

India- Poland Bilateral Relationship

Why in News?

Poland and India upgrade relations during first visit by Indian PM in 45 years since previous visit of Indian PM in 1979.

What are the pillars of the India-Poland Relationship?

- **Historical connections** - Between 1942 and 1948 during World War II, over 6,000 Polish women and children found refuge in India, particularly in the princely states of Jamnagar and Kolhapur.
- The then-Maharaja of Nawanagar, Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji, played a key role in offering sanctuary to these refugees which is remembered fondly in Poland to this day.

Nawanagar was an Indian princely state on the southern shores of the Gulf of Kutch, was ruled by the Jadeja dynasty. It became a part of newly formed India. Its capital city was Nawanagar city, now known as Jamnagar.

Recognition of Jam Saheb Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji in Poland

- A square in Warsaw was named in his honour called **as 'Good Maharaja Square.'**
- A monument was dedicated to him in the square.
- He was also posthumously awarded the Commander's Cross of the Order of Merit of the Republic of Poland.
- Eight schools in Poland have also been named after him.

- The **monument for the Battle of Monte Cassino**, pays homage to Indian and Polish soldiers who fought one of the defining moments of World War-II in Italy in 1944.
- **Political relations** - The diplomatic relations was formally established **in 1954** and 2024 marks the 70th anniversary of the diplomatic relations.
- The **year 1957** saw the opening of embassies in respective countries
 - The Indian Embassy in Warsaw
 - The Polish Embassy in New Delhi
- **Economic ties**- Poland joined the EU in 2004, becoming a key economic partner for India in Central Europe.
- Poland is India's largest trading & investment partner in Central & Eastern Europe.
 - For example, their bilateral trade increased by 192% from 2013 to 2023.
- The balance of trade is in favor of India, with key exports including textiles, base metals, and chemical products.
 - Indian investments in Poland exceed \$3 billion, while Polish investments in India are estimated at \$685 million.

Sectoral collaboration between India and Poland

- **Mining/Energy-** *Poland has expertise in clean coal technologies*, contributing to India's mining and power sectors.
- **Agro-food processing-** *Poland's advanced food processing capabilities* align with India's Mega Food Parks initiative.
- **IT and ICT-** *Indian IT companies have a strong presence in Poland*, leveraging its strategic location for near-shoring operations.
- **Pharmaceuticals and chemicals-** *Poland's dependence on India* for critical medicines and raw materials presents opportunities for Indian exporters.
- **Textile sector-** *Textile exports from India* to Poland have grown substantially, with potential for further expansion.
- **Engineering sector-** Historical collaboration in mining and power sectors continues, with opportunities for further engagement.

- **Defence relations-** India has recently posted *a defence attaché in Poland*, and Polish companies are increasingly securing defence orders and exploring joint ventures in India.

A defence attaché (DA) is a member of the armed forces who serves in an embassy as a representative of his/her country's defence establishment abroad and in this capacity enjoys diplomatic status and immunity.

- A Poland company got the contract *to supply warmate loitering munitions* to the Indian Army.
- **Educational ties-** Poland has a strong tradition of *Indology studies*
 - Poland institutions like the *Jagiellonian University* and the *University of Warsaw* plays a pivotal role.
- Notable Polish scholars have *contributed to Sanskrit translations* and received recognition from India.
- **Cultural ties** - The Indian community in Poland is approximately 25,000 strong, with professionals, students, and traders contributing to local society.
- **Yoga** has a *100-year history in Poland*, with a significant number of practitioners and centers promoting the practice.
- Busts and streets named after Indian leaders like ***Mahatma Gandhi*** and ***Rabindranath Tagore*** signify the cultural connection between the two nations.
- **Consular relations-** India has an Honorary Consulate in Wroclaw, while Poland has Honorary Consulates in *Kolkata and Bengaluru*.
- Poland has been included in India's ***e-visa scheme*** since 2015, facilitating travel for tourism and business purposes.
- **Recent developments** - Polish companies are invited to join Make in India and Make for the world.
- India-Poland ties are *upgraded to a Strategic Partnership*.

What are the significances of the India-Poland relationship?

- **Strategic location-** Poland is viewed as a potential *gateway for India* to expand trade and business ties with Europe, particularly after the war in Ukraine.

- **Evacuation drive-** Poland played a key *role in helping evacuate Indian students from Ukraine* during the Russian invasion in 2022 under the 'Operation Ganga'.
- **Economic gateway-** With its robust industrial base, *it is an attractive destination for Indian businesses* looking to expand in Europe.

Poland is the sixth largest economy in the EU and 21st globally, while India is the fifth and soon-to-be third-largest economy in the world.

- Poland will hold the *next presidency of the Council of the European Union*, enhancing its strategic importance for India.
- **Defense cooperation-** Poland's advanced defense manufacturing capabilities present *opportunities for collaboration in defense technology* and joint ventures, which align with India's push for self-reliance in defense production.
- **Education-** There is growing collaboration with several Polish universities offering scholarships to Indian students.
- **Democracy-** Poland believes that India's interest to support the "*democratic world*" can help in its struggle against neo-imperialism and military aggression.
- **Reforming institutions** - Both sides agree that reform in the United Nations and other international institutions is the need of the hour to face global challenges.

What are the challenges in India-Poland relationship?

- **Trade related issues-** A significant amount of trade between India and Poland is *unofficial*, often *routed through other countries*.
- A lot of cargo coming *from India to Poland comes via Rotterdam* or other ports all recorded in those respective countries and cargo to India transiting through other countries is labelled as made in EU.
- There is a lack of clarity on how the Indian system operates, which needs to be addressed.
- **External factors-** *Poland has primarily focused on China* in opening to Asia.
- *India's traditional friendship with Russia* and its dependence on Russian arms have constrained India's ability to take a definitive stand regarding Russia's aggression against Ukraine.
- **Cultural differences-** While cultural exchanges are growing, there are still significant differences that can lead to misunderstandings or *slower progress in people-to-people ties*.

What lies ahead?

- Indian businesses need to better educate and showcase themselves to Polish entrepreneurs to capitalize on trade opportunities.
- Enhancing economic ties can further the growth in trade and investment, particularly in sectors like IT, green energy, and pharmaceuticals.
- Increasing academic exchanges, tourism, and cultural programs will help in building a more robust relationship at the grassroots level.

References

1. [The Hindu | India- Poland bilateral relations](#)
2. [ORF | India and Poland](#)

