

## India-Poland Relations

### I. Political Relations

India & Poland share a long-standing friendly relationship, marked by high level political contacts and vibrant economic engagement. Diplomatic relations were established in 1954, leading to the opening of the Indian Embassy in Warsaw in 1957. The two countries shared common ideological perceptions, based on their opposition to colonialism, imperialism and racism. During the Communist era, bilateral relations were close and cordial, with regular high level visits (several VVIP visits from India – beginning with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru in 1955 - and four from Poland), coupled with planned trade and economic interactions by state trading organizations, underpinned by the rupee clearing arrangements.

The relationship continued to remain close after Poland chose the democratic path in 1989. India and Poland transitioned to hard currency trading arrangements that were sustained by rising levels of trade as both economies grew in size and heft. A cordial political relationship has emerged in the current century, particularly after Poland joined the EU in 2004, and became India's key economic partner in Central Europe.

**Visits:** Over the decades, India and Poland have had robust exchanges at the level of Heads of State and Government. High level 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, high level visits include: Presidents Alexander Kwasniewski (1998), Lech Walesa (1994 and 1998), Prime Ministers Cyrankiewicz (1957) and Jaroszewicz (1973), Polish United Workers' Party First Secretary Gierek (1977) and Gen. Jaruzelski (1985). After democracy came to Poland in 1990, high-level contacts continued with the visits of Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski (1998) and Polish PM Leszek Miller (2003). The President of India, Smt. Pratibha Patil, visited Poland in April 2009, and Polish PM Donald Tusk paid a state visit to India in September 2010.

Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Poland in April, 2017. Krzysztof Szczerski, Secretary of State and Chief of the Cabinet of the President of the Republic of Poland visited India in January 2019. EAM Dr S. Jaishankar visited Poland from 28-29 August 2019. Deputy Foreign Minister of Poland Marcin Przydacz visited India in September 2019 to inaugurate the launch of direct flights from Warsaw to Delhi. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs W.T. Bartozewski visited India from 19-23 February 2024 to meet MoS Meenakshi Lekhi and then Deputy NSA Vikram Misri. He also participated in the 9<sup>th</sup> edition of the Raisina Dialogue 2024.

**Visit of Vice President to Poland:** The then Vice President, Shri Hamid Ansari, paid an official visit to Poland in April 2017, leading a high-level delegation, including Shri Giriraj Singh, Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises and four Members of Parliament from both Houses – Shri Sita Ram Yechuri, Shri D.P. Tripathi, Shri Vivek K. Tankha and Shri Thupstan Chhewang. During the visit, the HVP held extensive talks with the Prime Minister, President and the Marshal (Speaker) of the Senate (Upper House). The Hon'ble Vice President addressed, jointly with the Polish Prime Minister, an Indo-Polish Business Summit at the Ministry of Economic Development in Warsaw. He also formally inaugurated the newly-built Embassy complex in Warsaw. During the visit, an agreement on cooperation in agriculture and allied sector was signed. The VVIP visit, after a gap of nine years, helped to greatly reinvigorate the warm bilateral ties between India and Poland.

**Visit of EAM to Poland:** EAM Dr S. Jaishankar visited Poland on 28-29 August 2019. The last visit by a Minister of External Affairs was in 1987. EAM held delegation level talks with his Polish counterpart Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz, which was followed by joint address to the local media. A Joint Statement was issued at the end of the visit, wherein Poland emphasized India's role as a prominent regional power, an active and significant player in G20 and in the United Nations, as well as its key partner in South Asia. India emphasized Poland's role as an important member of the European Union and a leader of Central & Eastern Europe. EAM also met with Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, and Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Glinski.

**Visit of Undersecretary of State Marcin Przydacz to India in September 2019-LOT flight inauguration:** Marcin Przydacz, Under Secretary of State visited India in September 2019 on the occasion of inauguration of LOT Polish Airlines' direct flight on the Warsaw – Delhi sector. During the visit, he met with MoS(IC) for Civil Aviation Shri Hardeep Singh Puri and discussed possibility of creating a broader network of air connections in the future and also informed about plans of Poland to build the Solidarity Transport Hub (CPK) in Poland. He also had a fruitful meeting with Secretary (ER).

**Agreements:** A number of bilateral agreements are operational that include: Agreement on Cultural Cooperation (1957); Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (1981); Agreement on Cooperation in Science and Technology (1993); Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (1996); Agreement on Promotion and Protection of Investments (1996); Agreement on Cooperation in Combating Organized Crime and International Terrorism (2003); MOU on Defence Cooperation (2003); Extradition Treaty (2003); Agreement on Economic Cooperation (2006); Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Health Care and Medical Science (2009); and Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Tourism (2009); agreement on audio-visual coproduction (2012); protocol on amending the agreement on avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes and income (2013); agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports (2015); agreement on cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors (2017); Cooperation in the area of Coal Mining (2019) and engagement in the gainful occupation by family members of a member of a diplomatic mission or consular post, signed in Warsaw on December 12, 2022,

**Parliamentary Exchanges:** Contacts between the Indian and Polish Parliaments were established after the overthrow of the Communist system in 1989. Polish parliamentary delegations have visited India in December 1992, March 2000, January 2003 and December 2004. Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Manohar Joshi, led a multi-party Parliamentary delegation to Poland in May 2002. Subsequently, a Parliamentary Friendship Group with Poland was constituted in both the Parliaments.

**Foreign Office Consultations:** Both sides have been regularly engaging in Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) since 1996. The 10<sup>th</sup> Foreign Office Consultations between India & Poland were held virtually on December 12, 2022. From the Polish side, the meeting was chaired by Mr. Marcin Przydacz, Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland and from the Indian side by Mr. Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs. The talks focused on high-level bilateral visits, economic cooperation, co-ordination in international fora, regional geopolitical situation etc.

## **II. Economic & commercial Relations**

Poland continues to be India's largest trading & investment partner in Central & Eastern Europe. Over the period 2010-2020, the total bilateral trade with Poland has witnessed an increase of

107.9% i.e. from US\$ 1.32billion in 2010 to US\$ 2.73billion in 2020. The balance of trade continues to be largely in favour of India in 2023 as well.

### Growth of trade between India and Poland, 2013-2023 (Figures in US\$ million)

US \$ mn	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Indian Exports to Poland	1465	1722	1747	2099	2444	2136	2120	2100	3185	4086	3959
Indian Imports from Poland	491	552	464	669	736	818	731	632	1122	1483	1761
Total India-Poland Bilateral trade	1956	2274	2211	2769	3180	2955	2851	2733	4307	5569	5720

(Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland; Trade Figures in US\$ million; Calendar year basis Jan-Dec)

The top 10 items of Indian export includes 1. Textiles and textile articles 2. Base metals and articles thereof 3. Products of chemical industry 4. Machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical and electro-technical equipment 5. Footwear, headgear 6. Transport equipment 7. Plastic, rubber and materials thereof 8. Prepared foodstuff 9. Articles of stone, ceramic products, glass 10. Vegetable products. The **top 10 items of Indian import from Poland includes** (1) Machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical and electro-technical equipment (2). Mineral products (3). Base metals and articles (4). Plastic, rubber and articles thereof (5). Products of chemical industry (6). Optical, photographic, measuring, checking instruments etc. (7). Transport equipment (8). Miscellaneous manufactured articles (9). Pulp of wood, paper, and similar (10) Articles of stone, ceramic, glass.

**Investment:** Indian investment in Poland has been steadily growing over the years and is now estimated over USD 3 billion. The Indian companies are partner in Poland's development and thus creating substantial number of jobs locally. The Indian IT companies are spearheading Indian investment in Poland and are estimated to employ nearly 10,000 Polish experts. The Indian companies operating in Poland include those of the IT and outsourcing sectors, such as Genpact, Infosys, KPIT-Info systems, HCL, Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro, L&T Tech and Zensar Technologies. Other Indian companies having a presence in Poland include UFLEX, Essel Propack, VVF etc. Some of the companies that have entered the Polish market through acquisitions include Berger Paints India, Escorts, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, Lambda Therapeutics Research, Lumel SA and Tata Global Beverages.

Total Polish investment in India is estimated at \$685 million. Major Polish companies operating in the Indian market include TZMO, Can Pack,, Polmor, SECO/WARWICK, Maflow Group etc. Billenium, an IT company, opened its office in India in 2017. EKOLOG, a firm that focuses on clean technologies, entered the Indian market in 2016 and won a tender to build an Integrated Solid Waste Management Center for the airport in Bengaluru (Karnataka). The Polish bus-making company, Solaris – one of the leading producers of electric buses in Europe – has entered into a

joint venture with an Indian counterpart, JBM Auto, to produce these kinds of vehicles for the Indian market.

### **Sectoral Collaboration**

**Mining/energy sector:** Poland possesses reputed clean coal technologies and Polish public sector companies have played a substantial role in development of mining and power sectors in India. Trainee engineers from M/s Coal India Limited trainee have received training in Polish mines that specialize in intelligent mining. India and Poland signed a Memorandum of Understanding on 4 February 2019, in New Delhi to enhance bilateral cooperation in the coal and mining sector.

**Agro-food Processing:** The Polish capabilities and advance technologies in the food processing industry is well recognized. Polish food processing companies and entrepreneurs could participate in the Mega Food Parks being set up in India. A Joint Working Group on Food Processing has been set up.

**IT and ICT:** The Indian and Polish IT & ICT companies complement rather than compete with each other, as manifested by the presence of a significant number of blue-chip Indian IT companies in Poland. Around 11 Indian IT companies, employing more than 10,000 professionals, are currently active in Poland and are operating also their Europe operation from here. Growth in the Polish IT industry is driven by rising incomes, investment in data networks, high levels of computer literacy support and retail hardware demand. Indian companies have sensed opportunities in Poland for over a decade and have made it a destination of choice for near-shoring operations targeted at Europe. Infosys and HCL have a strong presence in Poland.

**Pharmaceutical and chemicals Sector:** Chemical Industry is one of the major sectors of the Polish economy and Poland is a net importer of chemicals. Chemical products figures in top 5 exports items from India to Poland with organic chemicals taking the lead. Given Poland's strategic location, shortages in health care personnel and 25% growth in pharma market in recent years, there are good opportunities for Indian exporters and investors. OTC drugs, food supplements and generic drugs are particular areas of opportunities. Poland is largely dependent on India for active substances for critical medicines and imports raw materials for the production of antibiotics - salt of erythromycin (for the treatment of respiratory tract infections, skin, urinary tract infections and postoperative infections), acyclovir (for shingles and herpes); neomycin used for wound infections and rifampicin for tuberculosis.

**Textile Sector:** Textile continues to be the largest segment in the Indian exports to Poland. Polish Imports of textiles and textile articles from India have grown to US\$ 645 mn in 2023 marking an substantial growth over the last decade. However, there exists much potential to enhance our exports in the textiles sector provided conducive environment is created for Indian exporters..

**Engineering Sector:** Polish public sector companies have, in the past, played a substantial role in development of mining and power sectors in India. They have collaborated in reorganization of some Indian collieries, besides supplying mining machinery, equipment, technical know-how and training.

**Sub-national Partnership:** Six State-to-State cooperation/partnerships agreements, with an emphasis on economic and commercial cooperation exist between India and Poland.

### **III Cultural and Educational Relations:**

**Indology:** There is a strong tradition of Indology studies in Poland, with Polish scholars having translated Sanskrit into Polish as early as in the 19th Century. Sanskrit was being studied at the 600 year old Jagiellonian University in Krakow (the oldest in Poland) in 1860-61, with a Chair of Sanskrit being established there in 1893. The Indology Department of the Oriental Institute at the University of Warsaw (established in 1932) is the biggest center for Indian studies in Central Europe. Study of Indian languages, literature, culture and Indology is also pursued at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan and the Wroclaw University. ICCR sponsored the first Central & Eastern European regional conference of Indology in Warsaw University in September 2005 in which 19 scholars from 11 countries participated. An MoU for establishment of an ICCR Chair of Indian studies at the Jagiellonian University, Krakow was signed in February 2017 and two Indian Professors have since been appointed as ICCR Chair Professors since the signing of the MOU.

Prof. Maria Christopher Byrski, former Ambassador of Poland to India (1993-96) and Polish Sanskrit scholar received the Padma Shri Award by the President of India in March 2022 for his contribution in the field of literature and education. Prof. Byrski has taught Polish Indologists and has translated Manusmriti, Kamasutra and the dramas of Bhasa and Kalidasa into Polish language. ICCR President Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe conferred the Bharat Mitra Samman, also known as the Distinguished Indologist Award 2022, on Dr. Joanna Jurewicz, Chair of South Asia Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw in a ceremony organized on 12 October 2023 at the Embassy of India in Warsaw that celebrated the Poland-India cultural confluence. Three Polish students of Hindi participated in the Visitors Programme for International Hindi students organized by ICCR in May 2023. Well-known Polish Indologists from the Jagiellonian University (Prof. Halina Marlewicz), Adam Mickiewicz University (Prof. Monika Browarczyk) and University of Wroclaw (Prof. Przemyslaw Szurek) participated in the Know India International Convention organized by ICCR in December 2023.

**Yoga:** Poland has over 100-year history of yoga. It is estimated that there are over 300,000 yoga practitioners in Poland, with about 1,000 yoga centers and 8,000 teachers propagating Yoga in Poland. The Association of Schools of Yoga, started in 2013 with 11 yoga schools, has now 50 yoga schools under its umbrella. The Art of Living Foundation, Brahma Kumaris University and the Association of Yoga Iyengar are some of the prominent associations promoting yoga in Poland. International Day of Yoga (IDY) is celebrated every year with much enthusiasm and participation.

**Good Maharaja Connection:** A monument, commemorating Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja of Nawanager, was unveiled in October, 2014 at the Square of the Good Maharaja, Ochota District, Warsaw, Poland. Another plaque commemorating the Valivade-Kolhapur camp near the Monte Casino War Memorial was inaugurated in November 2017 in Warsaw. Eight Polish primary and secondary schools are named after Jam Saheb, known as 'Good Maharaja' in Poland. The Maharaja had accepted more than 1000 Polish refugees, mainly children, as they escaped the depredations of the Second World War in the 1940's. The surviving Polish children have formed an Association of Poles, which meets on an annual basis in one of the major Polish cities. In coordination and with the support of ICCR, the Embassy organized a commemorative event entitled "Remembering the Good Maharajas" (Upamiętnienie Dobrych Maharadzów), was organized in the Old Orangery of the iconic Royal Lazienki park on July 5, 2022. Shri Sambhaji Chhatrapati, the descendant of the Chhatrapati Shivaji and Dr. Piyushkumar Matalia, representative of the Jamsaheb of Nawanager attended this event which witnessed participation by ICCR President Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe.

**Commemorating Indian leaders:** A bust of Mahatma Gandhi has been placed in the library of University of Warsaw. It was unveiled in May 2002 by then Lok Sabha Speaker, Shri Manohar Joshi. Three streets in *Warsaw* are named after Indian leaders and Nobel Laureate Rabindra Nath Tagore. Cities of Krakow and Lodz also have streets named after Mahatma Gandhi.

**Friendship Societies:** There are a number of Indo-Polish Friendship Societies that promote Indian culture and people-to-people contacts locally.

#### **IV Consular Relations**

**Honorary Consulate:** Since January 2018, India has an Honorary Consulate in Wroclaw. In addition to the Polish Embassy in New Delhi and the Consulate General in Mumbai, Poland has two Honorary Consulates in Kolkata and Bengaluru.

**Visas:** Poland has been included in the e-visa scheme w.e.f August 15, 2015 and a large number of Poles avail of e-visa facilities for tourism and business purpose.

**Indian Community:** Estimated at approximately 25,000, the Indian community in Poland consists of traders (textiles, garments and electronics) who came after the collapse of communism and professionals working with multinational and Indian companies and software/IT businesses. Approximately 5000 students are currently pursuing studies in various universities in Poland. There are over 100 Indian restaurants in Poland.

\*\*\*\*\*

**June 2024**