

Consulate General of India Belfast

Bilateral Relations

Overview of India-UK Relations

1. India and the United Kingdom have shared historic ties spanning several centuries. The relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2004, and in May 2021 Prime Minister Modi and the then UK PM Boris Johnson agreed to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership” and an India-UK Roadmap 2030 to steer cooperation across trade, defence, health, science & technology, education, climate and people-to-people ties.
2. On the sidelines of the G20 (Rio, Nov 2024) and G7 (Canada, June 2025), PM Modi and former UK Prime Minister Starmer met and on 6 May 2025 spoke on phone to announce the conclusion, after three years of negotiation, of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) and a Double Contribution Convention on social security.
3. PM Modi and former UK PM Starmer jointly unveiled “India-UK Vision 2035” on 24 July 2025 in London, setting out the long-term roadmap for the partnership. CETA entered into force on 15 July 2026.
4. Trade & Investment: India-UK bilateral trade in goods and services stood at roughly £48 billion in 2025. The UK is India’s 6th-largest inward investor (cumulative equity of US\$35 billion to Sept 2024); India’s outward investment into the UK stands at roughly US\$19 billion. Over 970 Indian companies operate in the UK, and over 660 British companies operate in India.
5. Education & Diaspora: An estimated 170,000 Indian students study in the UK. The UK’s Indian diaspora numbers around 1.86 million (2021 Census), about 2.6% of the UK population — one of the largest and most successful diaspora communities in the UK.
6. Defence: The two countries hold regular joint exercises (Konkan, Cobra Warrior, Ajeya Warrior, Tarang Shakti) across naval, air and land forces.
7. Recent high-level visits include Hon’ble President Smt Draupadi Murmu’s visit to London for Queen Elizabeth II’s funeral (Sept 2022); former Vice President Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar’s attendance at King Charles III’s Coronation (May 2023); PM Modi’s visit for COP26 Glasgow (2021); and PM Johnson’s visit to India (April 2022).

India–Northern Ireland Relations

8. Northern Ireland is a devolved region of the United Kingdom, with Belfast as its capital. As per the 2021 Census, approximately 9,900 people of Indian ethnicity live in Northern Ireland (about 0.5% of the population), with the largest concentration in Belfast. The community is engaged mainly in healthcare, education, business, IT and academia.
9. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar inaugurated the Consulate General of India, Belfast on 7 March 2025, alongside a new Consulate General in Manchester, as part of a broader expansion of India’s diplomatic presence in the UK regions. In his speech, EAM

noted Belfast's location offered access to both UK and EU markets and policy space. The inauguration was attended by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly, and other dignitaries. During the same visit, EAM called on Northern Ireland's Deputy First Minister Emma Little-Pengelly and Junior Minister Aisling Reilly, with discussions covering cooperation in skills, cyber security, technology, creative industries and manufacturing. EAM also visited Queen's University Belfast.

10. Earlier, in 2012, the then First Minister Peter Robinson and deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, accompanied by Enterprise Minister Arlene Foster, undertook a 5 day business mission covering UAE and India (Mumbai and New Delhi). They led Invest NI's business mission to India and launched the NI "NI2012" tourism campaign in New Delhi.

Trade & Economic Cooperation

12. India-UK CETA is expected to benefit Northern Ireland's advanced manufacturing, agri-food, engineering, and services sectors as India's trade-weighted average tariff falls from around 15% to around 3%. A UK Government Report of July 2025 projected a £50 million boost to the Northern Ireland economy from the agreement. In 2024, 143 Northern Ireland businesses had exported goods worth £65 million to India.

13. Invest Northern Ireland, the region's economic development agency, runs a dedicated India, Middle East & Africa (IMEA) team to support Northern Ireland exporters and inward investors, operating through a regional office network based in Dubai.

Education & Research

14. Queen's University Belfast has opened a campus at GIFT City, Gujarat, becoming the first Russell Group university to do so, with its first cohort in January 2026. The announcement was made during the former UK Prime Minister's trade delegation to Mumbai (8–9 October 2025), where PM Starmer and PM Modi jointly marked the expansion of UK university campuses in India. Queen's was represented on that delegation by Prof. Margaret Topping, Pro-Vice-Chancellor for Global Engagement.

Cultural Diplomacy

16. The Consulate has engaged the Indian community in Belfast through cultural events including Diwali celebrations at Belfast City Hall and the Indian Community Centre, the Belfast Mela (organised by ArtsEkta), International Day of Yoga events in Belfast and Londonderry, and other events.

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