

**Embassy of India
Helsinki, Finland
India – Finland Bilateral Relations**

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India and Finland have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations. In recent years, bilateral relations have acquired diversity with collaboration in research, innovation, and investments by both sides. The Indian community in Finland is vibrant and well-placed. Indian culture and yoga are gaining popularity in Finland. 2019 marked 70 years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

High-level visits - Prime Ministers

- Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru Finland in 1957
- Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1983.
- Prime Minister Pt. Manmohan Singh in 2006.
- Mr. Vieno Johannes Sukselainen in 1960 - First Prime Minister of Finland
- Prime Minister Mr. Kalevi Sorsa in 1984.
- Prime Minister Mr. Matti Vanhanen visited India in March 2006, February 2008 and February 2010 (last two occasions to attend Delhi Sustainable Development Summit).
- Prime Minister Mr. Juha Sipilä: Feb 2016 (for Make in India week)

Presidential Visits

- President of Finland Mr. Urho Kekkonen in 1965
- President Mr. Mauno Koivisto in 1987
- President Mr. Martti Ahtisaari in 1996.
- President Mrs. Tarja Halonen in January 2007, February 2009 and February 2012 to attend the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.
- President Shri V.V. Giri in 1971
- President Shri R. Venkataraman in 1988.
- President Shri Pranab Mukherjee: October 2014

President Shri Pranab Mukherjee paid a State Visit to Finland on 14-16 October 2014 accompanied by Minister of State for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, four Members of Parliament, Officials, academicians and a business delegation. Agreements for cooperation in New and Renewable Energy, Biotechnology, Civil Nuclear Research, Meteorology, Healthcare and Education were signed during the visit.

On 17 April 2018, PM interacted with his counterparts from five Nordic countries, at the first India-Nordic Summit in Stockholm. Then PM Juha Sipilä of Finland participated in the Summit and had a bilateral meeting with our PM during which ongoing bilateral cooperation was reviewed. Both sides agreed to cooperate in energy,

vocational education, space and enhance trade and investment.

Virtual Summit between Prime Ministers on 16 March 2021

Prime Minister Sanna Marin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a virtual bilateral meeting on 16 March 2021. In their first meeting, the Prime Ministers had an extensive discussion on how to deepen concrete cooperation between their countries and addressed a number of key international issues.

The two Prime Ministers announced a Digital Partnership in Future ICT; Future Mobile Technologies and Digital Education; a High-Level Dialogue in education and a Sustainability Partnership involving Renewable and Clean Energy, Circular Economy, and Sustainable Mobility and noted that green growth is an essential element of bilateral cooperation.

Bilateral meeting during 2nd India-Nordic Summit in Copenhagen

Both Prime Ministers met on 4th May 2022 in Copenhagen on the margins of the 2nd India-Nordic Summit. They agreed to enhance cooperation in 5G/6G, AI, Blockchain, Quantum Computing and other areas.

Parliamentary Exchanges

- Mr. Eero Heinäluoma, Speaker of Parliament visited India in April, 2012.
- Mr. G.S. Dhillon, Speaker (Lok Sabha) visited Finland in 1957
- Mr. Balram Jhakar, Speaker (Lok Sabha) in 1986
- Mr. P.A. Sangma, Speaker (Lok Sabha) in 1997
- Mr. Manohar Joshi, Speaker (Lok Sabha) in 2003
- Mr. Somnath Chatterjee, Speaker (Lok Sabha) in June 2006.
- Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker (Lok Sabha) on 17-18 June, 2018.
- 10 MPs of Finland's Finance Committee led by Mr Johannes Koskinen visited India from 23-27 February 2020.

Foreign Minister's Exchanges

Dr. Erkki Tuomioja, Foreign Minister, visited India in May 2013. Shri Jaswant Singh, External Affairs Minister visited Finland in December 1999 for the 12th EU Troika Ministerial Meeting. Mr. Timo Soini, Foreign Minister of Finland visited India from 22-24 November, 2017 for fourth Global Conference on Cyber Security (GCCS) in New Delhi.

External Affairs Minister of India Dr S. Jaishankar visited Finland from 19 to 21 September 2019 on the occasion of 70 Years of diplomatic relation and 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. He met President Mr Sauli Niinistö, Prime Minister Mr Antti Rinne, Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Pekka Haavisto, Foreign Affairs Committee and Ms Tuula Haatainen, First Deputy Speaker of Parliament. At the Finnish Institute of International Affairs, he spoke about "India and the World: Priorities of India's Foreign Policy". Along with FM Pekka Haavisto, he unveiled the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Helsinki.

In November 2019, Mr. Pekka Haavisto, Finland's Foreign Minister visited India. He inaugurated a new factory of KONE elevators in Chennai and met EAM and Finance Minister.

EAM has been in regular contact with Foreign Minister Haavisto. EAM spoke to FM Haavisto on 22 October 2020 in the context of Afghanistan Donor Conference which was being organised by Finland in November 2020 and then on 21 May 2021 on the Covid-19 situation in India. On 22 September 2021, EAM met Finnish FM Pekka Haavisto on the sidelines of the UNGA. Discussion focused on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. Both Foreign Ministers had a telephone conversation on 19 January 2022 and held wide-ranging discussion on bilateral issues, as well as on the situation in Afghanistan and working together as members of UNHRC.

Parliamentary Exchanges:

Ms. Sumitra Mahajan, Hon'ble Speaker Lok Sabha visited Helsinki, Finland on June 17-18, 2018 accompanied by six members of Parliament and officials. She met Mrs. Paula Risikko, Speaker of Finland Parliament and interacted with members of the Indian community.

Other Ministerial visits since 2016:

- Shri Piyush Goyal, Minister of State (IC) for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines visited Finland 3-5 November, 2016.
- Mr. Kimmo Tiilikainen, Minister of Housing, Energy and the Environment visited India 3-5 October, 2017 and April 2018
- Shri M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Finland 5- 7 November, 2017.
- Ms. Anne Berner, Minister for Transport and Communications visited India 13-14 November, 2017.
- Karnataka's Minister of IT, biotech and S & T, Shri K J George visited Finland 26 August 2018.
- Ms. Anne-Mari Virolainen, Finland's Minister of Trade and Development visited India 29 November - 2 December 2018 accompanied by 25 companies.
- Minister of Employment, Mr. Timo Harakka, visited India on 18-22 November 2019 to explore opportunities in Smart Mobility, Digitalization and AI. He visited Delhi and Bengaluru and participated in the Bengaluru Tech Summit. He was accompanied by 16 companies from engineering, finance and design sectors. One important focus area of his visit was to promote Talent Boost, a program which seeks to attract foreign talent to Finland, particularly in tech-based industries.
- Minister of Economic Affairs of Finland, Mr. Mika Lintilä visited India with a Team Finland business delegation from 18 - 22 April 2022. Both sides reached an agreement on setting up Virtual Centre for Excellence in Quantum Computing. Tech Mahindra separately agreed to set up a Quantum CoE in India and Finland. Cooperation in energy, start-up, green energy, green transition, decarbonisation, development of EV ecosystem, recycling of battery, smart charging, biofuel technologies, etc were discussed during the visit.

Foreign Office Consultations

Discussions on bilateral matters, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest are held regularly. The 11th FOC was in Helsinki on 23 November 2021 led by Secretary (West) and Finland's Permanent Secretary of State.

Bilateral Agreements:

- Economic Cooperation Agreement signed in March 2010.
- Setting up India-Finland Joint Commission (1974).
- Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation (1983); amended January 2010.
- Cultural Agreement (1983).
- Memorandum of Understanding on Textiles (1993).
- Air Services Agreement signed 1995, modified in May 2006.
- Bilateral agreement on Promotion & Protection of Investments signed 2002 – Expired.
- Agreement for Cooperation in Science & Technology 2008.
- MoU for cooperation on Information Security January 2010.
- MoU for Cooperation in Road Transport May 10, 2010.
- Social Security Agreement June 2012 and implemented w.e.f. August 1, 2014.
- Arrangement for Cooperation in Nuclear and Radiation Safety Regulation October 2014.
- MoU for cooperation in Renewable Energy October 2014.
- MoU for cooperation in Biotechnology in October 2014 – Renewed Nov 2018.
- Implementing Arrangement for cooperation in Atmospheric Environment in October 2014.
- Gainful Occupation for Family Members of Members of a Diplomatic Mission or Consular Post on 1st August, 2016.
- Agreement for visa waiver for diplomatic passport holders on 6 November, 2017.
- MoU on Establishment of ICCR Chair of Indian Culture and Society, 20 August, 2018.
- MoU for cooperation in Cyber Security – Jan 2019.
- MoU for cooperation in space launch and peaceful uses of outer space – Jan 2019.
- MoU for cooperation in vocational education Training – March 2019.
- MOU for R&D Cooperation between DST India and Business Finland - August 2019
- MOU for Cooperation in Tourism between Ministry of Tourism, India and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland, November 2019

- Joint Declaration of Intent between Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, India and Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Finland for Cooperation in Digitalization, November 2019
- MOU for Cooperation in Defence Production, Procurement, R&D of Defence Equipment, January 2020.
- MoU on cooperation in Environment, November 2020
- MoU on Cooperation in Geology/Mining, December 2020

Economic and Commercial Relations

Joint Economic Commission: The 20th Joint Economic Commission Meeting between India and Finland took place on 2-3 June 2022. The Indian side was led by Joint Secretary Ms Nidhi Mani Tripathi and the Finnish side was led by Director General in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mr Jari Sinkkari. The JEC agreed to an Action Plan on cooperation across different sectors.

In 2021, India's total trade (goods and services) with Finland was € 2.1 billion and is in India's favour. Trade in goods in 2021 was approximately € 956 mn and for the first time was in India's favour. Trade data for the past four financial years is below:

EURO MILLION				
Financial Year (Jan-Dec)	2018	2019	2020	2021
India's imports from Finland	544.23	509.37	467.35	414.43
India's exports to Finland	354.85	355.27	351.12	541.58
Total Trade in Goods	899.08	864.64	818.47	956.01

Source: Finnish Customs

Finland's top imported goods from India (Jan-Dec 2020):

- Medicinal, pharmaceutical products
- Articles of apparel and clothing accessories
- Textile yarn, fabrics, made up articles
- Manufactures of metals
- Electric machinery and parts

India's top imported goods from Finland (Jan-Dec 2020):

- Machinery for special industries
- Electric machinery and parts
- Paper, paperboard and articles thereof
- Metalliferous ores and metal scrap
- General industrial machinery

Trade in Services

In 2021, bilateral trade in services was US\$ 1.5 billion (EUR 1.2 billion).

EURO MILLION				
Financial Year (Jan-Dec)	2018	2019	2020	2021
India's imports from Finland	529	393	410	324
India's exports to Finland	659	5 803	787	826
Total Trade in Services	1,188	1,196	1,197	1150

Source: Statistics Finland

Investments

Finland ranks 37th in terms of country-wise FDI Equity Inflows into India. Total FDI Inflows from Finland till June 2021 are 518.25 in US\$ million. Percentage share of total FDI Inflows is 0.09%. Actual investment will be higher as many Finnish companies have been in India since 1980s or 1990s.

Investment flows from India have started, including through acquisitions and have crossed one billion US\$. Major acquisitions are:

2006: WIPRO Technologies and Sasken Communications (Saraware and Botnia High-tech); Trivitron Healthcare Private Limited, (Ani Labsystems and Ani Biotech).

2014: Mahindra acquired Holiday Club Resorts (Euro 73 million, Rs 600 crore) and has 95% stake.

2016: Mahindra acquired 35% stake in Sampo Rosenlew, a combine harvester manufacturing company (Euro 18 million).

2017: Auto component company Mithras Sumi Systems (MSSL) acquired 93.75% stake in PKC Group (Euro 571 million or Rs 4112 crores), largest Indian investment and acquisition in Finland.

2018: Infosys acquired Fluido Oy (US\$ 75.8 million, Rs. 546 crore).

2022: Epsilon Advanced Material from India has signed an MoU with Finnish company Grafintec Oy, a graphite-based supply chain to establish an anode material production factory in Vaasa.

Information Technology and Emerging Technology

A Joint Declaration of Intent signed between MEITY and Minister of Economy in Finland on cooperation in the field of Digitalisation was signed in November 2019. The document provides for cooperation in information exchange between public and private entities of both countries in the field of digital development, strengthening collaboration in the fields of eGovernment, m-Governance, smart infrastructure, eHealth and e-Education, promoting emerging technologies such as AI, Cloud Computing, Big Data, Internet of Things, Blockchain, etc., promoting cooperation in Electronics Systems Design and Manufacturing, among other things. Both sides have nominated a coordinator for the purpose of implementing the JDI.

ICT companies from India and Finland came together for a B-to-B session under 'Digital Finland meets Digital India' event under 'India Meets Finland' series on 10 March 2021. MEITY Minister Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad and Finnish Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade spoke on the occasion. A Virtual Round Table with Indian IT companies based in Finland was organised on 25 May 2021 to identify the elements of the Digital Partnership. There are opportunities for collaboration in startup ecosystem, Digital Communications, Cyber Security, industry-academia collaboration, digital solutions for sustainability and circular economy and SMEs.

5G/6G

Finland is a leader in 5G/6G technology and Nokia is a world leader in providing the associated infrastructure. Top Indian IT companies are looking to collaborate in this sector. During the 4th Joint Committee meeting on S & T in November 2020, 5G was identified as one of the three areas for future collaboration between India and Finland. Wipro Limited, signed an MoU with the University of Oulu, Finland, on 19 November 2019 to collaborate in wireless communications in 5G/6G. University's 6G flagship program, is the world's first major 6G research program which also supports industry in identifying new 5G – enabled business opportunities. Together, Wipro and Oulu University will create technology pilots to address industry and customer requirements.

In addition, Tech Mahindra and Business Finland signed an MoU for research and development in 5G and 6G, on 21 November 2019. Under this collaboration, Tech Mahindra will set-up an innovation lab in Finland, develop, pilot and implement state of the art digital products and services for Finnish universities, research institutions, government and companies.

Science & Technology

An agreement for Cooperation in S&T was signed in February 2008 for development of innovation policies, exchange of information and scientists and R&D collaboration. Under this Agreement, Business Finland has an agreement with DST & Department of Biotechnology to promote joint R & D cooperation in the fields of science, biotechnology and wider technology domain. Under the Agreement, a Joint S & T committee representing both sides was formed to drive discussions on mutual areas of interests. The 4th Joint Committee Meeting was virtually held on 17th November 2020, Chaired by Secretary (DST) Shri Ashutosh Sharma and Mr Petri Peltonen, Under Secretary of State, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. The Joint Committee identified 5G, sustainability and quantum computing as topics of interest. Both sides have formed Working Groups to exchange information on the above topics, enhance industry to industry innovation and find relevant projects for joint government funding.

Environment

There are successful partnerships from 2004 between Finnish Meteorological Institute (FMI), India Meteorological Department (IMD) and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) in air quality including capacity building. The Ministries of Environment of India and Finland signed an MoU for Cooperation in November 2020.

Cooperation in Education

Finland is a global leader in education scoring consistently on several parameters. There have been tie-ups between private firms for exchange of best practices in early childhood and K-12 education. There is an MoU between a Consortium of ten Finnish Universities and twenty-three Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) for the period 2020-2025 for cooperation in higher education sector. Moreover, Finland is emerging as a favourable good destination for vocational and higher education for Indian students. A high-level dialogue in education was announced during the March 2021 Virtual Summit.

Vocational Education and Skill Development

Like other Scandinavian countries, Finland is renowned for vocational education. An

MoU between NSDC India and EDUFI in the Finnish Ministry of Education for Cooperation in Vocational Education Training was signed in January 2019. CEO, NSDC visited Finland in Oct. 2018 and identified tourism, catering, health, sports, technology, communications and transportation as possible areas of skilling. NSDC and Omnia (international commercial arm of four Finnish vocational education providers) signed an MOU for capacity building, joint certification courses; and entrepreneurship modules. A webinar to explore the opportunities for cooperation in vocation education was organized on 30 September 2021 by the Embassy with the support of NSDC and Education Finland.

Cultural Relations

Finland is receptive to Indian culture. There are several Indian dance schools and Yoga schools. Cultural events are organised regularly by Indian Associations and other cultural organisations promoting Indian dance and music (both classical as well as contemporary). Finnish India Society has been active since 1956. Embassy has been organising International Day of Yoga and annual cultural festival “India Day” since 2016.

A lifesize statue of Mahatma Gandhi gifted by ICCR to Government of Finland was unveiled by EAM and Foreign Minister Pekka Haavisto on 20 September 2019 to mark Gandhi’s 150th anniversary.

Visas/Travel

Finland has recognised both Covishield and Covaxin vaccines administered in India. Restrictions on entry at Finland’s external borders imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic has ended on 1 July 2022. Indian nationals arriving in Finland will no longer be required to hold vaccination or COVID-19 test certificates, and COVID-19 tests will not be carried out at border crossing points.

The favourite destinations of Finnish tourists are Goa, Kerala, and the Golden Temple, though other destinations are also becoming popular. E-visa’ facility has boosted tourism from Finland. There is a direct flight between Helsinki and New Delhi which has encouraged travel between both countries. Finnair has announced a direct Mumbai flight from August 2022.

Indian Community:

There are around 15,469 (end of 2020) persons of Indian origin (7231 NRIs and 8232 OCIs) in Finland. Most live in the capital Helsinki and surrounding regions. Most Indians who settled during 1980s and 1990s were from Punjab and are engaged mostly in the restaurant business. In recent years, Indian professionals are being employed in high-tech companies. With the encouragement from the Embassy, 18 Indian organisations are under an informal umbrella called ‘Friends of India Finland’ to bring more synergy to their effort to promote India-Finland relations.

The number of Indian students at Finnish universities has grown in recent years. Currently, about 1200 Indian students are pursuing higher education. About half are pursuing Masters degrees and the other are in doctorate programmes. Embassy is holding regular interaction with Indian students under ‘Terve-Namaste’ series. Six such interactions have been held with the universities of Helsinki, Aalto, Turku, Tampere, Oulu and students from all over Finland.

In February 2020, Embassy launched FINERAC - ‘Finland India Network of

Researchers and Academics' (earlier IARFE) with the objective to consolidate the community of Indian academics and research scholars, scattered across Finland, and to provide them a platform to collaborate. Since then, it has grown to expand its objectives to be able to include all academics and researchers with linkages to India and to strengthen the research collaborations between India and Finland.

Source: Embassy of India, Finland Web site July 2022.