

India - Ireland Relations

India-Ireland interactions go back to the nineteenth century, when a significant number of Irishmen joined the British Civil Service, colonial medical and engineering services and colonial army regiments in India. During this period, Irish missionaries and educationists also spread out into all regions of India. These links were further strengthened by the connections between the nationalist movements of the two countries since the early years of the 20th century. Leaders of freedom movements of both countries inspired each other. The Prime Minister of India made an official visit to Ireland on September 23, 2015 and met **former Prime Minister (Taoiseach)** Enda Kenny. The Prime Minister also met the Indian Community in Ireland at a Community Event organized by the Embassy. PM Narendra Modi spoke to the Irish **PM, Leo Varadkar** on 16 June 2017 and congratulated him on his election. PM Modi told the Irish PM that he looked forward to working with him for further strengthening of India-Ireland relations. PM also extended an invitation to the Irish PM to visit India. Minister of State for External Affairs M.J. Akbar spoke to the Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney on 14 July 2017 to congratulate him on his appointment.

Formal diplomatic links between India and Ireland 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. **Ireland announced that it would open a regular Consulate in Mumbai in 2017 to focus on India as a leading country in Asian region, and to strengthen relations as a part of expanding its global footprint.**

An Ireland-India Friendship Parliamentary Group has been set up in the Irish Parliament under the Chairmanship of Speaker of Dail (Lower House of Parliament) in June 2017 with the purpose of increasing awareness about India among the Members of Parliament of Ireland

The people to people relations between the two countries were further strengthened after the crash of an Air India aircraft – Kanishka – off the southwestern coast of Ireland on June 23, 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 annual commemoration ceremony is

organized by locals there. Minister of State for External Affairs, Dr.(Gen) V.K. Singh (Retd) attended the 30th anniversary of the crash held at Ahakista on June 23, 2015.

Since 2005, an Irish Minister has visited India on St. Patrick's Day, the last such visit was that of Minister of State for Training, Skills and Innovation, John Halligan in February 2017.

Other Ministerial visits from Ireland were:

- Minister of State for Employment and Small Business, Mr. Pat Breen led a Trade delegation to India on 20 November 2016.
- Minister for Public Expenditure Reforms, Mr. Brendan Howlin in March 2016.
- Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Dr. James Reilly in March 2015
- Minister of State in the Department of Education and Skills, Research and Innovation, Mr. Damien English in November 2014
- Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, Mr. Richard Bruton in November 2013 and April 2014.
- Minister for Children Ms. Frances Fitzgerald in March 2013 (St. Patrick's Day),
- Minister of State for European Affairs, Mr. Paschal Donohoe to participate in the ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi in November 2013,

Major agreements signed between the two countries include

- (i) Agreement on Air Transport signed in February 1991;
- (ii) Agreement on Foreign Office Consultations signed in October 1993;
- (iii) MOU on Joint Working Group on Information Technology signed in April 2000;
- (iv) Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation signed in November 2000;
- (v) Agreement on Cooperation in Culture;
- (vi) Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation
- (vii) Agreement on Cooperation between Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) and Indian National Science Academy signed in 2006.

The 7th Foreign Office Consultation were held in New Delhi on 23 November 2017 during which bilateral and multilateral issues of interest were discussed. The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (West).

Ireland co-hosted the 31st Plenary for the (Missile Technology Control Regime) MTCR at Dublin in October 2017. A 6-member Indian delegation, led by JS(DISA), participated in the MTCR meetings. JS (DISA) held bilateral meeting with his counterpart in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Ireland. Ireland supported India's candidature to MTCR in November 2016.

Bilateral trade between India and Ireland in 2016-17 touched US \$ 1.01 billion, India's Imports from Ireland was US\$ 525.8 million and India's exports to Ireland was US\$ 485.2 million. Main Items imported from India were Machinery and mechanical appliances, telecommunications equipment, computer accessories, precision equipment and pharmaceuticals. Main items exported from India were Organic chemicals, textiles, garments & clothing accessories, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, machinery, light engineering goods, plastics and rubber.

Major Indian companies which have presence in Ireland include Pinewood/Wockhardt, Reliance Genemedix, Crompton Greaves, Deepak Fasteners, Jain Irrigation Systems, Wipro, TCS, Infosys and HCL.

Major Irish companies which have presence in India are CRH Taxback Group; Connolly Red Mills, Globoforce, ICON, Kerry Group, Diageo, Glanbia.

Ireland continued to promote itself as an education hub and is becoming a significant destination for Indian students seeking higher education. Around 2300 Indian students are studying in Irish higher educational institutions. MoU on ICCR Chair on politics and international relations in the Dublin City University was renewed for another four Academic years in October 2017. President of Dublin City University, Prof. Brian MacCraith visited India under the Academic Visitors Programme of the ICCR in February 2017.

Several events were organized to celebrate 3rd International Day of Yoga to encourage participation from students, academics, yoga enthusiasts, general public, corporates and Diplomatic Corps.

The Commemorative Stamps on Ramyana which were released by PM Shri Narendra Modi on 22 September 2017 were launched in Ireland on 14 October 2017 in the presence of Mr. Paul Gogarty, South Dublin City Council Mayor. 150th Anniversary of Irish born Sister Nivedita was celebrated by organizing a "Puppet Show on Swami Vivekanda" on 14 October 2017 in collaboration with Eire Vedanta Society of Ireland. 8th Indian

Film Festival of Ireland was organized by showcasing several films from popular mainstream cinema, biopics and short films in September 2017.

The Indian community in Ireland continues to grow in size. Approximately 34000 PIOs/NRIs are in Ireland. The growth of the community is reflected in the growing celebrations of Indian festivals like Diwali and Ugadi. These are attended by a number of Irish leaders from all political parties. 3rd India Day was celebrated by the Indian Community in Dublin on 19 August 2017 and the event was graced by Deputy Prime Minister Frances Fitzgerald and Speaker of the lower house of Parliament, Mr. Ceann Comhairle.

Useful Resources:

Website: www.indianembassydublin.in

Useful resources: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiainIreland>

Twitter: <https://mobile.twitter.com/IndiainIreland>

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