

India- Lithuania: Bilateral Brief

India recognized Lithuania (along with the other Baltic States, Latvia, and Estonia) on September 7, 1991, after independence. Diplomatic relations were established with Lithuania on February 25, 1992.

2. Lithuania opened its Embassy in New Delhi on July 1, 2008, and has three honorary consulates in India, i.e., in Mumbai, Bengaluru, and Kolkata. The Ambassador of India in Warsaw was concurrently accredited to Lithuania and visited Vilnius periodically. India opened an honorary consulate in Vilnius in 2015. The Indian Embassy was established in Vilnius in March, 2023.

3. The first political contact between India and independent Lithuania took place in June 1992, when the then Prime Minister of India, Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao, met Mr. Vytautas Landsbergis, the first Head of State of independent Lithuania, during the Rio Summit.

Bilateral Visits

4. The Hon'ble Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, paid an official visit to Lithuania from August 17–19, 2019, leading a high-level delegation including Shri Sanjay Dhotre, Minister of State for HRD, Communications, Electronics, and IT, and three Members of Parliament. This was the first high-level visit from India to Lithuania since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992. During the visit, Vice President held delegation-level talks with President Nauseda and met the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament (Seimas). Vice President addressed the Indo-Lithuanian Business Meeting and members of the Indian community. Vice President also visited Kaunas, which is the second-largest city in Lithuania. Aside from a meeting with the Mayor, he paid a visit to Kaunas Technical University. Three MOUs, namely the Cultural Exchange Program (CEP), Agricultural Work Plan, and exchange of protocols for implementing the Extradition Treaty, were signed during the visit.

5. A delegation led by the Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri M.J. Akbar, visited Lithuania in May 2017 in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations. The Minister addressed the ASEM Conference on Women's Empowerment in Vilnius, held bilateral discussions with the Foreign Minister of Lithuania, chaired a meeting of business leaders of Lithuania, unveiled two plaques in Hindi and Sanskrit at Uzupis in the Vilnius old town, delivered a lecture at the Institute of International Relations and Political Science of the Vilnius University.

6. On the sidelines of Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Ulaanbaatar in July 2016, Vice President Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister of Lithuania, Algirdas Butkevičius.

7. MoS (Agriculture) Shri Mohanbhai Kundariya visited Lithuania in October, 2015. He along with PM of Lithuania jointly unveiled a sculptural composition of Mahatma Gandhi and his

Lithuanian friend, Hermann Kallenbach at Kallenbach's birthplace, Rusne, on October 2, 2015. MoS (Agriculture) also held bilateral talks in Vilnius with Lithuanian Vice Minister for Agriculture, Vilius Martusevičius.

8. MoS for External Affairs, Mrs. Preneet Kaur, visited Vilnius in March 2011. She called on Lithuanian President and the Prime Minister and met the Foreign Minister and the Minister of Economy as well as the Deputy Speaker and other Parliamentarians. MoS (External Affairs), Ms Preneet Kaur, again visited Vilnius in July 2011 to attend a Ministerial meeting of the Community of Democracies (COD).

9. Earlier visits from India include the following: Shri Anand Sharma, MoS (External Affairs) in March 2007; Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, MoS (External Affairs) in October, 2005 and Shri Salman Khurshid, MoS (External Affairs) in August 1995.

10. **High Level visits from Lithuania:** Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis participated in the Raisina Dialogue in February 2024.

11. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis visited India to participate in the Seventh Raisina Dialogue in April 2022. During the visit, he also called upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi and had bilateral meeting with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar. The then Lithuanian Foreign Minister, Linas Linkevicius, visited New Delhi in October 2017, in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. During the visit, the Extradition Treaty and the Protocol amending the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (BSA) were signed. The Lithuanian Foreign Minister also visited JNPT Port in Mumbai.

12. The Lithuanian Vice Minister of Agriculture visited New Delhi in July 2016 on a bilateral visit and signed an MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture and Allied Sector along with MoS, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Sudarshan Bhagat.

13. The Lithuanian Minister of Culture, Sarunas Birutis, visited New Delhi on 8-12 March 2016, to attend the World Culture Festival. During the visit, the Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) for 2016-18 was signed on 11 March 2016.

14. The Lithuanian Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Mantvydas Bakevius, visited India in November 2014. Vice Minister of Agriculture of Lithuania, Mr. Saulius Cironka, also visited India during this time. Lithuanian Vice Minister of Education and Science, Mr. Rimantas Vaikus, visited India from November 28 to December 1, 2014. Minister of State Shri V.K. Singh met Lithuanian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Andrius Krivas, on the sidelines of Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies (COD) in San Salvador on July 23, 2015.

15. The Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Mr. Linas Linkevicius, visited New Delhi to attend the 11th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting (ASEM FMM11) in November 2013. He met External Affairs Minister Shri Salman Khurshid on the sidelines of the ASEM meeting. The two Ministers signed an agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic Passports.

16. The Foreign Minister of Lithuania, Mr. Vygaudas Ušackas, visited India in December 2009 and met External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna and the Minister of New and Renewable Energy Shri Farooq Abdullah. He was accompanied by the Minister of Economy and a 30-member business delegation to explore business and investment opportunities. Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Asta Skaistgirytė Liauškienė, visited India in November 2011.

17. President Valdas Adamkus paid a State Visit to India in February 2001, accompanied by his wife, Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis and a delegation of Lithuanian businessmen. President Adamkus met the President of India, Shri K.R. Narayanan; Vice President, Shri Krishna Kant; Prime Minister, Shri A.B. Vajpayee; External Affairs Minister Shri Jaswant Singh; and, Leader of the Opposition, Smt. Sonia Gandhi. He also addressed a business meeting jointly hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) in New Delhi and Mumbai. During the visit, three bilateral agreements were signed.

18. Prime Minister Adolfas Slezevicius visited India in September 1995.

Parliamentary exchanges

19. There have been three visits from the Lithuanian Parliament - the first in 1993 and the next in January 2003 when the Vice Chairman (Deputy Speaker) of the Seimas (Parliament), Mr. Gintaras Steponavicius, and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Lithuanian Parliament, Mr. Gediminas Kirkilas, visited India to attend the Inter-Parliamentary Conference to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Indian Parliament. A Lithuanian Parliamentary delegation led by Deputy Speaker, Mr. Algis Kaseta, visited India in November 2010 as guests of Public Diplomacy Division. The delegation met MoS (External Affairs), Mrs. Preneet Kaur. The Speaker of the Indian Parliament, Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, met with the Chairperson of Lithuanian Parliament in October 2015 in New York.

20. A two-member Lithuanian Parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Mykolas Majauskas, Head of the Inter-Parliamentary Relations with India Group, visited India from August 9-14, 2022. During the visit, the delegations had meeting with Hon'ble Members of Parliament Shri Rajiv Pratap Rudy and Dr. Mahesh Sharma.

Bilateral Agreements / Treaties

21. The following agreements have been signed between India and Lithuania:

- i. Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation (July 1993)
- ii. Protocol on Bilateral Consultations between the Foreign Offices (Aug. 1995)
- iii. Agreement on Air Services (Feb. 2001)
- iv. Agreement on Cooperation in Culture, Science and Education (Feb. 2001)
- v. Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation (Oct. 2001)
- vi. Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPA) (March 2011)
- vii. Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) (July 2011)

- viii. Agreement on the exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports (Nov. 2013) has come into operation on 30 July 2014.
- ix. MoU on Agriculture and Allied Sector (July 2016)
- x. Extradition Treaty (signed in October 2017 and ratified in August 2019)
- xi. Protocol amending the Bilateral Air Services Agreement (Oct. 2017)
- xii. Cultural Exchange Programme for the period (2019-21).
- xiii. Agriculture Work Plan 2020-2022 (August 2019)

India-Lithuania Forum

22. The India Lithuania Forum was inaugurated in the Lithuanian Parliament in September 2010. This was the result of the initiative taken by the Lithuanian Parliament and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania. This forum provides support to various NGOs, individuals and institutions that are interested in India to reinforce India's multi-faceted relationship encompassing culture, education, business and science.

Economic Relations

23. The bilateral trade between India and Lithuania stood at US\$ 450.81 million for 2023-24. India's top export products to Lithuania include: engineering goods, electronic goods, marine products, pharmaceuticals and organic & inorganic chemicals. India's top import products from Lithuania include: Iron & Steel, Misc. chemical products, rubber and articles thereof, animal & vegetable fats and oils, wood products, electrical machinery and equipment, etc.

24. The bilateral trade figures as per Indian statistics for last 5 years are as under:

Financial Year (in US\$ million)

Year:	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
India's exports	110.76	163.66	330.85	357.44	314.42
India's imports	262.09	321.05	200.92	114.24	136.39
Total	372.86	484.71	531.77	471.68	450.81

Source: Ministry of Commerce, GOI statistics

Indian companies in Lithuania

25. **HCL Technologies** is an Indian company providing services in the IT Sector. **Indorama Ventures**, a Lohia Group company, has invested about US\$200 million from their Thailand branch, in the Klaipeda Economic Zone in a plant to manufacture plastic resin.

Cultural Relations

26. India and Lithuania have possible ancient links reflected through similarity between the Lithuanian and Sanskrit languages. More than 108 root words (and 10,000 derivatives) are common between the two languages. Sanskrit became part of the academic curricula of the Vilnius University in the 1970s, when Prof. Ricardas Mironas started teaching the language in the Department of Philology.

27. **Cultural Exchange Program:** The Cultural Exchange Program (CEP) for the years 2019-2022 was signed in Vilnius in August 2019 during the visit of Hon'ble Vice President to Lithuania. A number of ICCR sponsored troupes have performed in Lithuania in the last few years, with the last Mizoram folk song and dance troupe participating in the VII International Folk Contest – Festival 'Flowers of the Sun' at Siauliai on 1-6 July 2017 and winning the bronze medal in the competition. An 83-member orchestra of the National Philharmonic Society of Lithuania gave two performances at the National Centre for the Performing Arts (NCPA) in Mumbai in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of bilateral relations. A 10-member Vilnius University Folk Ensemble 'Ratilio' participated in the 8th International Dance & Music Festival organized by ICCR at Kamani Auditorium, New Delhi on 13-15 January 2018. The group also performed in Bangalore and Trivandrum, with the assistance of ICCR. Lithuanian band Antikvariniai Kašpirovskio Dantys performed in various Indian cities during its three week India tour in October 2023.

28. **Indology:** Study of Indian languages (mainly Hindi and Sanskrit) has been carried out at the Vilnius University for several decades. A separate center of Indian studies, under the Department of Oriental Studies, was set up in the Vilnius University in 1996. Vilnius University also hosted the 2nd Regional Conference of Central & Eastern Europe on Indian Studies (CEEIS) in August 2006 under the auspices of ICCR. A compilation of 108 common words of Sanskrit in Lithuanian languages has been brought out by the Oriental Centre of the Vilnius University jointly with the Lithuanian Embassy in New Delhi. Lithuanian Scholar in Sanskrit, Prof. Vytis Vidunas of Vilnius University's Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies visited India in October 2023 and delivered a series of lectures on Sanskrit and Lithuanian linguistic similarities in various fora and universities. His lectures were well attended by linguistic experts, academia and members of civil societies besides a large number of students.

29. **Centre for Baltic Studies in Haridwar:** A Centre for Baltic Culture and Studies was inaugurated at the Dev Sanskriti Vishwavidyalaya in Haridwar in August 2016 by the Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand, Dr. Krishna Kant Paul, as Chief Guest and the Ambassadors of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia as the Guests of Honor. The Centre is pursuing the following two objectives: (i) To discover and disseminate the knowledge about the shared history, heritage and culture of India and the Baltic Nations, and (ii) To foster and promote cultural activities of both Indian and Baltic countries in their respective nations.

30. **Yoga:** International Day of Yoga is celebrated every year in Vilnius and several other cities in Lithuania.

31. **ITEC:** Under the Indian Technical and Economic Co-operation Program (ITEC), since 1993, Lithuanian nominees have attended various courses in diplomacy, English, banking, mass communications, financial management, urban development management, IT, auditing etc. The Lithuanian leadership at the highest level has expressed appreciation for the ITEC program.

32. **Scholarships:** Since 2008, several Lithuanian students have learned Hindi at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan in Agra under the “Propagation of Hindi Abroad” scholarship.

33. **PCFD:** Under the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD), being conducted by the Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, several Lithuanian Diplomats have attended the course since 1993. In April 2024, one Lithuanian diplomat participated in the 71st PCFD.

34. **Indian Community:** The Indian community in Lithuania is a small but vibrant and diverse group of people comprising students, professionals, businessmen and their families. This community has been growing steadily in recent years. There are around 7000 Indians. Majority of them are students pursuing higher education in Lithuania’s universities especially in ICT, Engineering and Life Sciences.

28 March 2024