

India-Russia Relations

Bilateral ties with Russia are a key pillar of India's foreign policy. India sees Russia as a longstanding and time-tested friend that has played a significant role in its economic development and security. Since the signing of the "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 taking place in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, trade and economy, defense, science and technology and culture. Under the Declaration of Strategic Partnership, several institutionalized dialogue mechanisms have been put in place that operate at the political and official levels, and ensure regular interaction and follow up on cooperation activities. During the visit of President Dmitry Medvedev to India in December 2010, it was decided to further elevate the strategic partnership to the level of a "special and privileged strategic partnership". The 65th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Russia was celebrated on 13 April 2012.

Political relations

The Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism. Since the Declaration of Strategic Partnership, twelve Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in Indian and Russia. The last (12th) Summit meeting was held in Moscow, on December 16, 2011, between Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. The two Governments have also established two Inter-Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation, co-chaired by the External Affairs Minister and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister and another on Military Technical Cooperation co-chaired by the two Defence Ministers, both of which meet annually.

Indo-Russian cooperation in the military technical cooperation sphere has evolved from a simple buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research & development, joint production and marketing of advanced defence technologies and systems. The *BrahMos* missile system is an example of this type of cooperation. 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 other examples of flagship cooperation programs presently underway in this area.

Russia has been a long standing partner of India in nuclear energy and recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology and an impeccable non-proliferation record. The construction of the Kudankulam Nuclear

Power Project (KKNPP) is a good example of ongoing cooperation in this area. Units 1&2 of the KKNPP (VVER 1000 MW units) are being built with Russian collaboration. Unit 1 is due to be commissioned soon, while Unit 2 is at an advanced stage of construction. Discussions on the construction of two additional NPPs at Kudankulam (Units 3&4) are at an advanced stage.

India and Russia have also been collaborating 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 are cooperating on projects such as the Moon mission *Chandrayan 2*, and the Human Space Flight Project. On 20th 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. Trade in 2009 was US\$ 7.5 billion, in 2010 US\$ 8.5 billion, and in 2011 it reached US\$ 8.9 billion. In 2011, Russian exports to India amounted to US\$ 6.1 billion and imports from India to Russia amounted to US\$ 2.8 billion. Estimates for 2012 indicate the trade touching US\$ 10 billion. The two-way investment between the two countries stands at approximately US\$ 7.8 billion.

Both sides acknowledge that given the respective sizes of the Indian and Russian economies, as also untapped economic complementarities, there is vast potential for an increase in bilateral trade volumes and investment. In 2009, both sides set the target of achieving US\$ 20 billion in bilateral trade by 2015. Special attention is being paid to energy, pharmaceuticals, IT, steel, hydrocarbons, aerospace, diamonds and food products for this purpose.

The Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by the Indian External Affairs Minister and the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, is the main institutional mechanism supervising economic cooperation. It integrates six working groups on economic and trade cooperation, mines and metallurgy, energy, tourism and culture, science and technology, and IT. The 18th IRIGC-TEC meeting took place on Oct 15, 2012 in New Delhi.

Indo-Russian Forum on Trade and Investment (established in 2007 and co-chaired by the Commerce and Industry Minister of India and the Russian Minister for Economic Development) and the *India-Russia CEO's Council* (established in February 2008 and co-chaired by Mr. A.M. Naik, Chairman, L&T, and Mr. Vladimir Yevtushenkov, CEO of SISTEMA) are the two primary mechanisms to promote direct bilateral business-to-business contacts. The last

meeting of the Indo–Russian Forum on Trade & Investment was held on 15 Oct 2012 in New Delhi. Mechanisms such as the *India-Russia Business Council* (in partnership with FICCI of India and CCI of Russia) established in 2007; the *India-Russia Trade, Investment and Technology Promotion Council* (in partnership with CII of India and RUIE of Russia) established in 2007; and the *India-Russia Chamber of Commerce* (focusing on SMEs), supplement the efforts to build direct business-to-business ties. In June 2012, the 3rd India-Russia Business Dialogue was also held within the framework of the annual St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (SPIEF).

Science & Technology Cooperation

The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under of the IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral S&T cooperation, while the Science Academies of the two countries promote inter-academy exchanges. The ILTP supports collaborative research in basic and applied sciences. It has resulted in establishment of 9 thematic centers in India and Russia and implementation of 500 projects. In 2010 the program was extended for 10 years with a renewed mandate - Innovation Led Technology Programme. An Indo-Russian Science & Technology Centre was set up in 2011-12 with a branch each in Delhi-NCR and Moscow, to promote transfer of technologies developed jointly / independently by scientists of the two countries.

Cultural Cooperation

There are strong traditions of cultural cooperation between the two countries. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center (JNCC) of the Embassy of India, Moscow maintains close links with Russian institutions such as the Institute of Philosophy, Moscow, that has a Mahatma Gandhi Chair on Indian Philosophy; Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow; Institute of Asian and African Studies of the Moscow State University; School of International Relations, St. Petersburg University; Kazan State University; and Far Eastern National University, Vladivostok. About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, teach Hindi to over 1500 Russian students. Besides in Hindi, there are also Russian experts in Indian languages such as Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Pali, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Urdu. Interest in Indian dance and music is widespread and yoga is very popular in Russia. The JNCC conducts classes in yoga, dance, music and Hindi, for approximately 800 students every month.

There are several other cultural initiatives aimed at promoting people-to-people contacts between the two countries. In 2008, the Year of Russia in India was held. In 2009, the Year of India in Russia was conducted. In September 2011, a mini Festival of Indian Culture was organized in Russia, while several

cultural events and academic conferences were held as part of the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore. During 2012, the Embassy of India, Moscow has organized a very large number of academic, cultural and other events to mark the 65th anniversary of India-Russia diplomatic ties. A Festival of Russian Culture was organized in India from Oct 4 - Nov 29, 2012. 'Days of Moscow' in Delhi was held from Oct 26-29, 2012.

Indian Community

The Indian Community in the Russian Federation is estimated at about 15,000. In addition, there are about 1,500 Afghan nationals of Indian origin in Russia. There are about 500 Indian businessmen residing in Russia, of whom over 200 work in Moscow. It is estimated that there are around 300 registered Indian companies in Russia. Almost all Indian businessmen/Companies are involved in trading. 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 these students are pursuing medical studies in about 20 universities/institutions spread across the country.

The Hindustani Samaj is the oldest Indian organization in Russia. Set up in 1957, it works in close co-operation with the Indian Embassy. Other organizations in Moscow include AMMA, DISHA, Indian Business Alliance, Overseas Bihar Association, Textile Business Alliance, Bhartiya Sanskritik Samaj, Brahma Kumaris, ISKCON, Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, and Ramakrishna Society Vedanta Centre.

There is an Embassy of India School in Moscow, affiliated to Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan in New Delhi with teachers deputed from India. The School has classes from I to XII and it has about 360 students.

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