

**Embassy of India**  
**RUSSIA**  
**India- RUSSIA Bilateral Relations**

Russia has been a longstanding and time-tested partner for India. Development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy. Since the signing of “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000 (during the visit of President Putin), India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, defence, trade and economy, science and technology, and culture. Under the Strategic Partnership, several institutionalized dialogue mechanisms operate at both political and official levels to ensure regular interaction and follow up on cooperation activities. During the visit of the Russian President to India in December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a “Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.”

**Political Relations**

2. **Annual Summit:** The Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. So far 20 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. Prime Minister visited Vladivostok from September 4-5, 2019 for the 20<sup>th</sup> India-Russia Bilateral Summit and as the Guest of Honour for the 5<sup>th</sup> Eastern Economic Summit. 14 MoUs in the fields of Trade and Investments, defence cooperation, Road Transport and cooperation in oil and gas sectors were signed during the visit of Prime Minister. He also met the Prime Minister of Japan, the President of Mongolia and the Prime Minister of Malaysia on the sidelines and addressed the Eastern Economic Forum. President Putin visited New Delhi from October 04-05, 2018, for the 19<sup>th</sup> India-Russia Annual Bilateral Summit. He held official talks with the Prime Minister and also met the President of India. 8 MoUs were signed during the visit in the field of business and investment, civil nuclear cooperation, space, transport etc. Both the leaders jointly addressed the India-Russia Business Summit and interacted with the talented children of India & Russia.

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin held their first informal Summit in the city of Sochi in the Russian Federation on May 21, 2018. The Summit provided an occasion for both leaders to deepen their friendship and to exchange views on international and regional issues, in keeping with the tradition of high level political exchanges between India and Russia.

4. On April 12, 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order On Awarding PM Russia's highest state decoration - Order of St Andrew the Apostle. The order was presented to PM for his distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the Russian and Indian peoples.

5. **Intergovernmental Commissions:** There is regular high-level interaction between the two countries. Two Inter- Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), co-chaired by EAM and the Russian DPM, and another on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC- MTC) co-chaired by Russian and Indian Defence Ministers, meet annually. On December 13 2018, the 18th meeting of the IRIGC-MTC was held in New Delhi. During the meeting, issues relating to defence equipment, industry and technological engagement, after sales support/up-gradation and joint manufacturing of projects were discussed. Russian DPM, Mr. Yury Borisov, heading an 18-member composite delegation, visited New Delhi on 22 July 2019, and met EAM to co-chair the 24<sup>th</sup> IRIGC-TEC. They held their first inter-sessional meeting since EAM assumed office. To prepare PM's forthcoming visit to Vladivostok, the co-chairs held focused discussions on bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade and investment; transport; energy; agriculture; industry; and space.

6. **Bilateral Interaction/Visits:** NSA Shri Ajit Doval visited Moscow on August 21 and met the Secretary of the Russian National Security Council Nikolai Patrushev. They discussed regional and international issues and also the preparations for the upcoming visit of the PM of India to Vladivostok. He also met Director of Roscosmos Dmitry Rogozin to review the ongoing cooperation in space field and the Gaganyaan Programme. Dr. S Jaishankar, EAM visited Moscow on August 27-28 and met FM Lavrov. They exchanged views on the state and prospects of the India-Russia Special Privileged and Strategic Partnership. EAM also met the Co-chair of the IRIGC, DPM Borisov and also addressed a session on India's Perspectives on the Indo-Pacific in Valdai Discussion Club on August 27. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel visited Moscow on August 29-30. During the visit he met DPM Yury Trutnev and discussed ways to enhance cooperation in the energy and metal sectors. He also met the Minister of Energy, Alexander Novak and discussed energy cooperation between India and Russia. Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mr. Prakash Javadekar visited Moscow from September 26-29 to attend the first meeting of the Heads of Environment Ministers of the SCO member states.

7. Commerce and Industry Minister Mr. Piyush Goyal led a high power delegation of Chief Ministers of Haryana, Gujrat, Uttar Pradesh and Goa and about 140 Indian companies to Vladivostok from August 11-13, 2019. This visit came as a fulfillment of the assurance of Prime Minister to the Russian

President during their meeting in Bishkek earlier this year on the sidelines of the SCO Summit, to explore opportunities for enhancing trade and investment from India to the Far East region of Russia. About 200 Russian companies, Investment Agencies and Funds took part from the Russian side. Companies interacted separately with identified partners in an expanded B2B format and established contacts for further deliberations. The companies belonged to a wide cross-section of priority sectors, including minerals and rare earth, energy, forestry and timber, healthcare, agriculture and food processing, ceramics, tourism and infrastructure.

8. Deputy NSA Mr. Pankaj Saran visited Russia for the 8th International Meeting of Representatives of Arctic Council Member States, Observer States and Foreign Scientific Community organized by the Russian Security Council in Saint Petersburg. He also called on Mr. Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Russian Security Council on the sidelines. Deputy NSA Mr. Rajinder Khanna visited Ufa from June 17-20, 2019 to participate in the 10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of High Level Officials responsible for Security Matters. He also met Mr. Nikolai Patrushev, Secretary of the Russian Security Council, Mr. Oleg Khramov, Deputy Secretary, Mr. Zamir Kabulov, Presidential Envoy on Afghanistan and his counterparts from other countries on the sidelines of the event. Dy. NSA Mr. Pankaj Saran visited Sochi for annual meeting of the Valdai Club from 17-18 October 2018. Justice L. Nageswara Rao attended St. Petersburg International Legal Forum from 14-18<sup>th</sup> May 2019.

9. From June 17-20, 2019, DPM and Presidential Envoy to the Far Eastern Federal District of Russia, Yuri Trutnev visited India to prepare ground for PM's visit to Vladivostok in early September for EEF and to explore bilateral cooperation in Far East in priority areas like diamond-processing, petroleum and natural gas, coal and mining, agro-processing and tourism. He met NSA, EAM, Minister of PNG, Vice Chairman NITI Aayog, Head of Coal India Limited and attended a round-table discussion involving representatives of leading Indian Universities to foster closer partnership between Indian and Russian Far Eastern Universities in the field of science and education. He also traveled to Mumbai where he interacted with prominent Indian industry representatives and had meetings with Indian companies having business interests in the Russian Far East. Denis Manturov visited India on 20 Feb 2019 to participate in the 12<sup>th</sup> Aero India Show and on the sidelines, he met RM and Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation. On April 4 2019, Alexey Volin, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media visited India and met with Secretary, Information and Broadcasting. On July 9, 2019, Ms. Zarina Doguzova, Head of Russian Federal Agency for Tourism visited India and met Minister of State for Culture and Tourism, Mr. Prahlad Patel to discuss cooperation in tourism and culture. Mr. Alexander Venediktov, Assistant to the Secretary of Russian Security Council visited India from 19-20 Feb 2019 to meet Dy. NSA Mr. Pankaj Saran and NSA. On December 6-7, Secretary of the Security

Council of the Russian federation, Mr. Nikolai Patrushev visited India, where he held bilateral meetings with NSA and called on PM. On December 9-11, Speaker of State Duma visited India where he held bilateral meeting with Speaker of Lok Sabha. Both the speakers participated in 5th meeting of the Russian-Indian inter-parliamentary commission. During his visit he also called on PM & Vice President. He also visited exhibition hall of the Russian-Indian Joint Venture “BrahMos Aerospace Limited” and gave an interview to Doordarshan.

10. As part of his 3-day visit to Russia from 26-29th November 2017, Shri Rajnath Singh, Home Minister of India met the Minister for Internal Affairs, Secretary, Security Council, and Minister for the Emergency Situations. Four important bilateral agreements on security, disaster management were signed during this visit.

11. CIM visited Vladivostok from September 11-12, 2018 to attend 4th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) and met DPM Trutnev, Minister for Economic Development, Minister of Industry and Minister of Natural Resources on the sidelines of EEF 2018 to discuss further strengthening of bilateral ties for economic growth. CIM also met the Governors/Vice Governors and representatives of Russian Regions and Russian Far-Eastern Regions. CIM led a high-power delegation of Chief Ministers of Haryana, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Goa and about 140 Indian companies to Vladivostok from August 11-13, 2019 to explore opportunities for enhancing trade and investment from India to the Far East Region of Russia.

12. **Consultations:** During the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit, the sides concluded a Protocol for Consultations between the foreign ministries for the period 2019-23. FS visited Moscow April 1-2, 2019 for FOC with DFM Morgulov on bilateral issues and called on DPM Yury Trutnev to discuss cooperation in the Russian Far East. On January 17-18, 2019 DFM Morgulov visited India and held consultations with Foreign Secretary and met with Secretary (ER) and Secretary (East). On Jan 9, DFM Ryabkov visited India to participate in the Raisina Dialogue and also met FS. Other FoC that have been concluded are European Matters (March 27<sup>th</sup>); Indo-Pacific (April 29); Afghanistan (15<sup>th</sup> May) and Foreign Policy Planning (7<sup>th</sup> June).

13. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Round of India-Russian Consultations on security in the use of Information and communication technologies (ICTs) was held in Moscow on 5 March 2019 to discuss the 2019-2020 action plan. The annual DISA consultations were held in Moscow on 20 September 2018. Secretary East lead a composite 7 member delegation for the 10th Meeting of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism, held on 23<sup>rd</sup> July in Moscow.

### **International/Multilateral Organizations and Connectivity Projects:**

14. **BRICS:** Under the chairmanship of South Africa, EAM attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> BRICS Foreign Ministers meeting in Pretoria on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2018. NSA participated in the meeting of BRICS National Security Advisors from 28-29<sup>th</sup> June 2019 in Durban. PM participated in the BRICS summit in Johannesburg in July 2018 where he also met President Putin on the sidelines.

15. **SCO:** Chief Justice visited Sochi from June 17-19 2019, for the 14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Chief Justices of SCO and held bilateral meeting with Chief Justice of Supreme Court of Russia. Secretary West visited Moscow from 11-12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 along with JS(SCO) where she met DFM Morgulov and participated in the SCO DFMs' meeting on international issues. India participated for the first time ever in the Fifth Edition of the biennial Joint Military Counter-Terrorist Command and Staff Exercise 'Peace Mission' at Chebarkul (Chelyabinsk Region), from 22 Aug to 29 Aug 2018.

16. **NSG:** Russia has been a long standing supporter of India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This support was also reflected in the Joint Statement adopted during President Putin's visit to New Delhi in October for the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Bilateral Summit.

17. **UNSC:** In the recently adopted Joint Statement during the 19<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Summit, India & Russia reaffirmed the need to reform the UN Security Council to better reflect the current world order and make it more effective in dealing with emerging global challenges. Russia reiterated its unwavering support to India for Permanent Membership in an expanded UNSC.

18. **INSTC:** Russia has welcomed the INSTC and is constructively engaging with India and other stakeholders as well. The 7<sup>th</sup> international North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) Co-ordination Council Meeting was held on 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> March 2019 in Tehran to discuss issues like nodal persons, joint venture, implementation of TIR and E-TIR mechanism and test run along the route.

### **Defence and Security Cooperation**

19. India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a buyer - seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems. BrahMos Missile System as well as the licensed production in India of SU-30 aircraft and T-90 tanks, are examples of such flagship cooperation. During the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit, the sides concluded agreements on supply of S-400 air defence systems, construction of frigates under Project 1135.6 and shareholders agreement on the formation of joint venture to manufacture Ka-226T helicopters in India. On 3 March 2019, in Amethi, PM announced the JV – Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt. Ltd. for production of AK Series Assault Rifles at Ordnance Factory

Korwa under the 'Make-in-India' program. The two countries also hold exchanges and training exercises between their armed forces annually.

20. The first-ever TriServices exercise –'INDRA 2017' took place in Vladivostok from October 19 to 29, 2017. On December 13-16, bilateral Russian-Indian naval exercise Indra Navy-2018 was held in the Bay of Bengal.

21. On July 9, 2019, Chief of Air Staff, Mr. Birender Singh Dhanoa visited Moscow and met Chief of General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces and First Deputy Minister of Defence, Army General Valery Geramisov and Chief of Russian Air Force Lt. Sergey Dronov. Mr. Sanjay Mitra, Defence Secretary visited Moscow from April 23-27, 2019 to participate in the Moscow International Security Conference and met Deputy Defence Minister, Alexander Fomin. DG(Acquisition) Mr. Apoorva Chandra visited Moscow from June 11-14, 2019 to discuss revenue procurement and after sales support issues and met Director, FSMTC. Prominent public and private Sector Defence Companies including DRDO and OFB participated in the International Military Technical Forum "Army-2019" at Kubinka city in Moscow region on 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019. The 3rd round of India-Russia Military Industrial Conference was held on 13th April 2018 in Chennai and 7 MOUs were signed between the Industries for production in India. General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff visited Russia from 1-6 October 2018 on an official bilateral visit where he met senior Military hierarchy of Russian Armed Forces and visited key Military formations and establishments. Chief of Naval Staff, Admiral Sunil Lanba visited Russian Federation from 26 to 29<sup>th</sup> November 2018. He held discussions with Commander in Chief of the Navy of Russian Federation and spoke in the Valdai Club on "Maritime Security of India".

### **Trade and Economic Relations**

22. Intensifying the trade and economic relations has been identified as a priority area by the leaders on both the sides as is clear by the revised targets of increasing bilateral investment to US \$ 50 billion and bilateral trade to US \$ 30 billion by 2025. In the aftermath of general economic slowdown and Russia's ongoing dispute with the West over Ukraine issue, Russia has emphasized on import substitution due to which, there has been a significant reduction in Russia's external trade. India has also been affected by this contraction in Russian exports and imports.

#### **Trade in goods:**

***Russia-India trade statistics (totals) as per Federal Customs Service of the Russian Federation: (USD million)***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Russia's import from India</b>	<b>Russia's export to India</b>	<b>Total trade</b>	<b>Russia's Trade Balance w.r.t India</b>
2017	2898.20	6454.70	9352.90	+3556.50
2018	3219.9	7750.2	10970.1	+4530.3
2019 (till 01/05/19)	1434.7	2637.8	4072.5	+1203.1

**Major components of bilateral trade:**

**a. Top 5 import items in India from Russia during 2018 were:**

- I. Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances; mineral waxes
- II. Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals
- III. Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof
- IV. Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof
- V. Fertilizers

**b. Top 5 export items from India to Russia during 2017-18 were:**

- I. Pharmaceutical products
- II. Electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof
- III. Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; parts thereof
- IV. Organic chemicals
- V. Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock, and parts and accessories thereof

**Trade in services:** Bilateral trade in services has remained stable during the last 5 years with trade balance in Russia's favour.

***Russia-India trade in Services sector as per Central Bank of Russia (USD million):***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Russia's import from India</b>	<b>Russia's export to India</b>	<b>Total trade</b>	<b>Russia's Trade Balance w.r.t. India</b>
2017	432.09	663.35	1095.44	+231.26
2018	407.55	591.75	999.29	+184.19
2019 (1 <sup>st</sup> Quarter)	179.53	175.50	355.03	-4.03

### **Bilateral investment**

23. Russian investment in India in 2017 has reached 18bn USD and India's total investment in Russia so far is 13 bn USD. The overall investment target of 30 bn USD that was set for 2025 has been already crossed. The investment target of 30 bn USD by 2025 has been achieved. The cumulative Indian investments in Russia, (bulk of which is in hydrocarbons sector) was about US \$ 8 billion for the period 2000-2014, while the cumulative Russian investments in India over the same period were about US \$ 4 billion, mainly in automotive (KAMAZ) and telecommunications (AFK Sistema) sectors. In 2015-2017, there was a renewed emphasis on increasing the bilateral investment, especially in the hydrocarbon sector.

24. Srei Infrastructure Finance signed a memorandum of understanding with Vnesheconom bank to create a \$200 million IT and Innovation Fund for exploring investment opportunities in technology companies in Russia, India and other selected regions jointly. Some of the other major investments by Indian companies include ONGC Videsh Ltd. in Sakhalin-I Project (US \$ 2.2 bn); Imperial Energy (US \$ 2.1 bn); Commercial Bank of India Ltd. (JV of SBI and Canara Bank); ICICI Bank in its subsidiary ICICI Bank Eurasia; KGK Group (US \$ 50 mn); Advance Pharma (1.5 bn Ru).

25. Russian company Rosneft acquired ESSAR's Vadinar refinery in India by concluding a deal in 2017. This deal was USD 12.9 billion, is one of the biggest Russian investments in India in recent times. Other major investments from Russia in India are by AFK Sistema in Sistema Shyam Telelink Services; planned India- Russia JV for production of titanium products in Odisha; branches by VTB and Sber bank; Joint Ventures automotive company between Russian KamazInc and Vectra Group.

26. Pursuant to the decision taken during the 19th Bilateral Summit, 1st India-Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue (IRSED) was held in St. Petersburg



on November 26, 2018, led by Vice-Chairman NITI Aayog and Russian Minister of Economic Development. It focused on five core areas - Transport Infrastructure, Agriculture and agro-processing sector, Small & Medium Business support, Digital Transformation & Frontier technologies and Industrial & Trade Cooperation. The first India-Russia Startup Summit was held on December 11, 2018 at Skolkovo Foundation (SF) in Moscow led by Mr. Anjan Das, Executive Director, CII and Mr. Arkady Dvorkovich, Chairman, Skolkovo Foundation. The Summit ended with business match-making between Indian and Russian Startup companies. On July 10, 2019, Mr. Timur Maximov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development visited India and held the 2<sup>nd</sup> IRSED with Vice Chairman NITI Aayog. It focused on six core areas of cooperation, including; Trade, Banking, Finance, and Industry; and Tourism & Connectivity as well. On March 11-12, 2019 a high level CEOs delegation led by CII President, Mr. Rakesh Bharti Mittal visited Moscow and held meetings with Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) Director, DPM Trutnev, Minister of Industries and Trade and Adviser to the President, Mr. Anton Kobayakov. The meetings focused on identifying potential sectors, cooperation in the Far East and establishing business linkages.

27. The Russian Ministry of Economic Development has launched 'Single window Service' in October 2018 to facilitate hassle-free investment by Indian companies which will help achieve mutual trade and investment target. Some of the key priority sectors identified for focused interaction include hydrocarbons, pharmaceuticals, mining, fertilizers, heavy engineering, gems & jewelry, chemicals, fertilizers and agriculture & food processing industry.

28. A few important steps/projects that could provide a major boost to bilateral trade are: Operationalization of the 'Green Corridor' project; International North-South Transport Corridor, and the signing of an FTA with EaEU. First round of technical consultations on the India-EaEU FTA took place on January 30-31 in New Delhi. On June 27, 2019, Mr. B.B Swain, AS, DoC held consultations with EaEC in Moscow.

29. Hydrocarbons is an active area for exploring cooperation between the two countries. In the second and third quarter of 2016, Indian companies invested close to US\$ 5.5 billion in Russia's Oil and Gas sector, which included acquisition of 23.9% stake in Vankorneft and 29.9% in Taas-Yuryakh by an Indian Consortium of Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Indian Oil Corporation Limited (OIL) and Bharat Petro Resources Limited (BPRL); and acquisition of 15% and 11% stake by ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) in Vankorneft from Rosneft Oil Company of Russia. During the 17th Annual Summit, the sides concluded documents between Engineers India Ltd and Gazprom on the Joint Study of a gas pipeline to India and other possible areas of cooperation; Agreement in the area of Education and Training between ONGC Videsh Ltd and Rosneft Oil Company; and Programme of Cooperation (PoC) in the Field of

Oil and Gas for the period 2017-18; and the Sale and Purchase Agreement between a Rosneft-led consortium and Essar for acquisition of 98% stake in Essar Oil Limited. The Rosneft led Consortium has invested close to US \$ 13 billion in this deal. The sides are working towards realization of an 'Energy Bridge' between the two countries, which is based on robust civil nuclear cooperation, LNG sourcing, partnership in the Oil and Gas sector, and engagement in renewable energy sources. On April 15, 2019, JS(MoPNG) Mr. BN Reddy visited Moscow for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Working Group on Energy and Energy Efficiency.

### **Nuclear Energy**

30. Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy. It recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. In Dec 2014, DAE and Russia's Rosatom signed the Strategic Vision for strengthening cooperation in peaceful uses of atomic energy. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) is being built in India with Russian cooperation. KKNPP Units 1 and 2 have already become operational and construction of Units 3&4 is going on. Credit Protocol for Unit 5&6 was signed during 18<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Summit and technical evaluation of the 2<sup>nd</sup> site is currently going on. DAE signed a trilateral MoU on cooperation in the implementation of the Rooppur NPP construction project in Bangladesh along with the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh and Rosatom. MoU on Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field was signed during the 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Summit in October in New Delhi. Secretary DAE Dr. K.N. Vyas visited Russia from April 12-17, where he visited the Novovoronezh NPP and met DG Rosatom Mr. Alexey Likhachev and participated in the 10<sup>th</sup> Atomexpo in Sochi.

### **Space Cooperation**

31. India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. Both sides cooperate in the peaceful uses of outer space, including satellite launches, GLONASS navigation system, remote sensing and other societal applications of outer space. A MoU ISRO and ROSCOSMOS on Joint Activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme was signed during the 19<sup>th</sup> Bilateral Summit. Since then, several visits have taken place from ISRO and ROSCOSMOS regarding negotiation of contracts and identification of key areas of cooperation for realization of the Human Spaceflight Program - Gaganyaan. On July 11, 2019, Dmitry Rogozin, DG ROSCOSMOS visited India and met NSA and Chairman ISRO to discuss bilateral cooperation in Gaganyaan program, production of space systems in India, futuristic technologies, including new space systems, rocket engines, propellants and propulsion systems, spacecraft and launch vehicle.

## **Science & Technology**

32. The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral Science and Technology cooperation, while the Science Academies of the two countries promote inter-academy exchanges.

33. A new mechanism of cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technological cooperation came into effective from 21<sup>st</sup> June 2017 after the first protocol was signed in Novosibirsk, Russia by RM and DPM Dmitry Rogozin. First Executive council meeting was held in June 2017 in Moscow and second meeting was held in New Delhi in November 2017. The Third Executive Council (EC) Meeting is to be held in Russia.

34. A number of new initiatives in this sphere include India-Russia Bridge to Innovation, cooperation in telemedicine, creation of a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), GIAN, and the Russia-India Network (RIN) of Universities.

## **Cultural Cooperation**

35. There is a strong tradition of Indian studies in Russia. JNCC maintains close cooperation with leading Russian institutions. About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly teach Hindi to about 1500 Russian students. Apart from Hindi, languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions. There is strong interest among Russian people in Indian dance, music, yoga and Ayurveda. JNCC conducts classes in yoga, dance, music and Hindi for approximately 500 students every month. Ministry of Culture annually provides around Rs. 118 Lakhs as grant to over 20 Friendship Societies in Russia for promotion of Indian culture.

36. The Embassy of India through the grant provided by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of India conducted a six month long “Festival of India in Russia” from September 2018 to March 2019 in 22 cities with 34 performances by 10 groups, showcasing the best of Indian music, dance, food and spiritual traditions.

37. As per the reciprocal agreement, regular cultural exchange between India and Russia has been taking place since 2015. Recently, more than 60 Russian artists from 3 groups have traveled to India for Festival of Russian Culture. Similarly, from September 2019, four Indian groups will travel to more than 10 Russian cities over four months as part of “Namaste Russia.”

38. The Embassy with support from regional governments organized a week-long celebration to mark the 5th anniversary of the International Day of Yoga in 65 regions, spanning 11 time zones across the length and breadth of Russia.

39. To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, digital exhibition and cycle rally were organized by the Embassy. On October 2, an exhibition dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and about his friendship with the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was opened at the State Duma of the Russian Federation. Heads and representatives of various factions and Special Representative of the Russian President for International Cultural cooperation, participated in the opening ceremony. The Embassy in India, in collaboration with the Leo Tolstoy Museum and Estate and the Institute of Oriental Studies organized a day long Exhibition and Academic Conference dedicated to the deep friendship between Mahatma Gandhi and Leo Tolstoy, at the Tolstoy Estate in Yasna Polyana on 28 September 2019. The exhibition, titled "Tolstoy-Gandhi: The story of personal transformations across continents bound by the infinite possibilities of universal love". The event was inaugurated by the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Mr. Prakash Javadekar.

40. Russia has been an active partner country for ITEC scholarship with around 76 Russians taking the benefit in 2018-19. The number of ICCR scholarships has been steadily growing every year.

**Source: Embassy of India, Russia Web site October 2019.**