Chandrawat & Partners



BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA - POLAND

INTRODUCTION

Indo-Polish relations are the bilateral relations between the Republic of Poland and the Republic of India. Historically, relations have generally been friendly, characterised by understanding and cooperation on an international front.





HISTORY

ORIGIN: THE AGE OF DISCOVERY

During the 16th century Renaissance and the Age of Discovery period in the Crown of the Kingdom of Poland, a small number of Poland's nobility, statesmen, merchants and writers visited India and fostered the abiding interest of the Polish people in the civilization, philosophy, spiritual traditions, art and culture of India. One of the first diplomatic dignitaries and travellers during this period to make Polish contact with India—then under the rule of the Mughal Empire, was the Polish nobleman and statesman Paweł Palczowski who was a long serving royal courtier to King Sigismund III Vasa and from the distinguished senior Silesian noble house of Saszowski family. Others from this period include Erazm Kretkowski a Polish diplomatic representative for King Sigismund II Augustus in the Ottoman Empire in 1538 and royal castellan of Brześć Kujawski and Gniezno, and Krzysztof Pawłowski a Polish seafarer and diarist who provided a description of India preserved in Polish, recorded in a letter dated 1569 to an unknown person; Pawłowski who came to India in 1569, left a rudimentary description of the sea route from Gdańsk via Portugal (Lisbon) to India (Goa) in the form of a comprehensive letter-relation to a friend in Kraków, in which described the customs of 'dark' people. A consequence of these voyages soon provided Indian echoes in Polish literature.

As early as 1611, the Polish Catholic priest, translator and poet, Stanislaw Grochowski (1542-1612), published a book titled Cudowne wiersze z indyjskiego jezyka (Wonderful Verses from the Indian Language). It was a translation of the Bhagavad Gita, which had first been translated from Sanskrit into Medieval Latin by the Italian poet and Jesuit missionary Francisco Benci (1542-1594), who had stayed in India and later lectured at the Jesuit college in Pułtusk, Poland, where Stanislaw Grochowski was a professor.

19th century

During the 19th century, several Sanskrit classics were translated into Polish and a 'History of Ancient India' in Polish was one of the first of its kind to be published in Europe. A Chair of Sanskrit was set up at the Jagiellonian University of Kraków in 1893. Studies and research in Indian languages and literature had developed at the Universities of Kraków, Warsaw, Wrocław and Poznań.

Aid to Polish refugees in India

During the Second World War Occupation of Poland by the Soviet Union in the east and the German Reich in the west, the Maharaja Jam Sahib of Nawanagar State, Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji Jadeja of Nawanagar, extended hospitality and sanctuary to more than 640 Polish displaced persons, the majority were orphaned children and women, out of some 5,000 refugees sent to India from Soviet deportation, and despite India itself suffering from a severe backdrop of drought and famine at that time.

After their ship and plight was turned away by every country approached and when the British Crown governor in Mumbai (Bombay) too refused them entry, the Maharaja Jam Sahib, frustrated by the lack of empathy and unwillingness of the British government to act, ordered the ship to dock at Rozi port in his province. The displaced persons, lived in camps in several places in western India, including Balachadi (near Jamnagar), Valivade (near Kolhapur) and Panchgani. Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji's unparalleled act of generosity, saw him become patron of the first public school complex founded in Poland after the Second World War, located in the capital of Warsaw, and named Jam Saheba Digvijay Sinhji in his honour. In 2012, the Sejm of the Republic of Poland, honoured the 50th anniversary of his death, posthumously awarding the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland, and the Warsaw City Council named one of its city park squares in Ochota district after him - the 'Square of the Good Maharaja' (Skwer Dobrego Maharadży).



ECONOMIC TIES

Bilateral trade between the two countries has grown about eleven times from 1992 to 2008. Bilateral trade, which totaled US$675.73 million (approximately ₹3,825 crores) and US$861.78 million (approximately ₹4,873 crores) in 2006 and 2007 respectively, crossed US$1 billion (approximately ₹5,700 crores) in 2008 with US$1274.77 million (approximately ₹7,000 crores). During 2005, major Indian companies signed several agreements on investments that are expected to create more than 3,500 new jobs in Poland. India's major exports to Poland include Tea, Coffee, Spices, Textiles, Pharmaceuticals, machinery and instruments, auto parts and surgical items. India's imports from Poland include machinery except electric and electronic appliances, artificial resins, plastic material, non-ferrous metals and machine tools. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has sent several delegations to Poland to explore economic opportunities in various sectors. Indian companies such as Tata Consultancy Services, Wipro Technologies, ZenSar and Videocon have already set up their bases in Poland. The 'Indo-Polish Chamber of Commerce and Industry'(IPCCI) was formed in 2008 under the astute leadership of Mr Jowahar Jyothi Singh(JJ Singh) to protect and represent the interests within the range of economic activity and to promote economic relations between India and Poland. Direct nonstop flights provided by LOT Polish Airlines between Warsaw Chopin Airport and Indira Gandhi International Airport started September 12, 2019.

Both countries have a long-standing history of cooperation in science and technology. The first Indo-Polish Agreement on this cooperation was signed in March 1974; subsequently, a new agreement with more focus Programmes of Cooperation (POC) in science and technology were signed between the two countries from time to time. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) have ongoing scientific exchange programs with the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAS).



DEFENCE TIES

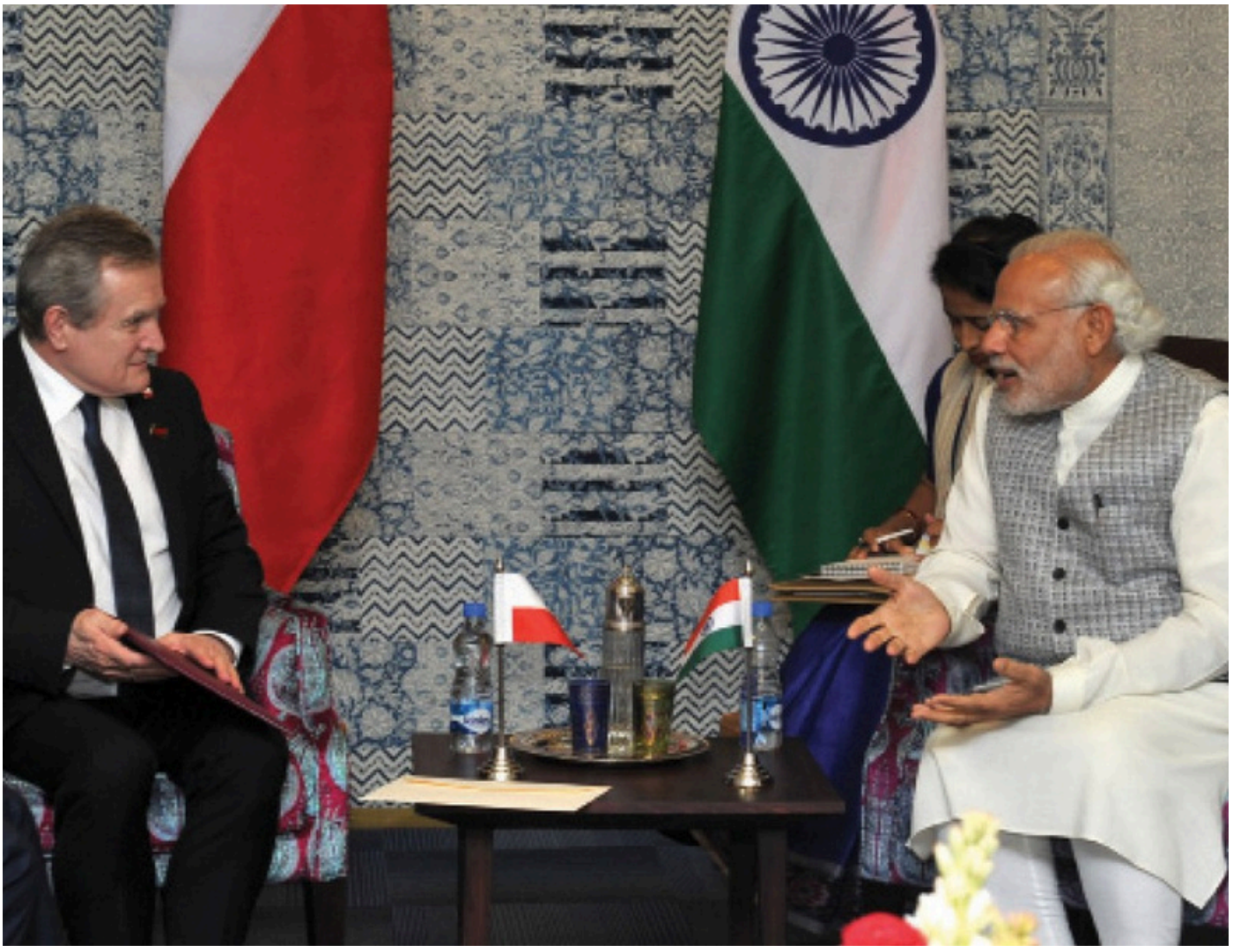
India's defence relations with Poland have grown from military cooperation to comprehensive defence cooperation that includes courses, training for UN peacekeeping operations, and exchange of observers during army exercises. India and Poland signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Defence Cooperation in February 2003 during the visit of the Prime Minister of Poland Leszek Miller to India. India awarded contracts worth US$600 million (₹3.5 thousand-crores) to Poland for modernisation of tanks and the acquisition of air defence missiles. The T-72M1 with 800 horsepower engines were upgraded with 1000 hp engines and re-equipped with modern fire control systems (DRAWA-T) and thermal imaging equipment. Both India and Poland are considering privatising their defence industries and see good prospects for mutual investments. Indian Army chief General Deepak Kapoor visited Warsaw in March 2008 followed by Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister Ryszard Schnepf in June the same year. India also acquired 625 assault parachutes from the Polish company Air-Pol with automatic devices ensuring their reliable opening, with a total value of US$1.5 million. India's growing defence buy-outs from Poland has disappointed Russia which had considered India a safe market for its military hardware. Poland also delivered a batch of 80 WZT-3 armoured recovery vehicles (ARVs) to the Indian Army in 2001 at the Kolar Gold Fields facility in Karnataka and the remaining batch in 2004. The final batch of 40 WZT-3 ARVs were assembled in India from kits supplied from Poland.

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RESIDENT DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS

- India has an embassy in Warsaw.
- Poland has an embassy in New Delhi and a consulate-general in Mumbai.





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