

# EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY DIPLOMATIST

SPECIAL REPORT 2025

*Analysing International Relations*



## INDIA-BELARUS RELATIONS

A JOURNEY OF FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION



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# F O R E W O R D



I appreciate the growing warmth and strength in bilateral relationship between India and Belarus. It is heartening to note that both India and Belarus share similar views on many contemporary issues. Both countries are exploring newer areas of cooperation for the mutual benefit. The trade and commerce between the two countries have been on a rise. The growing number of Indian students in Belarus is also contributing significantly in strengthening the bonds of friendship and understanding. I appreciate Belarus' open-hearted acknowledgment and appreciation of Indian diaspora's contribution to its socio-economic development and also thank Belarus for offering the Indian diaspora a new home away from home for their growth.

It is a matter of satisfaction that we have witnessed strengthening of our relationship in all areas of mutual interest with a clear understanding to find new avenues of cooperation for the benefit of the people of India and Belarus.

Let us re-dedicate ourselves to work towards further strengthening of growing partnership between India and Belarus.

I place my sincere thanks to 'The Diplomatist' for bringing out this special supplement on the occasion of 78th Independence Day of India.

**H.E. Mr. Ashok Kumar**  
Ambassador of India to Belarus





# India

## FACT FILE

Official Name	Republic of India
Capital	New Delhi
Largest City	Mumbai
Official Languages	Hindi (Primary), English (Secondary)
Government	Federal Parliamentary Democratic Republic
President	Droupadi Murmu
Prime Minister	Narendra Modi
Independence	August 15, 1947 (from the United Kingdom)
Area	3,287,263 square kilometers (1,269,219 square miles)
Location	South Asia
Borders	Pakistan, China, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, and Myanmar
Coastline	7,516.6 kilometers (4,670.6 miles)
Climate	Ranges from tropical in the south to temperate in the north. India experiences a variety of climates including monsoon, arid, and alpine.
Population	Over 1.4 billion (2024 estimate)
Currency	Indian Rupee (₹)
GDP (Nominal)	\$3.73 trillion USD (2024 estimate)
GDP (PPP)	\$11.74 trillion USD (2024 estimate)
Major Industries	Information Technology, Telecommunications, Textiles, Chemicals, Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology, Food Processing, Steel, Transportation Equipment, Cement, Mining, Petroleum, Machinery
Major Exports	Petroleum products, Gems and Jewellery, Pharmaceuticals, Textiles and Apparel, Automobiles, Machinery, Agricultural products
National Sport	Field Hockey (de facto)
Popular Sports	Cricket, Football, Badminton, Wrestling, Tennis, Chess
Major Achievements	India has won multiple Cricket World Cups, has a strong presence in international badminton, and has produced numerous chess grandmasters.



# IETO: CHAMPIONING INDIA'S GLOBAL TRADE ENGAGEMENTS



India and Belarus share a vision for inclusive growth, technological collaboration, and diversified trade. IETO is proud to be a catalyst in this evolving journey.

— Dr. Asif Iqbal, President, IETO

As a premier institution driving India's international economic diplomacy, the Indian Economic Trade Organization (IETO) is committed to fostering strong and sustainable partnerships across borders. Our mission is to connect Indian enterprises with global opportunities, with a special focus on enhancing bilateral and multilateral ties through trade, investment, innovation, and cultural exchange.

## Strengthening India–Belarus Relations

IETO has been at the forefront of facilitating strategic engagement between India and Belarus. From high-level business delegations and investment dialogues to sector-specific forums, we have played a pivotal role in unlocking the immense potential of this partnership. Our initiatives have laid the foundation for deeper economic cooperation in areas such as pharmaceuticals, IT, education, agriculture, defence technologies, and heavy machinery.



# INDIA UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF NARENDRA MODI

## A GLOBAL FORCE

Under Narendra Modi's leadership, India has made remarkable strides in economic development, global diplomacy, and strategic partnerships. The country's active engagement in world affairs, coupled with its domestic reforms and focus on self-reliance, has positioned India as a key player on the global stage. As India continues to rise, it remains committed to fostering peace, stability, and prosperity, both within its borders and beyond. The journey of India under Modi is a testimony to the power of visionary leadership and the nation's unwavering resolve to shape its destiny in the 21st century.

India, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has undergone a transformative journey, emerging as a formidable player on the global stage. Since taking office in 2014, Modi has ushered in an era of development, diplomatic outreach, and economic reform, positioning India as a key player in international affairs and a sought-after destination for investment.

### Development and Economic Reforms

One of the hallmarks of Modi's leadership has been his relentless focus on economic development. The government has introduced a series of reforms aimed at improving the business environment, attracting foreign investment, and fostering innovation. The "Make in India" initiative, launched in 2014, aimed to transform India into a global manufacturing hub by encouraging both multinational and domestic companies to manufacture their products within the country. This initiative has been complemented by the "Digital India" program, which seeks to enhance internet connectivity and promote digital literacy, paving the way for a robust digital economy.

In addition to these initiatives, the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in 2017 marked a significant milestone in India's economic history. By

replacing a complex web of state and central taxes with a single tax, GST has simplified the tax system, increased compliance, and improved the ease of doing business. These efforts have not gone unnoticed, with India consistently climbing the ranks in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business index.

### India's Global Visibility and Diplomatic Outreach

Under Modi, India's foreign policy has witnessed a paradigm shift, with a renewed focus on establishing strategic partnerships and enhancing India's global standing. Modi has pursued a proactive foreign policy, engaging with world leaders and participating in high-level multilateral forums. His leadership has been instrumental in strengthening India's ties with major powers, including the United States, Japan, and Russia, while also deepening relationships with neighbouring countries in South Asia.

India's growing visibility on the global stage is evident from its active participation in key international forums such as the United Nations, G20, BRICS, and the Quad. Modi's vision of a multi-aligned foreign policy has allowed India to navigate the complexities of international relations, balancing its ties with various global powers while asserting its strategic autonomy.



## India Presidency of the G20

India's presidency of the G20 in 2023 marked a significant milestone in its diplomatic journey under Narendra Modi's leadership. Hosting the G20 summit in New Delhi, India positioned itself at the forefront of global economic and political discourse, highlighting its growing influence on the world stage. The summit, themed "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth, One Family, One Future," emphasized the interconnectedness of the global community and India's commitment to inclusive and sustainable development. Under Modi's guidance, the G20 summit saw India champion issues such as climate change, digital transformation, and equitable global health access. A historic achievement under India's presidency was the inclusion of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20, a move that further emphasized India's dedication to ensuring a more representative and inclusive global governance system. The summit was also a platform for India to voice the concerns of developing nations, advocating for fairer global governance and reforms in multilateral institutions. India's leadership in the G20 not only showcased its ability to convene and lead on critical global issues but also reinforced its role as a bridge between the Global North and South, further solidifying its position as a key player in shaping the future of international relations.

## Vaccine Diplomacy and Global Leadership

The COVID-19 pandemic presented India with an unprecedented challenge, but it also provided an opportunity for India to demonstrate global leadership. Under Modi's guidance, India emerged as a "pharmacy of the world," supplying critical medicines and vaccines to countries in need. The "Vaccine Maitri" initiative, which involved the export of millions of doses of COVID-19 vaccines to over 90 countries, showcased India's commitment to global health and solidarity.

This vaccine diplomacy not only reinforced India's image as a responsible global actor but also strengthened its bilateral relationships with countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America. India's ability to produce and distribute vaccines on such a large scale was a testament to its pharmaceutical prowess and its willingness to play a constructive role in addressing global challenges.

## Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

India's bilateral relations have flourished under Modi's leadership, with the country forging deeper ties with

traditional allies and exploring new partnerships. The United States has emerged as a key strategic partner, with both countries collaborating on issues ranging from defence and security to trade and technology. India's relationship with Japan has also reached new heights, with the two nations working closely on infrastructure projects, regional security, and economic cooperation.

In Europe, India has strengthened its ties with major powers such as France and Germany, while also expanding its outreach to the European Union as a whole. Modi's visits to countries in Africa and the Middle East have opened new avenues for trade, investment, and energy cooperation, underscoring India's commitment to diversifying its diplomatic engagements.

On the multilateral front, India's role in BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), and the G20 has been particularly noteworthy. As a leading voice for developing countries, India has advocated for reforming global institutions to make them more representative and responsive to the needs of the Global South. Modi's leadership has also been instrumental in advancing India's interests in climate negotiations, where the country has championed sustainable development and the use of renewable energy.

## India as an Investment Destination

India's emergence as a preferred investment destination can be attributed to the Modi government's business-friendly policies and efforts to improve the ease of doing business. The launch of the "Startup India" initiative has created a conducive environment for entrepreneurship, leading to a surge in the number of startups and unicorns in the country. The government's focus on infrastructure development, including the construction of smart cities, highways, and industrial corridors, has further enhanced India's attractiveness to investors.

Moreover, the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-Reliant India) campaign, which aims to reduce dependence on imports and boost domestic production, has resonated with both Indian and foreign businesses. The Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, designed to incentivize manufacturing in sectors such as electronics, pharmaceuticals, and textiles, have drawn significant investment from global companies looking to capitalise on India's large and growing market.

## India Overtakes Japan to Become the World's Fourth-Largest Economy in 2025

India has officially become the world's fourth-largest economy, overtaking Japan in 2025. According to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook released in April 2025, India's nominal Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has reached \$4.187 trillion, slightly ahead of Japan's \$4.186 trillion.

This development cements India's position as a leading economic power in the global arena. B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, CEO of NITI Aayog, confirmed the news, stating, "We are now the fourth-largest economy in the world. This is not my data—it is the IMF's data."



# BUSINESS FRIENDLY REFORMS

## INDIA'S PATH TO PROSPERITY

**D**oing business in India used to be challenging due to repetitive tasks, multiple touchpoints, strict capital ceilings, and harsh tax regulations, among other hurdles. However, with the introduction of EoDB 2.0 and significant business-friendly reforms that have broken through department silos and eased compliance, the situation has drastically improved. Now, the nation and its young entrepreneurs are well-positioned at the table to take advantage of these changes.

According to the World Bank's Doing Business Report (DBR), India enhanced the regulatory landscape to support businesses' launch and operation, thus improving Ease of Doing Business Ranking from 142nd in 2014 to 63rd rank in 2020. As per the International Monetary Fund, India is the world's 5th largest economy, with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$4.1 Tn - driven by transformational business reforms, technological innovation, and entrepreneurship. India's upward trajectory will continue strengthening with ongoing policy reforms and digital-led taxation and compliance protocols. Let's look at the key touchstones playing a decisive role in enhancing the ease of doing business in India.

### Initiatives to Improve Ease of Doing Business in India

One of the cornerstones of India's reform journey has been reducing the compliance burden to create a conducive business environment. All entities across industries and sectors, including startups, continue to benefit from these reforms.

The key focus areas of the initiatives are:

- Simplifying procedures related to applications, renewals, inspections, filing records, etc.
- Rationalisation by repealing, amending or subsuming redundant laws
- Promoting digitisation by creating online interfaces to eliminate manual forms and records
- Decriminalising minor technical or procedural defaults

With a distinct focus towards transparency and accountability, the government has introduced several landmark initiatives:

- The PAN (Permanent Account Number) as the common identifier for all regulatory clearances
- The decriminalisation of 3,400 legal provisions and reduction of 39,000 compliances to enhance the ease of doing business in India
- The registration of a business as a startup for 10 years since its inception making it a beneficiary of tax reductions for the tenure of the 10 years. A 100% deduction on profits for startups, incorporated before 1st April 2023, for three consecutive years of the 10 years
- Inclusion of investments from non-residents within the ambit of taxation for startups, thereby making the capital up to INR 10 Cr, beneficiaries of tax remissions

### Simplification of Tax in India

Implemented on July 01, 2017, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has unified confusing and costly taxes for businesses like excise duty, service tax, and others, consolidating



them into a streamlined method of tax payments. GST has subsumed 8 taxes at the Central and 9 at the State level.

As the single applicable tax, GST has unified the compliance framework for businesses, drastically reducing compliance costs and helping companies invest that money in the development of the business. With the e-services on the GST portal, businesses, especially small and new businesses, can now easily comply with tax laws.

The GST collections of February 2024 alone stand at a whopping INR 1,68,337 Cr, a 12.5% increase compared to February 2023.

In the Union Budget 2024-25, the government announced that tax benefits to startups and investments made by Sovereign Wealth Funds or pension funds and on certain income of IFSC units located in GIFT City extended to March 31, 2025 - boosting the investment ecosystem in the country. The Union Budget also highlighted that the number of return filers has increased by 2.4 times, while the collection of direct taxes has tripled. Along with the average processing time of tax returns being reduced to less than 10 days.

Another key reform was the reduction of corporate tax for mid-sized companies from 30% to 25%. Corporate tax rates were slashed to 22% for domestic companies and 15% for new domestic manufacturing companies and others. The revised rates are more competitive globally, putting India at par with leading economies in terms of corporate tax.

Besides a robust tax regime, India has taken massive strides in promoting innovation and championing the entrepreneurial spirit.

### **Innovation that Fosters Entrepreneurship**

Innovation and entrepreneurship in India are often two sides of the same coin. From 81st rank in 2015, India is now 40th in the Global Innovation Index 2023, a reflection of the country's thriving innovation ecosystem. In CY 2023, 247 patent applications were filed daily, an all-time high compared to last 20 years. In 2022, India emerged as the 6th largest in the number of patents filed, recording ~25% growth with 77,068 patents compared to a degrowth of 0.4% in 2014. The patents in computers, communications, biomedical & polymers are gaining momentum like never before.

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry and the Department of Science & Technology have initiated various initiatives to support and promote innovation and foster entrepreneurship.

- The National Science and Technology Entrepreneurship Development Board (NSTEDB) is dedicated to training and supporting entrepreneurs at various stages of growth. The National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI), conceived and developed by NSTEDB, offers seed funds, incubators, accelerators, and 'Proof of Concept' grants for entrepreneurs and innovations across India. Since its launch in 2016, NIDHI has helped establish a network of more than 170

Technology Business Incubators (TBIs). With a grant of INR 220 Lakh for each TBI to fund 10 innovators each year.

- Meanwhile, the Technology Incubation and Development of Entrepreneurs (TIDE) scheme and its enhanced version, TIDE 2.0, launched by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, provide technical and financial support to emerging technologies like the Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, Robotics, and more. With 51 incubators across the nation, the scheme provides financial support to nearly 2000 technology startups.
- The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) supports incubators in the biotechnology sector, offering mentorship, infrastructural support, IP and technological assistance through the BIRAC BioNEST scheme and equity-based funding through the SEED (Sustaining Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Development) and LEAP (Launching Entrepreneurial Driven Affordable Products Fund for Start-up) funds.

### **Permissions & Licenses**

Gone are the days when acquiring business permits and licenses was an odyssey of wading through mountains of paperwork. Young entrepreneurs can register their businesses and gain permits and licenses with ease and clarity of process.

- Tax Deduction & Collection Account Number (TAN), Permanent Account Number (PAN), and Director Identification Number (DIN) have been simplified into a single SPICe, which can easily be used to incorporate a company on a single web form SPICe+. Moreover, companies with capital of up to INR 15 Lakh no longer have to pay an incorporation fee.
- The Shram Suvidha Portal under the Ministry of Labour & Employment provides a Labour Identification Number (LIN). It also provides an error-free, risk criteria-based Labour Inspection Scheme and promotes transparency and accountability by making the inspection report public within 48 hours on the portal. Since its launch in 2014, 43,62,416 LINS have been generated, and nearly 8,36,903 inspection reports submitted.
- The registration process for Employee State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and Employee Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has been simplified as an effortless online task with no physical touchpoint or manual intervention. With 66,788 claims approved out of 88,210 claims received, the ESIC is poised to expand medical benefits for superannuated insured individuals with relaxed norms.
- The lengthy and cumbersome 5-page forms and document attachments required for registering a company with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs have been streamlined to three easy-to-fill fields.

## India vs World in Taxation Reforms

India's tax reforms in recent years have had a decidedly two-pronged approach. One is the modernisation of domestic tax practices focusing on digitisation and transparency. The government has also implemented real-time submission of transaction data and electronic invoicing. The other is cross-border tax administration to promote exports, global trade, and foreign investments.

- The Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme supports exporters by remitting taxes and duties levied on exports. The Government of India has allocated a budget of INR 15,070 Cr to support the RoDTEP Scheme in 2023-24.
- India also launched Project Insight to enhance cooperation and harmonisation across various tax authorities – direct, indirect, and corporate affairs.
- Income Tax Transaction Analysis Centre (INTRAC) is another initiative by India to leverage data analytics in tax administration.
- India is also part of the US-led 13-nation Indo-Pacific framework dedicated to ESG compliance reforms in global supply chains, anti-corruption programs, and climate change. It is also closing several fast-track bilateral trade agreements like the India-UAE Comprehensive Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IndAus ECTA) and \$100 Bn India-EFTA Trade & Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA).
- Introduced in 2012, the Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs) are another tool India is leveraging for greater tax certainty in international transactions. In FY 2022-23, the CBDT signed a record-high 95 APAs, the most ever in a single financial year since the launch of the APA programme.

## Startup India, Self-reliant India

As of 2024, India is home to 113 unicorns with a combined valuation of \$350 Bn. It is also the 3rd largest startup ecosystem in the world, with over 124,000 DPIIT-recognised startups. And the only way for these numbers in the future is UP.

Multiple schemes and initiatives have been formulated to offer diverse support for these budding businesses, from technical & financial support to subsidies and tax exemptions.

- The Startup India Initiative, the flagbearer of the government's support for startups, offers various schemes that provide financial and infrastructural support to young entrepreneurs. The Startup India Seed Fund Scheme has allocated ~INR 447 Cr to fund 133 incubators.
- The Credit Guarantee Scheme for Startups provides credit guarantees to loans extended by member institutions to finance eligible startups. The scheme guarantees loans up to INR 10 Crore.

- In 2022, India announced 53 key regulatory reforms for startups across the board to enhance the ease of doing business, ease of raising capital and reduce the compliance burden for the startup ecosystem.
- To build an innovation-led economy, startups in India are provided with an 80% rebate in filing patents and a 50% rebate in filing trademarks vis-à-vis other companies.
- Another key reform for startups is the exemption from income tax. Startups incorporated on or after April 01, 2016, are eligible for income tax exemption for a period of 3 consecutive years out of 10 years since incorporation.
- Startups are allowed to self-certify their compliance under 9 Labour and 3 Environment laws for a period of 3 to 5 years from the date of incorporation.

These and several other reforms are making it easier for startups to thrive in India, building a self-reliant economy, driven by the entrepreneurial spirit and rooted in a dynamic innovation ecosystem.

## India vs World in EoDB Global Rankings

With an FDI equity flow of over \$11.5 Bn in the 3rd quarter of FY 2023-24 alone, India has emerged as one of the most desirable locations for business globally. Positive growth and business-friendly reforms have paved the way for India's ranking as 27th in the world in the ease of acquiring construction permits and 22nd in getting electricity in the World Bank's Doing Business Report (DBR) of 2020. India also ranks 13th in the report on protecting minority investors and has done exceptionally well on several other metrics, such as resolving insolvency, starting a business or registering a company.

## Conclusion

In recent years, the Indian economy has seen remarkable growth. The influx of government policies for businesses in India has helped establish the nation's macroeconomic stability in the global market. Reforms and investments aimed at unified growth from the grassroots to the upper echelons of financial institutions have democratised the business landscape. Easing restrictions on FDI by raising the foreign equity ceilings for defence and insurance has helped notch India's ease of doing business rankings amidst global businesses. Furthermore, in a recent amendment to the FDI policy, India has relaxed the regulations, allowing 100% FDI in manufacturing and procuring satellite systems. The reform is set to attract FDI, enhance the nation's EoDB, and expand income and employment in the space sector. With enhanced governance, business-friendly policies, and empowered entrepreneurs, the stage is set for an exciting growth-fuelled future.

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Source: Invest India

# INDIA-BELARUS BILATERAL RELATIONS



India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial. India was one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as independent country in 1991. Formal diplomatic relations were established and the Indian diplomatic mission was opened in Minsk in 1992- with the first Resident Ambassador joining in January 1993- followed by the opening of Belarusian Embassy in New Delhi in 1998. Belarus opened its Honorary Consulate in Kolkata in December 2002 and in Mumbai in September 2018. In August 2022, the new Belarusian Consulate General in Mumbai was inaugurated.

Bilateral relations between India and Belarus are marked by broad understanding on issues of mutual interest. The two countries enjoy a comprehensive partnership and have established mechanisms for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues through Foreign Office Consultations, Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation, and other thematic bilateral mechanisms.

The 7th round of FOCs was held in August 2022 in New Delhi, chaired by Secretary (West) and the First Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus. The two countries have signed a number of Agreements/MoUs on various subjects, including trade and economic cooperation, culture, education, media and sports, tourism, science & technology, agriculture, textiles, Avoidance of Double Taxation, Promotion and Protection of Investments, and defence and technical cooperation. The first ever India-Belarus Consular Dialogue was held in Minsk on 28th June 2024. The Indian delegation was led by Mr. Aman Puri, Joint Secretary(CPV).

The sides discussed consular issues of mutual interest.

Both countries have exchanged high level visits at regular intervals. Hon'ble Rashtrapati's State Visit in



June 2015 to Minsk, the first Presidential visit from India to Belarus, provided significant impetus to further expanding bilateral relations. During the visit, six MoUs for cooperation in areas such as broadcasting, standardization, textiles, and financial securities were signed and a Roadmap for future cooperation was exchanged. Government of India also announced a line of credit (LoC) of US\$100 million to Belarus. President of Belarus visited India in 1997, 2007 and 2017.

The two countries cooperate and coordinate their efforts in the international, multilateral and regional matters with a commonality of views on several international and regional issues. Belarus has been supportive of India's candidature for a permanent seat at the UNSC, and supported India's candidature for the non-permanent seat of UNSC for the years 2021-22. Belarus also supported India at Nuclear Suppliers Group meetings. Similarly, India has supported Belarus for its membership in the NAM and also other international and multilateral fora like Inter-Parliamentary Union. India's supportive stand on various Resolutions in Geneva and New York (especially during India's non-permanent membership of UNSC in 2021-22) targeting Belarus for violation of human rights and restrictions on freedom of expression have also been appreciated by Belarus. Belarus recognizes India as an emerging global power and seeks to develop a "strategic relationship" with India. Bilateral trade between the two countries remains below its potential. Bilateral trade based on data from Department of Commerce for 2023-24 stands at USD 59.05 million. India has a trade surplus of USD 28.61 million with Belarus, for this period. Belarus played an important role in the setting up of the Advance Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials in Hyderabad in 1991. Indian PSU, BHEL, was awarded a contract worth US\$ 55.5 million under GoI's credit line for the Grodno Power Project-II in 2013.

BelAZ signed a contract with Coal India Ltd. for supply of 77 mining dump trucks in October 2019. Under a subsequent contract, 6 dump trucks of 220 tons capacity each, have already been delivered. A JV, Enrika Trades and Services Private Limited, has been set up between BelAZ and the Indian JV Gokal Group Company for service and maintenance of the BelAZ trucks. MTZ (Minsk Tractor Factory) has signed an agreement with the Indian company Erisha Agritech to supply a batch (2000) of MTZ Tractors to the Indian market.

During 9-10 November 2022, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Mr. Vladimir Makei visited India to co-Chair the 11th Session of the Indian-Belarusian Inter-governmental Commission

on Trade, Economy, Industry, Science, Technology and Culture (IGC-TEC).

On 9 November 2022, FM Makei met External Affairs Minister of India, Dr. S. Jaishankar and both sides reaffirmed the friendly and constructive nature of bilateral cooperation. FM Makei also held discussions with Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, India's Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers wherein the two sides discussed issues related to supply of Potash from Belarus to India.

The 11th Session of the IGC-TEC was held on 10 November 2022 and was co-Chaired by FM Makei and Shri Som Prakash, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry from the Indian side.

During the visit, FM Makei also held a meeting with Shri Piyush Goyal, India's Minister of Commerce & Industry. The two sides confirmed their firm focus on creating favorable conditions for increasing mutual trade and implementing joint projects in such areas as engineering, pharmaceuticals, and infrastructure development.

FM Makei also addressed the Belarusian-Indian Business & Investment Forum, organized under the auspices of the National Center for Marketing and Price Study of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), which was attended by more than 60 Indian companies.

Belarus participated in all the three editions of the Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS). Minister of Energy Viktor Karankevich participated in the first edition of the Summit held in January 2023, Minister of Industry Alexander Rogozhnik participated in the second edition of the Summit held in November 2023 and President of Belarus participated at the 3rd VOGSS held on 17th August, 2024 in virtual mode in the Leaders' Inaugural Session.

Belarusian business delegations have participated in Global Maritime India Summit, World Food India, UP International Trade Show, and various other exhibitions held in India during 2023 and 2024.

In December 2023, an 8-member business delegation led by FICCI visited Minsk. The delegation held B2B meetings with counterparts from Belarus, and visited Belarusian enterprises to assess potential opportunities for cooperation. A Belarus – India Business Forum was organised jointly by FICCI and Belarusian National Center for Marketing, during the visit.

Pharmaceuticals is an important area of cooperation, and forms a major component of India's exports to Belarus. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group for cooperation in the pharmaceuticals was held in New Delhi in February



2017. The 2nd meeting of the JWG on Pharma was held on 4 August 2023 in virtual format. The meeting was chaired by Economic Adviser of the Department of Pharmaceuticals from the Indian side and the Deputy Minister for Health from the Belarus side. A delegation of 19 pharma companies, led by Pharmexcil visited Belarus and participated in the international exhibition Healthcare of the Republic of Belarus in May 2023. Two Indian companies participated in the 29th edition of Healthcare of Belarus during 23-26 April 2024. In World Food India held during 20-21 September, 2024, eight Belarusian companies participated. During 12-15 November 2024, eight-member Indian business delegation participated at the Prodexpo 2024 held in Minsk.

The 2nd meeting of the Joint Working Group on Textiles was held on 18 September 2023. It was chaired by Trade Adviser from the Ministry of Textiles on the Indian side and the heads of Bellegprom and Belneftekhim on the Belarus side.

Science and Technology is an important component of bilateral relations as both countries have a strong scientific and technological establishment. The 9th meeting of the India-Belarus Joint Science & Technology Committee was held virtually on 5 Aug 2020. The two sides agreed to launch a Joint Research call for proposals. Under this joint call (launched in July 2022), out of the common proposals received, several projects in areas such as ICT, new materials, Biotech and medicine have been jointly selected for funding during 2023-24. A CSIR delegation, led by Secretary, DSIR visited Minsk in May 2023 and held meetings with their counterparts from National Academy of Sciences and State Committee of Science and Technology of Belarus.

On 18 January 2024, Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik and External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar met in Kampala during the 19th NAM Summit. During 12-13 March 2024, Foreign Minister Sergei Aleinik visited India. In the meeting with EAM, the two sides reviewed progress in the entire gamut of bilateral relations. They discussed ways to further intensify political cooperation and interaction in international organisations. Special attention was paid to the prospects of India-Belarus trade and economic cooperation. Foreign Minister Aleinik met Commerce and Industry Minister Sh. Piyush Goyal, and discussed preparations for the 12th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Commercial matters. Cooperation in the area of potash imports from Belarus to India was discussed in the meeting with Sh. Manuskh Mandaviya, Minister of Chemicals and Fertilizers.

External Affairs Minister met the newly appointed Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov in Astana on 3 July 2024 on the sidelines of 24th Summit of the Council of Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Both the leaders met again in New York on 27th September 2024 on the sidelines of Summit of Future.

Earlier, in February, 2023, for the very first time Ms. Anastasia Bulankova participated in World Hindi Conference

in Fiji. In July 2024, the Mission participated in special segment of the cultural festival Slavianski Bazar in Vitebsk at the event titled, Dialogue of Cultures: A Factor of Unity of the Peoples of the SCO Countries. An Indian pavilion was set up to showcase spices, snacks, art, and books from India at the Bazaar and cultural performances were also held at the event.

'India Day' was celebrated at the 'Listapad' International Film Festival of Belarus. The Deputy Minister of Culture of the Republic of Belarus H.E. Mr. Sergei Sorokach graced the occasion as Chief Guest. An Indian Movie 'Sirf Ek Banda Kafi Hai' was screened on 2 November 2024 and the exhibition on 'Journey of Indian Cinema' was also inaugurated. Indian Films 'Gandhi Tatha Chettu' won two awards and 'Bawri' won one award in different categories at the 30th edition of the Belarusian International Film Festival 'Listapad' held in November, 2024.

Ambassador met Vladimir Karanik, Chairman of the Regional Executive Committee, Grodno Region on 27 November. Both sides discussed bilateral cooperation in the field of education, culture and trade. Grodno region and the Indian state of Gujarat are planning to sign a sister city agreement. This will give a new impetus to cultural and inter-regional ties. Ambassador and Chairman inaugurated the Days of Indian Cinema in Grodno 27-29, November, 2024 and met with the Indian medial students.

Belarus is a partner in the ITEC Program of the Ministry of External Affairs since 1993. Over 400 Belarusian professionals have benefited under the Program through various professional courses in designated institutions in India.

The Indian Community in Belarus consists of around 101 Permanent Residents and 1056 Temporary Residents, including 916 students, almost all of them pursuing studies in medicine in State medical universities in Belarus. Indian art and culture, dance, yoga, ayurveda, films, etc. remain popular among Belarusian nationals. Many young Belarusians also take keen interest in learning Hindi and classical dance forms of India. Hindi classes had been started at Belarusian State University (BSU), Minsk in September 2017, the first batch of 15 students completed their 2-year course in July 2020. A Centre of Indian Culture at BSU, Minsk was inaugurated in July 2020. With the support of Local Resource Persons, classes of Yoga, Indian dance forms and Hindi, are held at the Embassy.

Belarus is part of India's e-visa program. Direct flights were started on the Minsk-Delhi route by Belavia in August 2023.

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# Economic and Trade Relations Between India and Belarus

## Historical Context

India and Belarus have maintained warm and cordial relations since Belarus gained independence in 1991. India was among the first countries to recognize Belarus as an independent nation, establishing formal diplomatic ties and opening its diplomatic mission in Minsk in 1992. Over the years, both nations have signed numerous agreements and Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) covering various sectors, including trade, economic cooperation, culture, education, media, sports, tourism, science and technology, agriculture, textiles, defence, and technical cooperation.

## Bilateral Trade Overview

Trade and economic cooperation between India and Belarus have steadily progressed since 1991. In 2023, bilateral trade stood at USD 111.8 million, with the trade balance favouring Belarus. Belarus is a significant source of potash fertilizers for India, which are crucial for India's agricultural sector.

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Despite the positive trajectory, bilateral trade has faced challenges, including a decline in trade volumes over recent years. Both countries have recognized the need to diversify their trade baskets and explore new areas of cooperation.

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### Key Exports and Imports

In 2022, Belarus exported goods worth \$174 million to India. The primary exports included potassic fertilizers (\$162 million), plastic building materials (\$3.15 million), and flax fibres (\$2.58 million). However, over the past five years, Belarusian exports to India have decreased at an annualized rate of 9.38%, from \$285 million in 2017 to \$174 million in 2022.

Conversely, in 2022, India exported goods valued at \$42.7 million to Belarus. The main exports were packaged medicaments (\$16.1 million), nitrogen heterocyclic compounds (\$3.39 million), and fish fillets (\$2.8 million). Indian exports to Belarus have also seen a decline over the past five years, decreasing at an annualized rate of 15.8% from \$101 million in 2017 to \$42.7 million in 2022.

### Investment and Economic Cooperation

In 2021, the inflow of direct investment from India to Belarus increased significantly, reaching \$1.3 million. This uptick indicates a growing interest among Indian investors in the Belarusian market. Additionally, Belarus planned to hold a National Exposition in New Delhi during the “India International Trade Fair 2022” to showcase its products and explore further economic cooperation.

### Institutional Framework

The Belarusian-Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Industrial, Scientific, Technological, and Cultural Cooperation (IGC) was established in 1997 to facilitate and promote bilateral cooperation across various sectors. This commission has been instrumental in identifying new areas of collaboration and addressing challenges in bilateral trade.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Despite the positive trajectory, bilateral trade has faced challenges, including a decline in trade volumes over recent years. Both countries have recognized the need to diversify their trade baskets and explore new areas of cooperation. Potential sectors for future collaboration include pharmaceuticals, information technology, machinery, and the development of smart cities. India’s “Make in India” initiative presents opportunities for Belarusian businesses to invest and establish joint ventures in India.

### Conclusion

India and Belarus share a robust foundation of economic and trade relations, underscored by mutual respect and cooperation. While there have been challenges, both nations are committed to strengthening their economic ties and exploring new avenues for collaboration. With the existing institutional frameworks and shared interests, the future of India-Belarus economic and trade relations appears promising.



# India-Belarus Science and Technology Cooperation

Strengthening Partnerships for  
Innovation and Progress



**I**ndia and Belarus have long shared a strong partnership in the realm of science and technology, marked by fruitful collaborations and a commitment to advancing innovation. The foundation for this robust cooperation was laid in 1992 with the signing of an inter-governmental agreement, coinciding with the establishment of diplomatic ties between the two nations. Alongside Russia, Belarus stands as one of India's key scientific partners in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region.

### Framework for Cooperation

The India-Belarus Science and Technology (S&T) Cooperation Programme is driven by the Joint Commission on Science & Technology, co-chaired by representatives from the Department of Science and Technology (DST) of India and the State Committee on Science and Technology (SCST) of Belarus. This commission serves as a pivotal platform to foster research collaborations and facilitate bilateral workshops.

The collaboration spans various crucial sectors, including:

1. Energy
2. Information and Communications Technologies (ICT)
3. Biotechnology, Medicine, and Pharmacy
4. Agro-technology and Food Security
5. Clean Technology for Environment
6. Materials Sciences and Metallurgy

### Key Agreements and Initiatives

A significant milestone was achieved in 2017 when the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB) signed an agreement to bolster cooperation. This agreement supports workshops, seminars, and researcher exchanges, enabling scientists from both nations to submit joint research proposals for funding.

Furthermore, an MoU was inked between India's International Center for Advanced Research of Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) and Belarus' Belarusian Institute for System

Analysis and Information Support of the Scientific and Technical Sphere (BELISA). This partnership aims to foster collaboration in scientific, technical, and innovation domains.

### Recent Developments

The 9th meeting of the Joint Commission in August 2020 underscored a renewed commitment to advancing cooperation. Key mechanisms agreed upon included:

- Enhancing opportunities for exchanges of S&T initiatives
- Intensifying technology transfer for the creation of joint enterprises
- Promoting commercialization of technologies
- Supporting Science Technology Parks on both sides

A joint research call for proposals launched in July 2022 resulted in the selection of several projects for funding in 2023-24, focusing on ICT, new materials, biotech, and medicine.

In May 2023, a high-level CSIR delegation led by the Secretary (DSIR) visited Minsk. Discussions with Belarusian counterparts centered on expanding cooperation and organizing regular calls for joint project proposals.

Further strengthening ties, December 2024 witnessed the signing of an agreement between the Directorate of Forensic Science Services, Ministry of Home Affairs of India, and the State Forensic Examination Committee of Belarus. This agreement fosters collaboration in forensic science, a critical field for law enforcement and judicial processes.

### Future Prospects

The India-Belarus science and technology partnership continues to hold immense potential. With growing research collaborations, technological exchanges, and commercial ventures, both nations are poised to contribute significantly to global scientific advancements. This enduring relationship exemplifies how cross-border cooperation can drive innovation and mutual progress in an increasingly interconnected world.





# India-Belarus Defence Cooperation

## Strengthening Strategic Ties

### Introduction

India and Belarus have shared a strong defence partnership since establishing diplomatic ties in 1992. With Belarus known for its advanced military technology and India emerging as a global defence power, the collaboration between the two nations has grown to encompass joint research, development, and technology transfer. This strategic relationship plays a significant role in enhancing India's defence capabilities and fostering bilateral ties rooted in mutual respect and shared security concerns.

### Foundations of Defence Collaboration

The foundation of India-Belarus defence cooperation lies in a series of agreements focused on military research, technical collaboration, and defence production. These agreements have enabled both countries to explore avenues for the co-development and modernization of

military equipment.

### Key milestones include:

- **1993 Agreement on Defence and Technical Cooperation:** This agreement laid the groundwork for long-term cooperation in defence-related fields, including training, technical exchanges, and defence procurement.
- **Subsequent Strategic Dialogues:** Regular high-level exchanges between defence officials have further strengthened the partnership, ensuring continuous engagement and collaboration.

### Joint Research and Development Initiatives

One of the defining features of India-Belarus defence cooperation is their focus on joint research and development (R&D) projects. Belarus has made significant contributions in the fields of radar systems,



optics, and high-precision equipment. Belarus's expertise in advanced radar systems has been leveraged by India to bolster its surveillance capabilities. Belarusian technology in night vision devices and optical systems has been critical in enhancing the combat readiness of Indian armed forces. Joint efforts to upgrade and maintain existing defence equipment have proved beneficial for both nations.

### Defence Trade and Exhibitions

Defence trade between India and Belarus has seen steady growth, with Belarus actively participating in Indian defence expos, such as:

- **DefExpo and Aero India:** These events provide platforms for Belarusian companies to showcase cutting-edge military technologies and explore business opportunities with Indian defence firms.
- **Defence Procurement:** India has procured

advanced radar systems and electronic warfare equipment from Belarus to strengthen its defence infrastructure.

### Capacity Building and Training

Training and capacity-building initiatives are essential elements of the defence partnership between the two nations. Belarusian defence personnel have participated in specialized training programs in India, while Indian officials have benefited from technical training in Belarus. Both countries regularly exchange knowledge and expertise in military tactics, technological advancements, and operational strategies.

### Focus on Indigenous Defence Production

India's push for self-reliance in defence manufacturing under the "Make in India" initiative has created new opportunities for joint ventures with Belarus. Belarus has been a key partner in transferring defence technologies to India, enabling local production and reducing dependence on foreign imports. Collaborative projects are being explored to co-develop high-tech military equipment for domestic use and export to other nations.

### Challenges and Opportunities

Despite significant achievements, some challenges persist in India-Belarus defence cooperation. The evolving geopolitical landscape, including Western sanctions on Belarus, poses hurdles to expanding defence ties. Keeping pace with rapidly evolving defence technologies requires sustained investment and innovation.

However, these challenges also present opportunities for deeper collaboration:

- **Cybersecurity and Emerging Technologies:** Cooperation in cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and unmanned systems offers immense potential.
- **Space and Aerospace Collaboration:** Belarus's expertise in aerospace technologies can complement India's advancements in space research.

### Looking Ahead

Both nations have expressed their commitment to expanding defence cooperation in the coming years. Key areas of focus include:

- **Advanced R&D Projects:** Continued efforts to co-develop cutting-edge defence technologies.
- **Increased Defence Trade:** Expanding the scope of defence procurement and joint production initiatives.
- **High-Level Dialogues:** Strengthening institutional mechanisms to facilitate regular defence consultations and strategic exchanges.

# LANGUAGE AND ARTS

## BUILDING CULTURAL BRIDGES



**T**he strong cultural ties between India and Belarus, rooted in their historical engagement since the Soviet era, continue to flourish today. Indian films, music, and dance forms enjoy enduring popularity in Belarus, and the interest among young Belarusians in learning Hindi and classical Indian dances highlights the deepening people-to-people connections.

### Cultural Exchange and Initiatives

The Embassy of India in Minsk plays a pivotal role in

promoting Indian culture through various initiatives. Free classes in yoga, Hindi, and classical Indian dance forms are offered by the Embassy and have gained immense popularity among locals. These classes not only provide an avenue for cultural learning but also create opportunities for trained students to perform in cultural shows organised by the Embassy across Belarus.

To commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Belarus during April 2022 to March 2023, the Embassy hosted numerous music and dance concerts featuring



Belarusian artists performing Indian classical art forms. A highlight of this celebration was the visit of the Indian performing troupe “Bhairi Bhavani” in July 2022. The troupe showcased their talent at the prestigious Slaviyanski Bazaar in Vitebsk and performed in the cities of Minsk and Gomel.

On 9 November 2023, India and Belarus signed a Programme of Cooperation in the field of culture for 2023-25, further solidifying their cultural partnership. In February 2024, a 10-member Belarusian delegation, including singers from “Polesskie Zori” and craftspeople, participated in the 37th Surajkund Mela in India, showcasing Belarusian cultural heritage.

### Cinema as a Bridge

Cinema continues to be a significant medium of cultural exchange. In recent years, new Indian movies have been released in Belarus, sometimes on the same dates as their Indian premieres. To sustain this interest, the Embassy organizes regular screenings of Indian films dubbed in Russian. Festivals of Indian Cinema have been held in Minsk and other cities in 2021, 2022, and 2023. In April 2023, a two-day festival of Indian cinema was organized in Minsk to mark the anniversary of diplomatic relations.

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Educational ties between the two nations date back to the Soviet era and continue to thrive. Belarus hosts Indian students, primarily in medical universities and institutions.

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### Literary Contributions and Intellectual Exchange

Belarus has a rich tradition of scholarly engagement with Indian culture. Notable contributions include the book *Key to Vedas* by Belarusian Sanskrit scholar Prof. Mikhail Mikhailov, which has been translated into English. The late Ms. Taisa Bondar, a prominent Indophile, translated the verses of Saint Kabir into Russian. In July 2016, the release of *First Mandala of the Rigveda* translated from Sanskrit into Belarusian by writer and poet Igar Kulikov marked another significant milestone.

A symbol of India’s enduring influence in Belarus is the bust of Mahatma Gandhi unveiled by the President of India at the Belarusian State University on 3 June 2015.

### Educational Collaboration

Educational ties between the two nations date back to the Soviet era and continue to thrive. Belarus hosts Indian students, primarily in medical universities and institutions. Additionally, Belarus benefits from India’s ITEC (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) programme, with 15 slots allocated for the 2024-25 period. Over 350 experts and specialists from Belarus have participated in ITEC courses, gaining training in diverse fields such as Information Technology, Management, Administration, Banking & Finance, Education & Human Resource Development, and English.

Belarus has expressed interest in establishing cooperation in the joint production of feature films involving both Indian and Belarusian artists, demonstrating a forward-looking approach to creative collaboration.



# YOGA

## A GIFT FROM INDIA TO THE WORLD

Yoga, a timeless gift from India to the world, continues to inspire and transform lives across the globe. Through strategic initiatives and the support of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has successfully elevated yoga to an international phenomenon. As Indian missions abroad continue to promote yoga, the practice will undoubtedly reach new heights, fostering global health, harmony, and peace. In celebrating yoga, we celebrate a legacy of wellness that transcends borders and unites humanity in the pursuit of holistic well-being.

**Y**oga, an ancient practice originating from India, has transcended geographical and cultural boundaries to become a global phenomenon. With its physical, mental, and spiritual benefits, yoga has been embraced by millions around the world. This ancient discipline, which harmonizes the mind, body, and spirit, is a testament to India's rich cultural heritage. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has taken significant strides to promote yoga internationally, showcasing it as a precious gift to the world.

### The Importance of Yoga

Yoga, which means “union” in Sanskrit, is a practice that encompasses physical postures, breathing techniques, meditation, and ethical principles. It aims to create a balance between the mind, body, and spirit,

promoting overall well-being. The benefits of yoga are well-documented and include:

**1. Physical Health:** Yoga improves flexibility, strength, and balance. It helps in managing chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis. Regular practice can lead to better cardiovascular health and enhanced respiratory function.

**2. Mental Health:** Yoga reduces stress, anxiety, and depression. It promotes mental clarity, emotional stability, and enhances cognitive function. The mindfulness aspect of yoga fosters a positive outlook on life.

**3. Spiritual Growth:** Yoga encourages self-awareness and inner peace. It fosters a deeper connection with oneself and the universe, promoting spiritual growth and enlightenment.

### India's Initiatives in Promoting Yoga

India has taken numerous initiatives to promote yoga on both national and international stages. These efforts underscore the country's commitment to sharing this ancient practice with the world.

**1. International Day of Yoga:** One of the most significant initiatives is the International Day of Yoga, proposed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2014. Celebrated on June 21st each year, this day has become a global event, with millions of people participating in yoga sessions, workshops, and seminars across the world.

**2. Yoga Certification Board:** The Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy) has established the Yoga Certification Board to promote authentic yoga practices and ensure the quality of yoga instructors. This initiative aims to standardise yoga education and training globally.

**3. Promotion through Indian Missions Abroad:** Indian embassies and consulates worldwide actively promote yoga through various programs and events. They organize yoga workshops, classes, and demonstrations to introduce and educate people about the benefits of yoga. These efforts have significantly contributed to the global popularity of yoga.

**4. Collaborations and Partnerships:** India has entered into collaborations with various countries and international organizations to promote yoga. These partnerships include cultural exchanges, joint research, and the establishment of yoga centres abroad.

**5. Integration in Education:** The Indian government has integrated yoga into the school curriculum, emphasizing its importance for physical and mental development. This initiative aims to inculcate healthy habits in children from a young age.

### Narendra Modi's Role in Promoting Yoga

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been a pivotal figure in the global promotion of yoga. His vision and initiatives have played a crucial role in bringing yoga to the international forefront.

**1. Advocacy at Global Platforms:** Prime Minister Modi has consistently advocated for yoga at various international platforms, highlighting its universal appeal and benefits. His speech at the United Nations General Assembly in 2014 was instrumental in the adoption of the International Day of Yoga.



**2. Yogic Diplomacy:** Modi's visits to various countries often include yoga demonstrations and events, showcasing India's cultural heritage. These events have garnered significant attention and participation, strengthening diplomatic ties through cultural exchange.

**3. Support for Research and Development:** Under Modi's leadership, there has been increased support for research on yoga and its benefits. This has led to greater scientific validation of yoga's efficacy, further promoting its acceptance worldwide.

**4. Public Engagement:** Modi actively participates in yoga events, inspiring millions to take up the practice. His involvement has added credibility and visibility to yoga, encouraging people from all walks of life to embrace it.

### Efforts by Indian Missions Abroad

Indian missions abroad have been instrumental in promoting yoga, reflecting the country's commitment to cultural diplomacy. These missions organize a variety of activities to spread awareness about yoga and its benefits.

**1. Cultural Events:** Embassies and consulates host cultural events featuring yoga demonstrations, lectures, and workshops. These events attract a diverse audience, including local communities, expatriates, and dignitaries.

**2. Partnership with Local Organizations:** Indian missions collaborate with local yoga centres, universities, and wellness institutions to promote yoga. These partnerships help in reaching a broader audience and integrating yoga into local communities.

**3. Digital Outreach:** With the advent of digital media, Indian missions have utilised online platforms to conduct virtual yoga sessions and webinars. This has enabled wider participation, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic when physical gatherings were restricted.

**4. Yoga Scholarships and Programmes:** Some missions offer scholarships and programmes for individuals interested in pursuing yoga studies in India. This fosters cultural exchange and enhances global understanding of yoga.

### The Global Acceptance of Yoga

The widespread acceptance of yoga is a testimony to its universal appeal and effectiveness. From bustling cities to remote villages, people around the world have embraced yoga as a means to improve their health and well-being. The integration of yoga into mainstream healthcare, education, and corporate wellness programs further underscores its global significance.





# Incredible India

A World of Experiences Awaits



Incredible India invites you to explore its many wonders, immerse yourself in its rich heritage, and create memories that will last a lifetime. Whether you seek adventure, relaxation, cultural immersion, or spiritual enlightenment, India promises a journey like no other.

India, a land of mesmerising contrasts and timeless traditions, extends a warm welcome to tourists from across the globe. With its rich cultural heritage, stunning landscapes, and diverse experiences, India stands as a premier destination for travellers seeking a blend of history, adventure, spirituality, and natural beauty. From the serene backwaters of Kerala to the bustling streets of Mumbai, India offers a tapestry of wonders for every kind of tourist.

### **A Land of Diversity and Rich Heritage**

India's vast and varied geography ensures that every traveller finds something to captivate their interest. The country is a mosaic of cultures, languages, and traditions, making it a truly unique destination. Its historical legacy, reflected in the majestic forts, palaces, and temples, provides a deep connection to its past. The country's cultural diversity is celebrated through its festivals, art forms, and cuisine, offering visitors a truly immersive experience.

### **Types of Tourism in India**

#### **1. Historical and Cultural Tourism**

India's historical sites are some of the most iconic in the world. The Taj Mahal in Agra, a symbol of eternal love, draws millions of visitors each year. The ancient city of Varanasi, with its spiritual significance and vibrant ghats, offers a cultural experience. Jaipur, with its grand palaces and forts, showcases the opulence of Rajasthan's royal heritage. Each region of India is home to historical landmarks that narrate the tales of bygone eras.

#### **2. Spiritual Tourism**

India is renowned as a spiritual haven, attracting those on a quest for inner peace and enlightenment. The Himalayas are dotted with monasteries and meditation centres, offering tranquility and spiritual growth. Rishikesh, on the banks of the Ganges, is famous for yoga and meditation retreats. The sacred city of Haridwar and the temples of Kanchipuram and Madurai provide insights into the country's deep spiritual roots.





### 3. Adventure Tourism

For thrill-seekers, India offers a plethora of adventure activities. The Himalayan region is ideal for trekking, mountaineering, and skiing, with popular destinations like Manali, Shimla, and Leh-Ladakh. The Rajasthan desert offers camel safaris and dune adventures. Coastal regions such as Goa and Kerala provide opportunities for water sports like scuba diving, surfing, and snorkelling.



### 4. Wildlife Tourism

India's diverse ecosystems are home to an array of wildlife species. Ranthambore National Park and Jim Corbett National Park are renowned for tiger sightings. Kaziranga National Park is famous for its one-horned rhinoceros. The rich biodiversity of Periyar Wildlife Sanctuary and Sundarbans National Park offers unique wildlife experiences amidst lush landscapes.



### 5. Culinary Tourism

Indian cuisine is as diverse as its culture, offering a rich palette of flavours and ingredients. From the spicy curries of the north to the coastal seafood of the south, India's food reflects its regional diversity. Delhi and Mumbai are renowned for their street food, while Punjab and Kerala offer traditional feasts. Culinary tours provide an immersive experience into the country's gastronomic traditions.

### 6. Eco-Tourism

Eco-tourism in India focuses on sustainable travel and conservation. The serene backwaters of Kerala, with its houseboat cruises, offer a unique way to explore natural beauty. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands provide pristine beaches and coral reefs. Efforts in eco-tourism promote responsible travel and environmental conservation, allowing visitors to experience India's natural splendour while supporting local communities.



### 7. Luxury Tourism

India's luxury tourism offers opulent experiences in palatial hotels and royal residences. The Taj Lake Palace in Udaipur and the Rambagh Palace in Jaipur provide regal stays fit for royalty. Luxury trains like the Palace on Wheels and Maharajas' Express offer a journey through India's landscapes in utmost comfort. The country's luxury tourism sector caters to those seeking exclusive and high-end experiences.





## 10. Shopping and Craft Tourism

India's markets are a treasure trove of unique crafts and souvenirs. From the bustling bazaars of Delhi and Mumbai to the artisanal markets of Jaipur and Kolkata, visitors can find handcrafted textiles, jewellery, and artifacts. Traditional crafts such as Kashmiri carpets, Kanjeevaram silk, and Madhubani paintings reflect the country's rich artisan heritage.



## 8. Festivals and Cultural Events

India's calendar is filled with vibrant festivals and cultural events. Diwali, the festival of lights, and Holi, the festival of colours, offer a glimpse into India's celebratory spirit. The Kumbh Mela attracts millions of pilgrims to sacred riverbanks, while Navratri and Durga Puja showcase elaborate rituals and cultural performances. Attending these festivals provides a unique insight into the country's rich traditions and communal celebrations.

## 9. Wellness Tourism

India is a global hub for wellness and holistic health. Ayurveda, the ancient system of medicine, is practiced extensively in Kerala and other parts of the country. Wellness retreats offer yoga, meditation, and therapeutic treatments designed to rejuvenate the body and mind. Rishikesh and Pondicherry are renowned for their wellness centres and holistic healing practices.



## India's Warm Welcome

India's hospitality is legendary, with its culture deeply rooted in the tradition of treating guests with utmost respect and warmth. The concept of "Atithi Devo Bhava" (The guest is God) permeates the Indian way of life, ensuring that visitors feel welcomed and valued. Whether staying in a luxury hotel or a local guesthouse, travellers are met with genuine friendliness and a willingness to share India's rich cultural tapestry.



## A World of Experiences Awaits

From the majestic landscapes and historical grandeur to the vibrant festivals and spiritual retreats, India offers an unparalleled array of experiences for every type of traveller. As you embark on your journey through this incredible land, you will discover that India's true beauty lies in its diversity and the warmth of its people.

From the majestic landscapes and historical grandeur to the vibrant festivals and spiritual retreats, India offers an unparalleled array of experiences for every type of traveller.

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