Brief of India Ireland Bilateral relations

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Historical: India-Ireland interactions date back to the 19th century when a significant number of Irishmen joined the British Civil Service, medical, engineering and army services. During this period, Irish missionaries and educationists also spread out into all regions of India. Links were further strengthened by connections between the nationalist movements of the two countries since the early 1900's. Noble laureates Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats inspired each other. Yeats wrote the introduction to Tagore's Gitanjali, which first appeared in 1913.

Formal Diplomatic Links: These were established in 1947. India opened it's Embassy in Dublin in 1951. The Irish Embassy in New Delhi was opened in 1964 (before Moscow, Tokyo, Beijing), and Honorary Consulates in Mumbai and Bengaluru in 1976 and 2000 respectively. Honorary Consulates were established in Chennai and Kolkata in 2010 and 2017. The Irish Government opened a full-fledged Consulate General in Mumbai in April 2019, as part of its Asia-Pacific outreach policy.

People-to-people Relations: (i) These were particularly strengthened after the crash of an Air India aircraft, Kanishka, off the south-western coast of Ireland on 23 June 1985 in a terrorist bombing. The extraordinary level of solidarity, support and assistance extended by the local population to the victims' families created a unique bond. A commemorative stone plaque was installed at the village of Ahakista which lies near the site of the crash and an annual commemoration ceremony is organized by the local community. Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen V.K. Singh (Retd) attended the 30th anniversary of the crash held at Ahakista on 23 June 2015. Every year the Indian Ambassador attends the commemoration service at Ahakista. Ambassador along with local Councillors and community members physically participated in the commemoration ceremony held at Ahakista, County Cork, in June 2022.

Ireland's support and assistance to India during the COVID-19 pandemic: Under EU-ECHO mechanism, Ireland sent emergency medical assistance of 1248 oxygen concentrators, 425 ventilators and 2 oxygen generators in two consignments.

VVIP/Ministerial Visits: There have been 3 Presidential visits from Ireland [Mary Robinson, 1993; Patrick Hillery, 1978; and Eamon de Valera, 1948] and 2 Presidential visits from India [Sanjiva Reddy, 1982 and S. Radhakrishnan, 1964]. At the Prime Ministerial level, Irish PMs Bertie Ahern visited in 2006 & Garret FitzGerald in 1984; PM Modi visited Dublin in 2015. Pt. Nehru visited in 1956 and 1949. Since 2005, an Irish Minister has visited India on St. Patrick's Day (National Day), except for last couple of years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Minister of State for Health, Jim Daly visited Mumbai and Delhi (Mar 2019) on occasion of St. Patrick's Day. SG Dept of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Niall Burgess visited India (May 2019) to exchange views on issues of mutual interest. Minister of Tourism of Punjab visited Ireland (Sep 2019) to take part in India Tourism Road Show. Minister of Health, Child Care and Social Justice of Kerala visited (Nov 2019) and had very constructive discussions with key health care stakeholders. EAM had a meeting with FM Simon Coveney (Feb 2022), in the margins of the Munich Security Conference and the UNGA 2022. Mr Robert Troy, Minister of State for Trade Promotion, Digital and Company Regulation in the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment visited India (Mar 2022) for St. Patrick's Day. He was accompanied by a 3-member official delegation from his Department. He had a meeting with Minister of State for External Affairs, Ms Meenakshi Lekhi. Discussions included deepening and widening bilateral relations and people-to-people contacts. Mr. Roderic O'Gorman , Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth visited India (Mar 2023) for St. Patrick's Day. He was accompanied by a delegation of Irish Government Officials and representatives from Irish higher education

institutions. EAM met with Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment of Ireland Simon Coveney, who visited India in the context of St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

Terrorism: Ireland has consistently supported India in its fight against terror. In the aftermath of the Pulwama cross-border terrorist incident, then Irish Deputy PM and FM Simon Coveney issued a statement (19 Feb 2019), strongly condemning the suicide bombing, expressing concern at the increasing levels of violence in the region and maintaining that Ireland will continue to work with India and the international community to support a comprehensive international response to preventing and countering terrorism.

Major Agreements: (i) Agreement on Air Transport (Feb 1991); (ii) Agreement on Foreign Office Consultations (Oct 1993); (iii) MOU on Joint Working Group on Information Technology (Apr 2000); (iv) Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (Nov 2000); (v) Agreement on Cooperation in Culture; (vi) Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation and (vii) Agreement on Cooperation between Science Foundation Ireland(SFI) and Indian National Science Academy (2006); (viii) Agreement on authorization for dependents of Diplomatic, Consular, Technical and Administrative Staff of Diplomatic and Consular Missions to engage in Gainful Employment (21 Mar 2018); (ix) ICCR Chair on Politics and International Affairs at Dublin City University (DCU) (renewed on 20 July, 2021); (x) Agreement on establishment of ICCR Chair for India studies in University College Cork (13.09.2021). [MOUs on Education Exchange Programme, Health and Medicine, Mobility & Migration, Visa Free travel for holders of Diplomatic/Official passports and Cultural Exchanges are under discussion].

Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs): The 9th round was held in New Delhi in October 2022, led by Secretary (West) (India) and Deputy Secretary General (Ireland), during which comprehensive discussions were held on bilateral, regional and global issues. The 10th FOC will take place in Dublin.

Multilateral: Both India and Ireland were elected as non-permanent UNSC members for 2021-22. There have been opportunities to work on shared priorities of multilateralism, climate change, peacekeeping, rule based international order in post-Covid era. Bilateral consultations on UNSC issues were held online on 25 February, 2021. Irish Minister for Transport and Environment, Climate and Communications participated in the Open Debate (through VTC mode) on Maritime Security hosted by PM on 09 Aug 2021, a key event of India's Presidency of UNSC for the month of August 2021.

Bilateral Trade in Goods and Services: Bilateral trade (Goods and Services) between the two countries, stood at 15.9 bn Euro in 2023 (Jan-Dec), with diversification of import and export baskets (Source: Central Statistics Office of Ireland). India's total trade in goods with Ireland for April 2023 – March 2024 is US$ 6.4 bn; India's export to Ireland stood at US$ 702.7 mn and imports from Ireland at US$ 5.6 bn (Source: Ministry of commerce and Industry of India).

Main items of India's exports during April 2023 – March 2024 were: Organic Chemicals; machinery and mechanical appliances; Aircraft, Spacecraft, and parts thereof; Pharmaceutical Products; Articles of Apparel and clothing Accessories. **Top five items of India's imports were**: Electrical Machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers and parts; machinery and mechanical appliances; Optical, photographic cinematographic measuring, checking precision, medical or surgical inst.; Plastic and articles thereof; Aircraft, Spacecraft, and parts thereof.

Investments and technical know-how: Irish companies are engaged in major flagship programmes like "Make in India", "Digital India", "Clean India" and "Smart Cities". Ireland has strengths in sectors like agriculture; clean technologies; fin-tech, med-tech; aviation; and tourism. Major Irish companies which have presence in India are CRH Taxback Group, Connolly Red Mills, Globoforce, Keventer,

ICON, Kerry Group, Diageo, Glanbia. Major Indian companies which have presence in Ireland include Pinewood/Wockhardt, Reliance Genemedix, Crompton Greaves, Deepak Fasteners, Jain Irrigation Systems, Shapoorji Pallonji, Amneal Pharmaceuticals, Wipro, TCS, Infosys and HCL. During FY 2020-21: (a) TCS acquired 1,500 staff and select assets of Pramerica Systems Ireland (Co. Letterkenny), a subsidiary of Prudential Financial Inc (Nov '20), and, (b) Tech Mahindra acquired majority (70%) stake in Perigord Life Science Solutions, a digital workflow and artwork, labelling and BPO services Irish firm for €21 mn (Feb '21), impacting positively on bilateral economic relations. Post-Covid, Irish industry can contribute to our Atmanirbhar Bharat programme, specially in digital-tech sector. There are possibilities in medical research, pharmaceuticals as well as frontier technologies like AI, i-cloud messaging, IoT, RFID, cyber security and VR applications. New opportunities have also emerged for recruitment of larger number of Indian health care specialists in Ireland. In context of Brexit, Ireland can emerge as a strong partner on account of its distinct advantages (English speaking, common law, low corporate tax, skilled workforce).

Education: Ireland has become a significant destination for Indian students seeking higher education, particularly post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral students in the areas of engineering, technology, medicine, and management. There are about 10,000 Indian students in Irish educational institutions. The Trinity College and Thapar University, Patiala have an MOU for joint degree programme in five engineering and science disciplines. New forms of S&T collaboration between India's Dept of S&T and Science Foundation, Ireland are being explored. A short-duration ICCR Chair on Indian Studies exists at the Dublin City University (DCU) and University College Cork (UCC).

Tourism: As per latest available figures, around 44,000 Irish tourists visit India annually, and a similar number of Indian visitors come to Ireland. Ireland gained traction as a tourist attraction after the introduction of common British Irish Visa Scheme (BIVS). Electronic Tourist Visa facility was extended to Ireland w.e.f. 15 Aug 2015, with no reciprocity. Indian Tourism events and road shows are organised annually.

Culture: The local Indian community is strongly supported by the Embassy for its various cultural performances, representing various States. A major event in the cultural calendar is the annual Indian Film Festival, with screening of contemporary films, participation of film actors/directors and thematic panel discussions. Rutger Kortenhorst, an Irish national, was awarded the ICCR World Sanskrit Award-2020 in recognition of his contribution to the teaching and promotion of Sanskrit at John Scottus School, Dublin. He was also awarded Padma Shri (announced on 25 Jan 2022) in the field of Literature and Education. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsored the visit of 16-member Tagore Theatrical group led by Mrs. Dona Ganguly on 19-21 August, 2022 as part of celebrations to commemorate 75 year of Indian Independence. The group performed 'Mayar Khela', the musical dance-drama written by Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

India-Ireland Friendship Lecture Series: In May 2022, the Embassy inaugurated a flagship event entitled "India-Ireland Friendship Lecture Series". Under the programme eminent persons having expertise in different fields of interest in promoting, widening and deepening mutual understanding and progress, are enlisted to deliver a lecture in their field of expertise either in person or virtually. The programme has generated tremendous interest both in India and Ireland and has been an effective instrument of Public Diplomacy and Soft Power engagement with Ireland in the fields of culture as well as business, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Indian Community: There are approx. 80,000 Indian origin persons in Ireland, of whom approx. 33,898 are PIOs and approx. 40,000 are NRIs, along with approx. 10,000 Indian students. The bulk of the community is in health-care, IT, engineering and senior management positions. The community is well-regarded locally and has integrated well into Irish society. Former Irish PM and current DPM, Leo

Varadkar (44 years) has Indian ancestry (father is Indian, mother is Irish). Some major Irish Govt decisions in recent past have had positive implications for Indian community: (i) non-requirement of obtaining additional work permit for spouses and partners of Critical Skill Employment Permit holders (Mar 2019) which is likely to attract more Indian high- skilled workers to Ireland, particularly in high-tech, medical and management sectors. (ii) Non-requirement of obtaining re-entry visa for GNIB card holders (Apr 2019). Secretary (CPV & OIA) visited Ireland (4-5 April 2022) and participated in the Global Diaspora Summit, 2022.

[As on 31 Jan 2025]