

## India-Ireland Relations

India-Ireland interactions go back to the nineteenth century, when a significant number of Irishmen joined the British Civil Service and colonial army regiments in India. The colonial medical and engineering services had a large Irish content. During this period, Irish missionaries and educationists also spread out into all regions of India. Links were further strengthened by the connections between the nationalist movements of the two countries since the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru and the Irish leader Eamon De Valera were often in touch. Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Vitthalbhai Patel were in regular correspondence with Irish nationalist leaders. There were contacts in other fields as well, most prominent among them being the close interaction between Nobel laureates Rabindranath Tagore and W.B. Yeats.

Formal diplomatic links were established in 1947. India opened an Embassy in Dublin in 1951. The Irish Embassy in New Delhi was set up in 1964 and the Honorary Consulates in Mumbai and Bengaluru in 1976 and 2000 respectively. New Honorary Consulates have been established in Chennai and Kolkata in 2010. Enterprise Ireland and Investment Development Agency, two Government of Ireland enterprises have their presence in Mumbai.

The Air India Kanishka flight from Canada crashed in the Atlantic Ocean off the southwestern shores of Ireland on June 23, 1985 as a result of a terrorist bomb. The extraordinary level of solidarity, support and assistance extended on that occasion by the local population to the victims' families created a unique sort of bond.

In March 2007, a road in Chanakyapuri in New Delhi was named Eamon de Valera Marg to celebrate the historical links. A bust of Rabindranath Tagore was installed in St. Stephen's Green in the central district in Dublin.

Bilateral relations have been uniformly cordial and trouble-free. The extensive interaction of past centuries continues to be recalled with genuine warmth. In recent years, with the increasing influx of Indian professionals in the Irish economy and the growing focus on the Indian market, this trend has been accentuated.

**Visits** - There have been three Presidential visits from Ireland to India – Eamon de Valera [1948], Dr Patrick Hillery [1979] and Mrs Mary Robinson [1993]. Presidential visits from India to Ireland have been of Dr. S. Radhakrishnan [1964] and Shri N. Sanjiva Reddy [1982].

The only Indian Prime Minister to have visited Ireland was Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru [twice – 1949 and 1956]. Irish PM Garrett Fitzgerald visited India for the funeral of Smt Indira Gandhi in 1984. PM Bertie Ahern paid an official bilateral visit in January 2006.

EAM Shri P. Shivshanker visited Ireland in June 1986 for the first anniversary ceremony of the Kanishka crash. Mrs Preneet Kaur visited Ireland in 2011. Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy paid a visit to Ireland in 2012. Irish Foreign Ministers visited India in 1991 and in 2004 – the latter visit was in the context of the India-EU Troika Ministerial meeting.

Since 2007, Ireland has followed the practice of a Government Minister going to India for St Patrick's Day celebrations [March 17]. The Irish visitor on St Patrick's Day 2013 was the Minister for Children Ms. Frances Fitzgerald.

Former President Abdul Kalam visited Dublin at the invitation of Trinity College in June 2009; besides a public lecture at Trinity College, he called on President McAleese and met the Irish Foreign Minister, who hosted a dinner in his honour.

### **Some Bilateral Agreements**

Feb 1991	Agreement on Air Transport signed in New Delhi
Oct 1993	Agreement on Foreign Office Consultations signed in New Delhi
Apr 2000	MOU on Joint Working Group on Information Technology signed in New Delhi
Nov 2000	Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation signed in New Delhi
Jan 2006 [during Irish PM's visit]	Agreement on Cooperation in Culture Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation Agreement on Co-operation between Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and Indian National Science Academy

### **Bilateral Economic and Commercial**

Bilateral economic and commercial ties are steadily growing. During Celtic years, Ireland's meteoric economic growth was largely based on trade and investment exchanges with the European Union and USA, with little contribution from Asia. In 2004, India was added as a focus country in Ireland's Asia Strategy. Since then, bilateral trade and investment started growing significantly. The visit to India of the Irish PM in January 2006 [with a large trade delegation] provided impetus and a new focus for steady growth in economic and commercial relations between India and Ireland.

### **BILATERAL TRADE**

**Trade in goods:**

**[In Euro Millions]**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Imports from India</b>	<b>Exports to India</b>	<b>Total Trade</b>
2008	265.00	161.00	426.00
2009	281.00	158.00	439.00
2010	301.00	162.00	463.00
2011	372.00	217.00	589.00
2012	235.00	365.00	600.00

Major items of Indian exports to Ireland include textiles, garments and clothing accessories, pharmaceuticals, light engineering goods and chemicals. Major items of Irish exports to India include telecommunications equipment, computer accessories, precision equipment and pharmaceuticals.

### **BILATERAL INVESTMENTS:**

**Irish investment in India:** Irish companies have invested in India in the field of manufacturing of building materials, property, food processing, medical research, media and IT sector. Notable among them are Cement Roadside Holdings, Quinn Property Group, Total Produce, ICON Independent News & Media Investment Limited and various IT Companies.

**Indian investment in Ireland:** Among the notable Indian companies who have investments in Ireland are Wockhardt Ltd Ranbaxy Ireland Ltd, Reliance GeneMedix, Crompton Greaves, Deepak Fasteners Limited, Hindustan Zinc, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) and Hindustan Computers Ltd(HCL).

**Cultural Events** – There have been regular visits by cultural troupes from India to Ireland over the years. In recent times, to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of ‘Gurudev’ Rabindranath Tagore, a number of events were organized both at the government and community levels. These included the joint unveiling of bust of Tagore in October 2011 in St Stephen’s Green in Dublin by Indian Minister of State for External Affairs, Smt Preneet Kaur and Mr Eamon Gilmore, Irish Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade; book launch of a translation into Irish of ‘Stray Birds’ of Tagore by Mr Gabriel Rosenstark; a symposium on the works of Tagore in Trinity College Dublin; a Cultural programme of dance, music and drama based on the works of Tagore organized by the members of ‘SUJAN’, a cultural association of the Indian community; two plays by Tagore ‘The Red Oleander’ and ‘The Post Office’ directed by Savio Sequeira, sponsored by ICCR and performed by the Kala Academy Repertory Theatre Company ‘RANGMELL’ from Goa.

In October and November 2011, the Embassy organized two exhibitions of digital versions of paintings of famous Indian painters compiled by Ms Anjolie Ila Menon called ‘KALPANA’. The exhibitions were held in the cities of Cork and Dublin and were sent by ICCR, New Delhi.

There have been various other events such as variety shows during festival occasions and classical music performances by local artists held periodically.

**Indian Community** – Indian citizens have been coming to Ireland from as around 1900, mostly as students and later as professionals and had mostly left the country thereafter to go to USA, Canada, UK etc. A significant number of Indian citizens travelled to Ireland between 1970 and 2007 when the Irish economy was experiencing a boom and jobs were available, especially for professionals in the IT, Health, Financial and other services sectors. Since then there has been a reduction in the number of Indian citizens coming to Ireland due to the slow down in the Irish economy coupled with changes in immigration and work permit regulations.

According to the Irish census figures released in 2012, the population of the Indian citizens in Ireland is in the range of 16,000. It is estimated that there is a further 10,000-14,000 persons of Indian origin. About 1000 Indian students are estimated to be pursuing higher education in Ireland. A large number of Indian citizens are being granted Irish citizenship, many of whom then migrate to other countries such as USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand etc due to lack of job opportunities, reduced wages and limited career options.

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