highlighted India's achievements in the software sector and its contribution to India and the world, especially in unleashing two major innovations – the 24 hour work day and the Global Delivery Model both of which have become hugely successful models for remote, large scale software development.

Incredible India Road Shows – Ministry of Tourism with the support of the Embassy organised road shows in Krakow and Warsaw on July 9-10, 2015 inviting Polish tourists to enjoy the richness and diversity of a resurgent India. Around 18 tour and travel operators from India participated in the events. Shri Girish Shankar, Additional Secretary from Ministry of Tourism gave a multimedia presentation on the tourist-friendly destinations of incredible India. Polish Ambassador to India Mr.Tomasz Lukascuk also participated in the event in Warsaw and complimented the growing ties between the two friendly countries.

Cultural & Educational Relations:

A strong tradition of Indology studies has been sustained in Poland for centuries. The first Sanskrit chair came up in Krakow in 1893. The Jagiellonian University has an active Indology Department with a popular 5-year post-graduate in Indology. Hindi is also taught. The Indology Department of the Oriental Institute at the University of Warsaw (established in 1932) is the biggest centre for Indian studies. ICCR funds two Indian professors, who teach Hindi and Tamil at the Warsaw University and Tamil at the Jagiellonian University. The first Indology Conference for Central and East European Countries was held in Warsaw in September 2005.

The Embassy of India in Warsaw regularly organizes Indian cultural programmes in Poland with the help of ICCR. The Embassy also offers scholarships to Polish professionals under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and to Polish students under ICCR and Kendriya Hindi Sansanathan, Agra, scholarship schemes.

2014 assumed special importance in the bilateral relationship as the 60th year of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Poland. A series of outreach activities including seminars, film weeks, performing arts, business forums, cuisine festivals, exhibitions, etc. were organised in both the countries to commemorate this historic event.

The International Day of Yoga was celebrated on June 21, 2015 in 21 cities in Poland. Prominent Polish celebrities Natalia Przybysz, Edyta HEBUS, and Malgorzata Pieczynska, (all three designated ambassadors of yoga), Members of Polish Parliament and representatives of local authorities were amongst the around 8000 people who participated in the event in Poland.

The 2nd International Conference on Yoga and Ayurveda (June 26-28, 2015) was held in Sulislaw, Opole region. Opole will start the first diploma course in yoga and ayurveda (holistic health) at the Opole Technical University in October 2015.

Asia Day Conference in Sejm: Embassy participated in Asia Day Conference organized by the Chancellery of the Sejm, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Polish Institute of International

Affairs in Polish Parliament (July 2015). Inaugurating the event, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Grzegorz Schetyna, said that the Asia and Pacific was a region of new possibilities and also of big new challenges for the whole Western world. During the conference, 21st century was called a 'marathon century' - era of communication and transportation. Asian countries were acknowledged as a key to globalisation.

Indian Community:

Estimated at approximately 3000, the Indian community in Poland consists of traders (textiles, garments, electronics) who came after the collapse of communism and professionals with multinational or Indian companies and software/IT experts. The number of Indian students in Poland has grown to over 600.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Warsaw website:

<http://www.indembwarsaw.pl/>

Embassy of India, Warsaw Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/embassyofindiawarsaw>

Embassy of India, Warsaw, Twitter page:

twitter.com/@IndiaPoland

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