India was amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War. Today, Germany is amongst India's most important partners both bilaterally and in the global context. India and Germany have a 'Strategic Partnership' since 2001, which has been further strengthened with the Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) at the level of Head of Governments which allows for a comprehensive review of cooperation and identification of fresh areas of engagement. India is amongst a select group of countries with which Germany has such a dialogue mechanism. The 4th IGC was held in Berlin on May 30, 2017 wherein 12 bilateral cooperation documents in various sectors were signed.

2. **High level visits:** Regular visits take place from both sides, including at the highest level. PM Shri Narendra Modi undertook his first official visit to Germany in April 2015, when India was the Partner Country at the Hannover Messe-2015. PM visited Germany twice in 2017: for a bilateral visit on May 29-30, 2017 to Berlin for the 4th Intergovernmental Consultations and to attend the G20 Summit on July 06-07, 2018. On the invitation of Chancellor Merkel, PM visited Berlin for a short official visit in April 20, 2018. Former External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Germany in August 2015. German President Dr. Frank-Walter Steinmeier paid a State Visit to India in March 2018. Chancellor Merkel visited India in 2007, 2011 and in October 2015.

3. **Parliamentary Exchanges:** There is an Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group, in German Bundestag since 1971. The Indo-German Parliamentary Friendship Group (constituted in May 2018) for the present term of German Parliament consists of 22 Members from all the six parties represented in the German Parliament and is led by Mr. Dirk Wiese. The last visit of a Parliamentary Delegation from Germany to India was in 2015. Several Parliamentarians from both sides have exchanged visits in recent times. The latest one in the series was of a Goodwill Parliamentary Delegation from India led by Mr. Arjun Ram Meghwal, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs to Berlin from October 17-19, 2018.

4. **Sister States:** Some States and Cities of India and Germany have entered into twinning arrangements. Karnataka and Bavaria have Sister States arrangement since 2007. Mumbai and Stuttgart are sister cities since 1968. In January 2015, Maharashtra and Baden-Wurttemberg signed an MoU to establish a Sister State relationship.

5. **Defence Cooperation:** India-Germany Defence Cooperation Agreement (2006) provides a framework for bilateral defence cooperation. The defence dialogue mechanisms include High Defence Committee meetings at the level of Defence Secretaries. Both sides had detailed discussion on defence cooperation during the visit of Defence Minister to to Germany in February 2019.
6. **Economic & Commercial Relations:** Germany is India’s largest trading partner in Europe. India was ranked 25th in Germany’s global trade during 2018. Germany is the 7th largest foreign direct investor in India since April 2000. Germany's total FDI in India from April 2000 until March 2019 amounted to US$ 11.7 billion.

7. **Facilitating Trade:** A Fast-Track System for German companies has been operating in Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) since March 2016. India and Germany signed a Joint Statement on April 1, 2019 to set up a Fast-Track system on the similar lines for Indian Companies in Germany. To facilitate the entry of German Mittelstand (Medium Sized Companies) in India, the Embassy of India, Berlin runs the Make in India Mittelstand (MIIM) Programme since September 2015. Currently, 135 German Mittelstand (MSMEs) companies are being facilitated through MIIM Programme for market entry and investment in India.

8. **Science & Technology:** Indo-German Science & Technology cooperation started with the signing of the Intergovernmental S&T Cooperation Agreement in 1971 and 1974. There are more than 150 joint S&T research projects and 70 direct partnerships between Universities of both countries. India’s scientific establishments have close partnerships with German R&D institutions, including the Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer Laboratories and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation.

9. **Culture:** India and Germany have a long tradition of academic and cultural exchange. Max Mueller was the first scholar of Indo-European languages to translate and publish the Upanishads and the Rigveda. There has been growing interest in Germany in Indian dance, music and literature, as well as motion picture and TV industry, in particular Bollywood. Indian films and artists regularly feature at the Berlin International Film Festival and at festivals across Germany. German interest in the Indian philosophy and languages resulted in the setting up of the first Chair of Indology at the University of Bonn in 1818. The Government of India has funded 31 short term rotating chairs of Indian studies in German Universities so far.

10. **Indians in Germany:** There are about 1.5 lakh Indians and people of Indian origin (2017 figures) in Germany. The Indian diaspora mainly comprises of professionals, technocrats, businessmen/traders and nurses. There has been an increase in the last few years in the number of qualified Indian professionals in Germany in the fields of IT, banking, finance, etc. There are a number of Indian organizations and associations active on the business/cultural front, cementing ties between India and Germany at the people-to-people level. More than 15,000 Indian students are pursuing various courses in Germany.

*****

*September 23, 2019*