

India-UK Relations

Political Relations

India and UK are bound by strong ties of history and culture. India's multi-faceted bilateral relationship with the UK intensified with its upgradation to a Strategic Partnership in 2004. The groundwork for this was laid when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair in London in September 2004 and they adopted a Joint Declaration titled 'India-UK: towards a new and dynamic partnership' which envisages annual Summits and regular meetings between Foreign Ministers. It also outlined areas for future cooperation in civil nuclear energy, space, defence, combating terrorism, economic ties, science & technology, education and culture. The visit of UK Prime Minister David Cameron to India in July 2010 saw the relations elevated to 'Enhanced Partnership for the Future'. The UK supports India's proposal for permanent membership of the UNSC and is also an important interlocutor for India in the EU, G8, G20 and global contexts.

The new coalition government which came to power in May 2010 has called for a new 'Special Relationship' with India. UK's keen interest in India can be gauged by their request for increasing their diplomatic presence in India.

There have been regular exchanges of visits at the Prime Ministerial level since the Strategic Partnership in 2004. Soon after coming to power, Prime Minister David Cameron, accompanied by a large delegation, visited India in July 2010. Summit level talks were held between the two Prime Ministers. The two leaders agreed *inter alia* to establish India-UK CEOs Forum and an India-UK Infrastructure Group to enhance trade and investment. Several understandings were reached to enhance all round cooperation including in S&T, Defence and to promote greater people to people contacts. An MOU on India-UK Cultural Cooperation was also signed. PM Cameron is scheduled to visit India again in February 2013.

President Smt. Pratibha Patil paid a State Visit to the UK from 26-29 October 2009 which was the third State visit by an Indian President to the UK and took place after a long period of 20 years.

There are regular exchanges of Ministerial visits. Some of the important visits during the year 2012 were – Visits of Commerce, Industry & Textiles Minister Sh. Anand Sharma, Minister of Science and Technology and Earth Sciences, Sh. Vilasrao Deshmukh, Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister of State (IC) for Youth Affairs and Sports, Sh. Ajay Maken, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Sh. Ghulam Nabi Azad, Minister of State (IC) for Women and Child Development, Smt. Krishna Tirath, Minister of Urban Development, Sh. Kamal Nath, former Minister of Law and Justice and Minority Affairs, Sh. Salman Khurshid and Minister of State (IC) for Tourism, Sh. K Chiranjeevi. Foreign Secretary, Sh. Ranjan Mathai, paid a transit visit to London on 9 February 2012 and met his British counterpart. He again visited London on 9 October 2012 for the 5th Dialogue of MEA and International Institute of Strategic Studies.

From UK side, Secretary of State in Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr. William Hague, visited India on 8 November 2012 and met his counterpart, EAM, Sh. Salman Khurshid. During the visit, a Joint Statement on Cooperation in Cyber Issues, was signed. Other important visits during the year 2012 were - visits of UK Chancellor of Exchequer, Mr. George Osborne, First Minister of Wales, Mr. Carwyn Howell Jones, First Minister of Northern Ireland, Mr. Peter Robinson, Prince Andrew, Duke of York, Secretary of State for International Development, Ms. Justine Greening, Secretary of State for Home, Ms. Theresa May and Mayor of London, Mr. Boris Johnson.

There is an established mechanism of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and the UK. The last round of FOC was held in New Delhi on 1 June 2012.

The Parliaments of India and the UK enjoy traditionally close relations. Speaker of Lok Sabha Smt. Meira Kumar visited the UK from 17-19 January 2011, which ended a long draught of 14 years in Parliamentary Speakers' visits between the two countries. Speaker of UK House of Commons John Bercow returned the visit the same year in August 2011. There are Friends of India Groups in all the three major political parties, namely Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat and they have visited India from time to time to keep in touch with the latest developments. The last visit was in September 2011 when a delegation of Conservative Friends of India Group visited India. Parliamentary exchanges have also taken place under the banner of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association. An All-Party Parliamentary Group on India holds periodic meetings. An All Party Parliamentary Group on Trade and Industry linkages with India was set up in 2009.

A new group of Lords, MPs and prominent British Indians of Conservative Party, called the Conservative friends of India group, was launched on 24 April 2012 with the purpose of a more meaningful relationship between the Conservative party, British Indian community, and India.

India is the second largest source of students studying in UK and the number of Indian students in UK is approximately 38,000. The UK-India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI) was launched in 2005 with focus on higher education and research, schools and professional and technical skills. As UKIERI was a success, the 2nd phase of UKIERI was launched on 9 June 2011, which focuses on leadership; innovations partnerships; skills development and mobility and mutual recognition.. Bilateral cooperation in education got a platform with the setting up of India-UK Education Forum in 2008 and the fourth meeting of the Forum was held in India in November 2011.

India has multifaceted cooperation in the defence sector with UK. We have institutionalised defence dialogue at Defence Secretary level. The 13th round was held in London in January, 2011. We have regular exchanges between the services including in training of officers. We also conduct joint exercises. We also procure defence equipment from UK. UK DSTL and our DRDO have agreed to identify specific areas for R&D collaboration through a Letter of Arrangement. There are regular visits of Chiefs of Staff between the two sides, the last being visit of Admiral Nirmal Kumar Verma, Chief of Naval Staff of India to UK on 25-26 June 2012.

India and UK signed a Civil Nuclear Cooperation Declaration on 11 February 2010 which will help promotion and facilitation of cooperation in the nuclear field including nuclear trade and also between the scientific institutions of the two countries. Several joint research projects are in progress.

India-UK Science and Technology Cooperation started with the signing of the Science and Technology Agreement in January 1996. In 2006, a new orientation was given to S & T Cooperation with setting up of the 'Science and Innovation Council' which is the main framework within which India-UK Science & Technology cooperation operates. A number of joint initiatives have been taken up during 2006-10 which include joint projects in Nano Science, Biotechnology including stem cell research, telecom, solar energy use and weather forecasting. Mr. Vilasrao Deshmukh, Minister of Science & Technology, visited London from 16-18 April 2012 for the third India-UK Science and Innovation Council meeting. A £10mn boost for the largest India-UK ICT Research collaboration was announced during the meeting.

The new coalition government, which came to office in May 2010, announced that they would set a numerical limit on non-EU migrants to the UK in their new migration policy in November 2010. The cap on work visas came into effect from April 2011. Student visa policy has also been revised and came into effect from April 2012.

The UK ranks number two in the world in terms of tourists visiting India, but most of the tourists are British nationals of Indian origin. Around 500,000 Indians visit UK every year. An India Tourism Office headed by a Director from Ministry of Tourism, is based in London. In all, over 100 weekly flights between India and the UK are operated by Air India, Jet Airways, British Airways and Virgin Atlantic.

The India-UK Round Table was set up as a non-government channel for long range and 'out of box' thinking on the future of our bilateral relationship. The 14th India-UK Round Table was held in Ditchley, Oxford from 27-29 April 2012.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Trade and investment is one of the most important underpinnings of our bilateral relations. The India-UK economic relations received a vibrant upward direction after the establishment of Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) in 2005 to tackle trade and investment barriers on both sides and promote business links. The 8th JETCO meeting was held in London on 16th April 2012.

Despite the continuing global economic slowdown, the India-UK trade has been growing. According to the data published by the Department of Commerce, New Delhi, two-way merchandise trade during 2011-12 stood at US\$16.19bn, surpassing the USD12.537 billion in 2010-11, registering a growth of about 29%. During last financial year India's merchandise exports to UK grew by about 20% from USD7.166 billion to USD 8.597 billion and imports from UK rose by over 40% from USD5.397 billion to US\$7.593 billion.

India's main exports to the UK are ready-made garments and textiles, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, petroleum and petrochemical products, transport

equipment and parts, spices, manufactures of metals, machinery and instruments, drugs & pharmaceuticals and marine products. The main imports from the UK to India are precious and semi-precious stones, metalifers, ores and metal scraps, engineering goods, professional instruments other than electronics, non-ferrous metals, chemicals and machinery. In the services sector, the UK is the largest market in Europe for Indian IT services.

In the field of investment, UK strengthened its position as India's 3rd largest FDI investor in 2011-12 as against the 4th position which it had enjoyed during the last decade.

Top sectors attracting FDI from UK are petroleum, ports, services, roads and highways, computer software. India became the third largest inward investor in UK in 2010 and maintained this position in 2011 after USA and China. There are around 700 Indian companies in the UK. The Tata group is the biggest private sector employer in the UK.

Culture

India and UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Cooperation in July 2010. The Nehru Centre (TNC), established in 1992 in London, is the cultural outreach of the High Commission of India in UK. The Centre organises a wide range of cultural functions at its premises. The 150th Birth Anniversary of Poet Rabindra Nath Tagore was duly celebrated by TNC from May 2011 to May 2012, through a series of activities both at the Centre itself and through outreach support given to other organizations/individuals by TNC/ICCR. These events included talks, seminars, exhibitions, music and dance programmes and play performances.

Indian community

Of Britain's population of 62.3 million, the population of Indian origin is estimated to be around 1.8 - 2 million, accounting for the single largest segment of ethnic population. Over the years Indians have performed extremely well in various fields. Majority of the second generation have opted for higher education and are in white collar professions such as doctors, engineers, solicitors and chartered accountants. The present Parliament of UK has 8 Indian origin MPs and 24 Indian-origin Lords. In addition, there are over 180 Indian origin Councillors elected to Councils across UK.

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