

India – Finland Bilateral Relations

Finland appointed a resident Ambassador to India in 1949. Their Embassy in India was their first in Asia. Embassy of India was opened in Helsinki in 1968. Finland has Honorary Consulates in Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Finland has opened a Consulate in Mumbai since November 2022 and the first Consul General has assumed office from 1 January 2023.

2. Finland and India have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations. In recent years, bilateral relations have acquired diversity with collaboration in research, innovation, and investments by both sides. The Indian community in Finland is vibrant and well-placed. Indian culture and yoga are very popular in Finland.

3. President Shri Pranab Mukherjee, paid a State Visit to Finland on 14-16 October 2014. Prime Minister Mr. Juha Sipilä visited India from 12 to 14 February, 2016 to participate in the "Make in India Week" in Mumbai along with a business delegation. On 17 April 2018, PM met Mr. Juha Sipilä on the sidelines of the first India-Nordic Summit in Stockholm.

4. A Virtual Summit between PM and then Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin was held on 16 March 2021. This was the first interaction between the two leaders. During the Summit, a Joint Statement was issued. The two Prime Ministers announced a Digital Partnership in Future ICT; Future Mobile Technologies and Digital Education; a High-Level Dialogue in education and a Sustainability Partnership involving Renewable and Clean Energy, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Mobility and noted that green growth is an essential element of bilateral cooperation. Both Prime Ministers met for their first in-person meeting on 4th May 2022 in Copenhagen on the margins of the 2nd India-Nordic Summit. Prime Minister Marin reiterated her invitation to PM to visit Finland at his convenience.

5. External Affairs Minister of India Dr S. Jaishankar visited Finland from 19 to 21 September 2019. Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Finland's then Foreign Minister visited India on 4-6 November 2019 on his initiative. EAM had four interactions with then FM Pekka Haavisto since January 2022.

6. The 12th FOC was held in New Delhi on 1 November 2023. The Indian side was led by Shri Sanjay Verma, Secretary (West) and the Finnish delegation by Permanent Secretary Jukka Salovaara.

7. The 20th Joint Economic Commission Meeting between India and Finland took place on 2-3 June 2022. The Indian side was led by Joint Secretary Ms Nidhi Mani Tripathi and the Finnish side was led by Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Jari Sinkkari. The JEC agreed to an Action Plan on cooperation across different sectors.

8. In 2022, India's total trade (goods and services) with Finland was € 3.0 billion and was in India's favour. Trade in goods in 2022 was € 1401 mn with exports from India at €765 mn and imports from Finland at €637mn. This was an impressive growth of 45.5% over the 2021 figure of € 956 mn reflecting growing trade relationship between both countries. Trade in services reached €1650 mn in 2022, up from €1245 mn in 2021. Trade data till September 2023 (goods and services) shows a stable trend touching €2315 mn.

Investment

9. Finland ranks 40th in terms of country-wise FDI Equity Inflows into India. Total FDI Inflows from Finland till September 2023 are US\$567 million. Percentage share of total FDI Inflows is 0.08%. Actual investment will be higher as many Finnish companies have been in India since 1980s or 1990s and further expansion are not accounted as FDI.

10. Over 100 Finnish companies have operations in India. Large Finnish companies like Nokia, Kone Elevators, Metso Outotec, Wartsila, UPM, Lindstrom, Fortum, Ahlstrom, Elcoteq, etc. have manufacturing facilities in India. India is one of Nokia's most strategic markets since 1995 and one of its 10 high growth regions. Nokia has global delivery centres in Noida & Chennai; and is India's largest international telecom infrastructure manufacturer. A JV between Numaligarh Refinery Ltd., Finnish companies, Fortum and Chempolis is building a biorefinery in Assam.

11. India's investments in Finland have crossed US\$ 1 billion, including acquisitions. About 30 Indian companies, mainly in the software and consultancy sector are active in Finland. Motherson Sumi Systems (MSSL) acquired PKC Group (\$ 620 million). Trivitron Healthcare, acquired Ani Labsystems. Mahindra Holidays and Resorts invested in the 'Holiday Club Resorts Oy'. Infosys, India acquired Finland's Fluido Oy. Epsilon Advanced Material from India has signed an MoU with Finnish company Grafintec Oy, a graphite-based supply chain to establish an anode material production factory in Vaasa at an investment of around €100 million. Cyient, an Indian technology solutions company acquired Citec, a Finnish plant and product engineering services company for €100 mn in June 2023. In September 2023, Tech Mahindra inaugurated an Innovation Centre in Espoo, Finland.

Information Technology

12. A Joint Declaration of Intent signed between MEITY and Minister of Economy in Finland on cooperation in the field of Digitalisation was signed in November 2019. Both sides have nominated a coordinator for the purpose of implementing the JDI. ICT companies from India and Finland came together for a B-to-B session under 'Digital Finland meets Digital India' event under 'India Meets Finland' series on 10 March 2021. MEITY Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad and Finnish Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade attended the event.
13. A Virtual Round Table with Indian IT companies based in Finland was organised on 25 May 2021 to identify the elements of the Digital Partnership. There are opportunities for collaboration in startup ecosystem, Digital Communications, Cyber Security, industry-academia collaboration, digital solutions for sustainability and circular economy and SMEs.
14. Minister of Science and Culture of Finland Mr Petri Honkonen attended the 25th edition of the Bengaluru Tech Summit in November 2021. Minister met Dr. Jitendra Singh, Minister of Science and Technology and discussed cooperation in areas like 5G/6G, Environment and Clean Technologies and Climate Change.
15. A 14-member NASSOM delegation visited Finland to explore business opportunities in Finland in June 2023.

5G/6G

16. Finland is a leader in 5G/6G technology and Nokia is a world leader in providing the associated infrastructure. Top Indian IT companies are looking to collaborate in this sector. During the 4th Joint Committee meeting on S & T in November 2020, 5G was identified as one of the three areas for future collaboration between India and Finland. Wipro Limited, signed an MoU with the University of Oulu, Finland, on 19 November 2019 to collaborate in wireless communications in 5G/6G. The University of Oulu in Finland announced its 6G collaboration with Reliance Jio on 20 January 2022 to explore digital opportunities. In addition, Tech Mahindra and Business Finland signed an MoU for research and development in 5G and 6G, on 21 November 2019. Nokia has won a major contract to supply 5G hardware to telecom firms in India. Nokia launched its first of its kind 6G Lab in Bangalore in October 2023 to undertake research in foundational 6G technologies like Network as a Sensor, Network Exposure and Automation.

Science & Technology

17. The 4th Joint Committee Meeting held on 17th November 2020 identified 5G, sustainability and quantum computing as topics of interest. Both sides have set up Working Groups in the above fields to enhance industry to industry innovation and find relevant projects for joint government funding.

Quantum Computing

18. A Virtual Centre for Excellence in Quantum Computing was agreed to be set up during the visit of Minister of Economy Mika Lintila to India in April 2022. Both sides are discussing a draft proposal to set up a quantum Partnership and the Centre of Excellence. A business event to take stock of our bilateral cooperation in quantum computing on 7 June 2023 in Espoo brought together the Indian and Finnish quantum stakeholders for understanding the quantum ecosystems in both countries and exploring business opportunities. Tech Mahindra and IQM Quantum Computers, the European leader in quantum computers have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for research in quantum computing on 14 December 2022.

Start-up

19. India-Finland Start-up Hub, a collaboration between Business Finland, investment promotion agency of Finland, Invest India and Headstart Network, one of India's largest early-stage start-up community was launched in April 2021 to link the start-up community of both countries. Tech Mahindra and Nokia have agreed to support the Hub. The platform has organised meetups on select sectors and is organising an Accelerator Programme to select 10 promising Indian Startups for the Finnish market.

20. Indian Startup firms have been participating at SLUSH, an annual private conference-cum-exhibition held in Helsinki, to provide a platform for startups to connect with investors and VCs since 2017. Startup India led an official Indian participation with 28 Indian Startup companies at SLUSH 2022 held from 16-18 November 2022. 30 Indian Startups participated at SLUSH 2023 with the support of Startup India. Another 12 Startup were supported by Kerala Startup Hub.

Environment

21. There are successful partnerships from 2004 between Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), India Meteorological Department (IMD) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in air quality including capacity building. The Ministries of Environment of India and Finland signed an MoU for Cooperation in November 2020.

Sustainability

22. During the Virtual Summit in March 2021, the Joint Statement agreed to a Sustainable Partnership to bring out convergences in emerging technology and also in areas like gas-based economy, biofuels, renewable energy, waste-to-energy, electricity storage and emerging fuels such as hydrogen. A Ministry of Power led JWG to implement the Sustainability Partnership has been agreed between both sides and discussions are ongoing to hold the 1st meeting of the JWG.

23. The framework of cooperation in renewable energy and related fields have been the MoU on Cooperation in Renewable Energy signed between MNRE and Finnish Ministry of Economy in 2014. Four JWG meetings have been held, the last on 23 September 2021 in a virtual format. A new MoU on cooperation in New and Renewable Energy has been signed in April 2022 during the visit of Minister of Economy Mika Lintila to India. An 'India-Finland Startup Connect' to facilitate knowledge-sharing and collaboration between Indian and Finnish Startups in the field of green transition was organised on 25 May 2023 in Helsinki.

Cooperation in Education

24. Finland is a global leader in education scoring consistently on several parameters. There have been tie-ups between private firms for exchange of best practices in early childhood and K-12 education. During the Virtual Summit, both sides agreed to hold a High-Level Dialogue on education to identify elements of cooperation. The HLD is taking place on 31 January 2024 at the level of Secretary.

25. There have been tie-ups between private firms for exchange of best practices in early childhood and K-12 education. A few States in India, Kerala & Karnataka, are collaborating with Finland to adopt the best practices in early childhood education. There is an MoU between a Consortium of ten Finnish Universities and twenty-three Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) for the period 2020-2025 for cooperation in higher education sector. Finland is also emerging as a favourable destination for vocational and higher education for Indian students.

Vocational Education and Skill Development

26. Like other Scandinavian countries, Finland is renowned for vocational education. An MoU between NSDC India and EDUFI in the Finnish Ministry of Education for Cooperation in Vocational Education Training was signed in January 2019. NSDC and Omnia (international commercial arm of four Finnish vocational education providers) signed an MOU for capacity building, joint certification courses; and entrepreneurship modules. A webinar to explore the opportunities for

cooperation in vocation education was organized on 30 September 2021 by the Embassy with the support of NSDC and Education Finland.

Cultural Relations

27. Finland is very receptive to Indian culture. There are several Indian dance schools and Yoga schools. Cultural events are organised regularly by Indian Associations and other cultural organisations promoting Indian dance and music (both classical as well as contemporary). Friends of India & Finland, a not-for-profit platform bringing all Indian community association together has been at the forefront of promoting Indian culture in Finland. Embassy has been organising International Day of Yoga and annual cultural festival “India Day” since 2016. The 7th edition held on 20 August 2023 attracted 30,000 people.

28. International Day of Yoga was organised on 21 June 2023 in four different cities in Finland with enthusiastic participation by more than 400 participants. The main event took place at the Senate Square in front of the Helsinki Cathedral.

29. Ayurveda Day is being organised by the Embassy every year in November in cooperation with Finnish Ayurveda Federation and Ayurveda practitioners. 8th Ayurveda Day celebration on 8 November 2023 was a well-attended event reflecting the growing popularity of Ayurveda in Finland.

30. A life-size statue of Mahatma Gandhi gifted by ICCR to Government of Finland was unveiled by EAM and Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto on 20 September 2019 to mark Gandhi’s 150th anniversary.

Tourism

31. The favourite destinations of Finnish tourists are Goa, Kerala, and the Golden Temple, though other destinations are also becoming popular. E-visa’ facility has boosted tourism from Finland. There is a daily direct flight between Helsinki and New Delhi which has encouraged travel between both countries. About 3000 tourist visas were issued in 2022.

Indian Community:

32. There are around 21,359 (Dec 2022) persons of Indian origin with 8245 NRIs and 13,114 OCIs. Most live in the capital Helsinki and surrounding regions. Most Indians who settled during 1980s and 1990s were from Punjab and are engaged mostly in the restaurant business. 16 registered Indian Associations in Finland are actively promoting Indian culture and function under an informal umbrella called

'Friends of India Finland'. An India Business and Professional Forum (IBPF) has been set up as a platform to bring together all Indian and Indian-origin professionals.

33. The number of Indian students at Finnish universities has grown in recent years. Currently, about 1200 Indian students are pursuing higher education. About half are pursuing Masters degrees and the others are in doctorate programmes. Embassy is holding regular interaction with Indian students under 'Terve-Namaste' series. Six such interactions have been held with the universities of Helsinki, Aalto, Turku, Tampere, Oulu and students from all over Finland.

34. In February 2020, Embassy launched FINERAC - 'Finland India Network of Researchers and Academics' (earlier IARFE) with the objective to consolidate the community of Indian academics and research scholars, scattered across Finland, and to provide them a platform to collaborate. 4th FINERAC Day on 31 October 2023 brought together experts from India and Finland to explore the theme of AI and Governance, sharing the best practices in both countries and exploring potential areas of collaboration.
