Chandrawat
& Partners



BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA - UNITED KINGDOM

INTRODUCTION

India–United Kingdom relations, also known as Indian–British relations or Indo–British relations, refers to international relations between India and the United Kingdom. India has a high commission in London and two consulates-general in Birmingham and Edinburgh. The United Kingdom has a high commission in New Delhi and five deputy high commissions in Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Kolkata. Both countries are full members of the Commonwealth of Nations.

The United Kingdom has an Indian population of over 1.5 million. Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom David Cameron described Indian–British relations as the "New Special Relationship" in 2010.



HISTORY

East India Company (1600–1857)

Trade was established between Tudor England and Mughal India in 1600 when Elizabeth I granted the newly formed East India Company a royal charter by sending precious gifts to the Mughal court of Emperor Akbar the Great. During the time of Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1707, India was a leading manufacturer, with a 25 percent share of the world's GDP. By the time the British left the country its share of global GDP was near 4%. During the 18th century, the East India Company began to gain greater influence in India.

The Battle of Plassey in 1757 led to the conquest of Bengal while by 1857, following various treaties and wars with Indian kingdoms (such as the Anglo-Mysore Wars with Tipu Sultan, the Anglo-Maratha Wars and both the First and Second Anglo-Sikh Wars), the East India Company controlled most of the Indian subcontinent. Following the Indian Rebellion of 1857, where Indian sepoys rebelled against their British officers, the East India Company was dissolved the following year.

The assets of the British East India Company became so huge that the British government decided to step in. India served as the main base for the British Empire's expansion across Asia and would remain the empire's most important colony and main source of income as well as soldiers until independence. Queen Victoria became Empress of India in 1876. From a small trading outpost, India became the jewel in the British crown.

British Raj (1858–1947)

In 1858, the British Government seized control of the territories and treaty arrangements of the former East India Company. In 1876, the area, which included modern India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, became "the Indian Empire" (often known historically as the "British Raj") with British Monarch Queen Victoria proclaimed as "Empress of India" (a title held by her successors until 1947). The British Indian Army was established and assisted Britain in many wars, including the Anglo-Afghan Wars, the Anglo-Gurkha Wars, the Anglo-Burmese Wars, the First and Second Opium Wars, and both World Wars.

The end of British rule

The Indian independence movement gained traction following the Indian Rebellion of 1857. Opposition to British rule increased, where ideology of satyagraha or non-violence was taken to a height by Gandhiji while on another hand, 'self defense' or armed revolution embraced by Nationalists like by Bhagat Singh and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, eventually led to the fall of British Raj and Independence of India on 15 August, 1947. However, the end of the Raj also resulted the disastrous Partition of India that resulted into creating two new entities, Dominion of Pakistan (which included the province of East Bengal that would later achieve independence as Bangladesh) and the Dominion of India.

Dominion of India (1947–1950)

Independence came in 1947 with the Partition of India into the dominions of India and Pakistan, within the Commonwealth of Nations. King George VI, who as British Monarch had been "Emperor of India", abandoned this title in 1947, and served as India's ceremonial head of state as 'King of India' (in much the same way, he also served as 'King of Pakistan'). In 1950 India became a republic and the link with the British crown was severed.

The Dominion was part of the Sterling Area (the Republic of India finally leaving in 1966). It is estimated the UK took wealth worth more than 46 Trillion US Dollars from India within the time of its rule.

Republic of India (since 1950)

India decided to remain in the Commonwealth of Nations after becoming a Republic. Both Britain and India have since pursued quite divergent diplomatic paths.

In particular, India became a major force within the Non-Aligned Movement, which initially sought to avoid taking sides during the Cold War. This contrasted with Britain's position as a founding member of NATO, and key ally of the United States.

ECONOMY

India is the second largest foreign investor in the UK. While UK ranks 18th as a trading partner of India and third after Mauritius and Singapore as an investor in India. There are many bilateral trade agreements between the two nations designed to strengthen ties. For example, in 2005, the Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) was inaugurated in New Delhi aimed at boosting two-way bilateral investments.

The growth of India's multinational companies contributed greatly to UK's business and economy. As of 2019, Indian companies in the UK generated over 48 billion pounds. Also, they have employed more than 105,000 people in the UK.

The British government has chosen India as one of its most influential trade partners because it is one of the "fastest growing economies in the world." In 2013, Cameron formed the biggest trade delegation by accommodating more than 100 representatives that varied from multinational corporations, medium-to-small-sized corporations, and universities to India.

Compared to the 2010 trade mission, the UK and India negotiated to double the trade volume by 2015. Following the trade delegation, total UK goods and services exports to India increased by 14% from January to September 2013. Between 6 and 8 November 2016, then British PM Theresa May visited India for a bilateral trip. The key topic of discussions would be May's plan for post-Brexit relations with India. Discussion on a possible free-trade agreement is also in the agenda.

According to a MEA (Ministry of External Affairs, India) spokesperson, there is "substantial scope for further strengthening bilateral cooperation across a range of sectors, including science & technology, finance, trade & investment, and defense & security."

Following a meeting between Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Chancellor of the Exchequer Philip Hammond at the 9th UK-India economic and financial dialogue, Jaitley announced that the two countries had agreed to discuss a bilateral free trade agreement. However, Jaitley stated that a formal dialogue on the agreement would only begin post-Brexit.

In September 2017 the High Commission of India in the UK, with the support of the UK India Business Council, announced the Access India programme, a unique scheme set up to help many more UK SMEs export to India. Whilst many large UK companies have a presence in India, small and medium-sized British companies do not. India hopes that the Access to India programme will not only encourage British SMEs to export to India but also inspire them to manufacture in India fulfilling the aims of the Make in India initiative.



EDUCATION

Various Indian students have gone to the UK to attain higher levels of education. From 2004 to 2009, the number of Indian students studying in the UK doubled from 10,000 to over 20,000. By 2009, India was one of the top ten countries sending students to study in the UK. Because the number of students grew, the British government and the Indian government agreed to cooperate.

During the 2010 UK-India Summit, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom and India came into agreement to support education by implementing the India Education and Research Initiative (UKIERI). In this summit, Cameron stated that "Education is an area where India and the UK could pool some of the advantages for mutual benefit." He continued by stating that a higher quality of education would lead to providing opportunities for all, thus encouraging economic growth and overcoming poverty for India.

After its implementation, the number of Indian students studying in the UK did not increase as expected by both governments. In 2010, the then Home Secretary Theresa May announced a stricter immigration law. This included tighter rules for international students. Students were forced to return to their homeland after earning their degree.

Since the immigration law, there has been a rapid decrease of 25% in the number of first year students from India during the year 2012–2013. Theresa May's action has been criticised by people such as historian Edward Acton. In March 2015, Phillip Hammond stated during an interview with DD News that Theresa May's policy has been cancelled. Starting from 2015, Indian students are able to stay in the UK for six months after their graduation.

Looking at education as a whole compared to Indian interests within the UK private education and high education like Oxford and Cambridge, and triple accredited business schools as it can be an entitled fact or observable proof that "The UK is the solution to Indian problems and that India is the solution to the UK's". The UK's education toward politics, economics, culture, and commerce is respected and highly regarded the world over.

POLITICAL RELATION

Politically, relations between India and the UK occur mostly through the multilateral organisations of which both are members, such as the Commonwealth of Nations, the World Trade Organization and the Asian Development Bank.

Three Presidents of India have paid state visits to the United Kingdom: Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan in June 1963, Ramaswamy Venkataraman in October 1990, and Pratibha Patil in 2009.

HM Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom paid state visits to India in November 1963, April 1990, and in October 1997. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited the UK in 2006.

After becoming the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Cameron was actively involved in enhancing the Indian-British relationship on various dimensions, such as "business, energy security, climate change, education, research, security and defense, and international relations."

His effort could be seen in his political visits in India on 18–20 February 2013 [30] and on 14 November 2013. Following his visit, other politicians such as Former UK Foreign Secretary William Hague and the then Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne visited India to accomplish a trade mission in July 2014.

During their visit, Osborne announced that a statue of Gandhi would be erected in London's Parliament Square to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Gandhi's return to India from South Africa. Upon unveiling the statue on 14 March 2015, Cameron stated that "Our ties with India have remained close throughout history and continue to go from strength to strength – through mutual respect as equals, through cooperation, trade, and of course through the one-and-a-half million Indian diasporas living in Britain today who bring our two nations closer, to the benefit of both." He further commented that the statue will "enrich the firm bond of friendship between the world's oldest democracy and its largest."

In terms of political forces behind economic development, Western powers look to India as a case study contrasting democracy-led growth and state-guided growth, the latter of which has been the modus operandi for China.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the UK from 12 to 16 November 2015. During the visit, Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the British Parliament. The Times of India reported that agents from Mossad and MI5 were protecting Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was heading to the 2015 G-20 Summit in Antalya, Turkey. The paper reported that the agents had been called in to provide additional cover to Modi's security detail, composed of India's Special Protection Group and secret agents from RAW and IB, in wake of the November 2015 Paris attacks.

Prime Minister Theresa May visited India on 6 November 2016 in her first bilateral visit to a non-European country since becoming Prime Minister. Explaining the decision, May said, "It [the visit] matters now more than ever. India is the fastest-growing major economy." May had previously referred to India as a "key strategic partner" in the aftermath of Britain voting to leave the European Union. She was accompanied by Trade Secretary Liam Fox and a delegation of 33 business leaders aiming to boost trade and investment between India and the United Kingdom.

In 2017 Times of India reported Boris Johnson as saying that in the first half of the year Britain gave nearly 500,000 visas to Indians – an eight per cent rise on the previous year. "Britain issues more visas to Indians than any other country in the world, apart from China." Mr Johnson said.

On a political basis India is the largest democratic nation in the world and with the second highest working population political relations are paramount to delivering upon mutual interests in a wider faster developing world, as with the UK's interests outside the EU after Brexit.

Following a resolution passed by the Labour Party, which attempted to internationalise the Kashmir issue in September 2019, the Indian High Commission in London decided to boycott the party and its events, whilst attending events organized by the Conservative Party-affiliated Conservative Friends of India. The Labour Party was historically the party of choice for many British Indians, but has lost support to the Conservatives in recent elections.

2017 UK-INDIA YEAR OF CULTURE

Her Majesty the Queen hosted the official launch of the UK India Year of Culture on 27 February 2017 at Buckingham Palace with Indian Finance Minister Arun Jaitley representing Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The British Council worked with the Palace and British-Indian start-up Studio Carrom to project a peacock, India's national bird, onto the facade of Buckingham Palace.

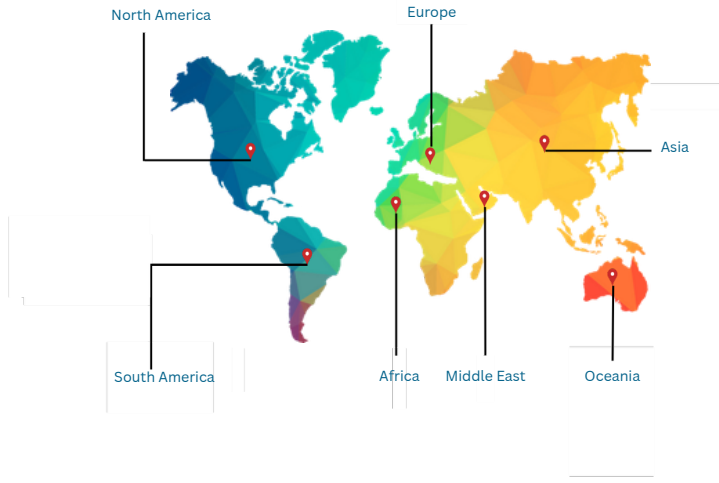
The programme for the year was announced by UK Minister of State for Digital and Culture Rt Hon Matt Hancock, Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom HE Mr Sinha and British Council Deputy Chair Rt Hon Baroness Prashar CBE PC, at the British Film Institute on 28 February 2017.

The programme includes an exhibition from the British Museum and The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya in Mumbai, the first exhibition on Indian innovation at the UK's Science Museum, London, and the restoration of 1928 Indian movie, Shiraz, by the British Film Institute with a new score by British-Indian musician Anoushka Shankar.

The British Council inaugurated the Year of Culture in India on 6 April 2017 projecting elements of the Buckingham Palace Studio Carrom peacock onto the British Council's Delhi building and launching an interactive music app Mix the City Delhi.

According to the results of the 2014 BBC World Service poll, 43% of Indian people view the United Kingdom's influence as positive and 27% view as negative. Similarly, 45% of Britons view India as positive and 46% as negative.

SERVING CLIENTS WORLDWIDE



The information contained herein is of a general nature. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. The information is not offered as an advice on any matter, and no one should act or fail to act based on such information without appropriate legal advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation. The information does not make us responsible or liable for any errors and/or omissions, whether it is now or in the future. We do not assume any responsibility and/or liability for any consequences.

Key Contact



Surendra Singh Chandrawat
Global Managing Partner

surendra@chandrawatpartners.com

Connect Surendra on

LinkedIn WhatsApp

Chandrawat & Partners is a leading and rapidly growing full-service firm providing high quality professional and corporate services to foreign and local clients, representing companies and individuals in a wide range of sectors through separate entities established in various countries worldwide.

Copyright © 2027 I All rights reserved I Chandrawat & Partners I Email: enquiries@chandrawatpartners.com I Website: www.chandrawatpartners.com

Follow us on: LinkedIn twitter facebook Instagram