

## 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](#)

