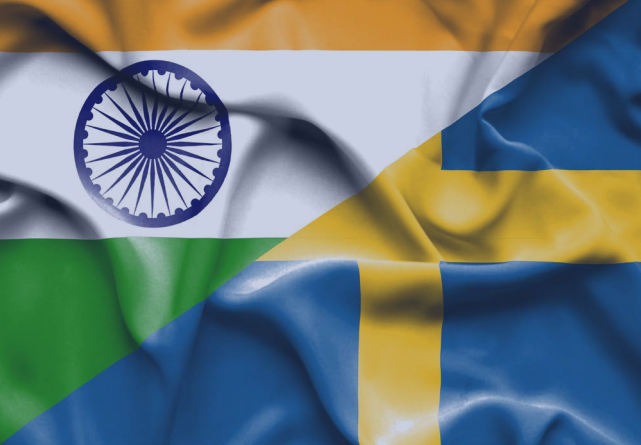




INDIA-SWEDEN STRATEGIC COMPASS

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY ISDP'S STOCKHOLM
CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN AND INDO-PACIFIC AFFAIRS

September-October 2025 • Vol.4 • No.5

INDIA-SWEDEN

Sweden pitches free trade and green innovation as cornerstones for ties with India

Sweden is seeking to anchor its relationship with India in innovation and sustainability, with Ambassador Jan Thesleff declaring at the *Time for Sweden* launch event in New Delhi that bilateral ties are “future-oriented and anchored in the green transition.” The *Time for Sweden* Event was a flagship showcase designed to highlight Sweden’s strengths in clean energy, smart industry, and digital transformation while promoting Swedish companies as long-term partners in India’s growth story. This vision was reinforced during a September 2025 visit to India by a delegation of Swedish small and medium enterprises (SMEs), organized under the Focus Asia program of Business Sweden, the country’s official trade and investment council.

Sweden’s expanding footprint in India

Ambassador Thesleff’s speech at the *Time for Sweden* event drew attention to the substantial presence Swedish companies already enjoy in India. More than 280 Swedish firms operate in the country, providing direct employment to over 220,000 people and supporting around 2 million jobs indirectly through supply chains and services. Household names such as IKEA, Volvo Group, Epiroc, Atlas Copco, and Getinge are expanding their Indian operations, while technology companies like Truecaller, Spotify, and Storytel illustrate Sweden’s diversification into digital services.

At the heart of the *Time for Sweden* event was a call to deepen collaboration in high-tech sectors. Ambassador Thesleff identified artificial intelligence, life sciences, quantum computing, telecommunications,

and space research as areas where Sweden and India could co-create solutions. Swedish firms are increasingly embedding Indian engineers and researchers into their global R&D networks, upgrading Indian operations from peripheral back-office roles to core innovation centres. “This is about co-creating technologies of the future,” the Ambassador said, stressing that India and Sweden share values of trust, openness, and sustainability that make them natural innovation partners.

Consul General of Sweden in Mumbai, Sven Östberg, emphasized the importance of Western India as a major hub for Swedish investment, noting that over 100 of the 280 Swedish firms in India are based in Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa. The historical legacy of companies such as SKF and Alfa Laval has now been joined by new investments in innovation-driven sectors, underscoring a broader shift from sales to manufacturing, R&D, and co-innovation.

SME delegation

Building on the success of the *Time for Sweden* launch event, Business Sweden’s Focus Asia SME Delegation conducted a successful four-day tour of sites in Mumbai and New Delhi, where delegates explored ways to strengthen connections between Swedish and Indian businesses. The Swedish delegation featured companies ranging from Skandia Elevator and Seaflex to SpinChem, Algoryx Simulation, and Björklunds Kafferosteri, supported by incubators such as Vasterbottens Handelskammare and Almi Malardalen. Commenting on the event, Ambassador Thesleff emphasized the importance of these initiatives, stating that ‘by facilitating direct engagement and knowledge exchange, [Sweden] aim[s] to create long-term value for both countries.’

The Focus Asia SME Delegation began its visit



in New Delhi, where discussions centred on green technologies and how to adapt to shifting global environmental standards. Delegates toured the Indian Institutes of Technology (IIT) Delhi's Research & Innovation Park to engage with startups and explore cutting-edge technologies, before meeting with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (ICCI) and the India SME Forum to assess market opportunities and build ties with Indian companies.

In Mumbai, the group visited IIT Bombay's Society for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (SINE) incubator, connected with local startups, and held talks with the Indian companies for cross-sector collaboration, which was then followed by a networking reception hosted by the Consul General. The final leg included meetings with Larsen & Toubro India, a leading Indian multinational company, to identify joint ventures in infrastructure, industry, and energy. At this meeting, Swedish firms also had the opportunity to showcase success stories and pitch pilot projects.

For Swedish SMEs, however, scaling in India still poses challenges. From regulatory complexity to the difficult in finding trusted local partnerships, these challenges have historically precluded Swedish companies from more active engagement in the Indian market. To address these concerns, Consul-General Sven Östberg, speaking in Mumbai, described the India-EU FTA as the "anchor" for increasing bilateral trade amid global uncertainty. "We are the most free-trade loving country in the world," he said, further declaring that "what India needs, and what Sweden needs, are reliable partners." Both

sides expect trade volumes to double once the FTA is concluded, with negotiations targeted for completion by the end of 2025.

Sources: *The Hindu Businessline* (Sep. 2025); *Business Standard* (Sep. 2025); *Fortune India* (Sep. 2025); *The Economic Times* (Sep. 2025); *The Sunday Guardian* (Sep. 2025).

India-Sweden Innovation Day: Leveraging partnership for sustainable development ahead of COP 30

The 12th India-Sweden Innovation Day, held on September 29, 2025 in Stockholm and co-organised by the Embassy of India in Sweden, spotlighted the growing importance of bilateral cooperation in aligning diplomacy, technology, and climate action ahead of COP 30. Inaugurated by Mr. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways of India, the event, entitled "Co-Creating a Sustainable Future: Scaling Innovation through Partnership", brought together policymakers, industry leaders, and researchers to explore new frontiers for collaboration across clean energy, circular manufacturing, artificial intelligence, and smart cities.

Minister Gadkari delivered the inaugural speech, calling for deeper collaboration in low-carbon mobility, green hydrogen, and smart infrastructure. Highlighting India's vision for sustainable growth, he praised Sweden's innovation-driven economy and affirmed that India and Sweden are "natural partners in building a better future."

The opening leadership panel brought together experts to discuss how policy and industry can align to scale innovation and achieve climate neutrality. The





speakers discussed Sweden’s “triple-helix” approach to innovation, linking academia, research, and industry. They also called for stronger collaboration within the bilateral Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LEAD-IT), an initiative aimed at promoting low-carbon industrial practices to meet climate goals.

The next session examined how collaboration in science and technology can advance the green transition. The discussion revolved around how to improve the bilateral science relationship and emphasized the role of mutual learning. On a governmental level, the importance of the continued development of mechanisms like the Joint Declaration on Sweden-India Innovation Partnership for a Sustainable Future signed in 2018 was emphasized.

The session on industrial transition explored how collaboration between large companies, small enterprises, and public agencies can accelerate decarbonization. The discussion traced the evolution of bilateral clean-tech cooperation through the India-Sweden Innovations Accelerator and the Industry Transition Partnership (ITP) launched at COP 28. Discussions in the session on travel and connectivity explored the role of tourism as a bridge between cultures and as an enabler of trade and knowledge exchange.

The panel on artificial intelligence explored how companies across industries are embedding AI to drive productivity, safety, and sustainability. The session underscored that successful AI deployment requires collaboration across industries, as well as ongoing investment in education and the development of ethical frameworks.

The Technology Leadership Fireside Chat explored sustainable innovation in engineering and R&D explored how AI and digitalization are transforming design and product development. The discussion highlighted that AI will likely become an important force multiplier for building resilient and sustainable industries and businesses.

The Sweden-India Innovation Bridge showcased the

growing strength of the Sweden-India technology corridor. The discussion highlighted the creation of a vibrant ecosystem linking startups, investors, and research institutions through collaborative ventures in AI, clean mobility, and digital manufacturing. Investment trends indicated a rising confidence in India’s technology and startup environment, with opportunities emerging in electric mobility, robotics, and advanced manufacturing.

The session on water-smart and circular solutions explored how the proposed Sweden-India Centre of Excellence on Water and Circular Economy can move “from vision to action.” The initiative aims to create an integrated platform for research, technology demonstration, and policy dialogue focused on sustainable urban water management. The session highlighted the need to connect scientific research with practical implementation and the challenges ahead.

The closing session focused on the evolving India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA). The discussion underlined that the FTA would provide predictability, enhance investor confidence, and strengthen supply-chain resilience across Europe and South Asia.

The agreement was viewed as a critical step toward deeper regulatory convergence and greater inclusion of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in global value chains. The session concluded that the India-EU partnership must be built on shared values, which then can be translated into the building of transparent frameworks that enable sustainable growth.

Sources: ptinews.com (Sep. 2025); economictimes.indiatimes.com (Sep. 2025); devdiscourse.com (Sep. 2025); Indian Embassy in Sweden (Sep. 2025); India Unlimited (LinkedIn) (Sep. 2025)

BHU and Karlstad University in Sweden renew MoU

On October 7, 2025, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) and Karlstad University of Sweden formally renewed their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for academic collaboration, reaffirming a

SPECIAL FEATURE

Swedish Government releases a 'Cultural Canon': Attempting to define the touchstones of Swedish Culture

In early September 2025, Sweden's Ministry of Culture unveiled a proposed list of 109 works—spanning literature, cinema, art, music, and even everyday icons like IKEA and the Nobel Prize—to form a new Swedish “cultural canon” (*kulturkanon*). The initiative, spearheaded by Culture Minister Parisa Liljestrand, is intended to establish a shared set of cultural reference points to understand the culture that has “shaped our country.” The government argues that the canon will help foster cohesion in a nation that has undergone rapid demographic and social change over the past three decades. The proposal has ignited fierce debate in Swedish politics. Critics from academia, the arts, and opposition parties have voiced criticism against the canon as an exercise in cultural gatekeeping, warning that it risks marginalising immigrant communities and narrowing the definition of what it means to be Swedish. Supporters, meanwhile, see it as a necessary attempt to reinforce civic identity where public discourse around values and tolerance is increasingly becoming more polarized.



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The *kulturkanon* initiative is rooted in the broader ideological re-orientation of Sweden's centre-right government, which has been under pressure from the Sweden Democrats (SD), a nationalist party now wielding considerable parliamentary influence. For SD and its allies, cultural policy has become a key instrument for articulating the values of “Swedishness.” The government, however, has framed the canon in more inclusive terms, insisting that the list is “a living and useful tool for education, community and inclusion” and highlights the achievements of Swedish creativity. The list includes a wide range of items, including the Nobel prize, Pippi Longstocking, IKEA, paternity leave and Ingmar Bergman. However, one glaring omission from the list is the pop group ABBA, arguably Sweden's most famous culture export. The justification for this was the fact that the international pop icons did not meet the criteria that items must be at least 50-year-old to qualify; however, some critics have argued that even under this criterion, ABBA still should have made the cut.

Sources: EuroNews (Sep. 2025); Guardian (Sep. 2025); LeMonde (Oct. 2025); New York Times (May, 2025)

partnership oriented around joint research, faculty and student exchanges, seminars, and custom programs tailored for BHU scholars. This renewal reaffirms the deep academic relationship between India and Sweden. According to the Indian Embassy in Sweden, other Indian universities like IIT Chennai, IIT Guwahati, Vellore Institute of Technology, Cen-

tral University of Gujarat, and Gandhinagar have ties to a range of Swedish academic institutions, including KTH (Royal Institute of Technology), Uppsala University, Blekinge Institute of Technology, and Linköping University.

Sources: Times of India (Oct. 2025); Embassy of India, Sweden (Mar. 2025)

A night of double celebrations: Sweden Day and Diwali celebrations in Delhi

On a crisp autumn evening in Delhi, the grounds of the Embassy of Sweden shimmered with lights and colors as guests gathered to celebrate not just one, but two meaningful occasions: Sweden Day and Diwali.

The event, held in mid-October, had all the hallmarks of a great party: guests dressed in vibrant Indian attire, some wearing floral crowns in a nod to traditional Swedish midsummer dress, and a playlist that moved seamlessly between Bollywood and Swedish hits, including desi song ‘Mundian To Bach Ke’ and ABBA’s ‘Gimme! Gimme! Gimme!’. The Swedish ambassador to India, Jan Thesleff, extended warm Diwali wishes (“Shubh Diwali”) and took the opportunity to remark on the often-made mistake of confusing Sweden with Switzerland, jovially inviting the guests to “come to Sweden instead!”. Meanwhile, Swedish-born Bollywood actress Elli AvrRam addressed the gathering, speaking about the growing connection between Indian and Swedish cinema and the potential for deeper cinematic collaboration.

The Ambassador and his love for the Festival of Lights

Speaking to the Times of India, Ambassador Thesleff shared how Diwali resonates deeply in Sweden, particularly given Sweden’s own ‘Festival of Lights’ in December, which celebrates the ancient Saint Lucia, who is said to be the bearer of light during the dark Swedish winters. He described the similarities



PM Kristersson’s Diwali greetings

In a heartwarming video, the Prime Minister of Sweden, Mr. Ulf Kristersson sent Diwali greetings to everyone celebrating the festival around the world.



Wishing everybody, he said “Diwali is the Festival of Lights and celebrated by over a billion people. Especially now, living in troubled times, Diwali’s message of hope for a brighter future is particularly important to many.” On the occasion, he said he would also like to recognize Sweden’s many Indian and Hindu residents and thank them for their invaluable contribution to Sweden.

Source: SwedeninIndia @facebook (Oct. 20)

between the festivals, observing that the Saint Lucia festival also captures, “the contrast between light and darkness, between good and evil, knowledge and ignorance, which I think is the essence of Diwali.”

Thesleff remarked on the Indian diaspora’s growing presence in Sweden and how Diwali is increasingly visible in Swedish life. He noted that Sweden is a multi-cultural society, with about 20% of the population born or with parents born abroad, and that very soon about 1% of Sweden’s population will be Indian. He pointed out that while Diwali is celebrated abroad, there’s a special energy when you are in India: “You really feel there is a change of the seasons, ... the tradition of the diyas and lights remind me of the [Saint Lucia] traditions I have at home.”

Sources: Hindustan Times (Oct. 2025); Times of India (Oct. 2025)

Ambassador Anurag Bhushan visits KTH Innovation Center

Ambassador Anurag Bhushan visited the KTH Innovation Center, where he explored cutting-edge initiatives at the crossroads of science, design, and sustainability.

The Ambassador learned about BIORESTORE, a remarkable innovation that applies bio-based, PFA-free technology to rejuvenate worn cotton garments and prolong their lifespan — a significant stride toward circular fashion and a more eco-friendly textile industry.



KTH helps researchers and students to commercialize their research results and business ideas.

Source: Sweden in India@Facebook, Oct. 26, 2025

Sweden and India deepen maritime and sustainability engagement

Sweden and India reinforced bilateral cooperation in maritime innovation, sustainable industry, and renewable energy during the three-day strategic visit of Ms. Sara Modig, State Secretary to the Deputy Prime Minister of Sweden, Ms. Ebba Busch, Ministry for Climate and Enterprise, Sweden.

The official visit to Mumbai included a business roundtable discussion with Mr. Shantanu Thakur, Minister of State, Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways, Government of India, as well as interactions with Swedish maritime companies including APOCCA, Candela, Echandia, Berg Propulsion and Trelleborg. Discussions focused on disruptive shipping technologies, port modernization, and opportunities for collaboration in sustainable maritime infrastructure.



She also undertook a site tour of Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), India's premier container port, located in Navi Mumbai, where the delegation gained key insights into port operations.

A key highlight of the visit was the launch of a joint statement on strategic collaboration between Tata Motors and Volvo Group under the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) initiative, focusing on green fuels. She also took part in India-Sweden Mining Day and announced a new partnership between Indian Institute of Technology (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad and Business Sweden, aimed at fostering innovation and sustainable practices in the mining sector.

In Delhi, she held productive meetings with Mr. Bhupathi Raju Srinivasa Varma, Minister of State, and Mr. Sandeep Poundrik, Secretary, Ministry of Steel, Government of India, to strengthen cooperation on sustainable industrial development, including research and innovation in green steel technologies.

Ahead of her visit, Ms. Modig met Ambassador Anurag Bhushan and discussed strengthening India-Sweden cooperation in energy, business, and industry, as well as further strengthening India-Sweden collaboration.

Sources: SwedeninIndia @facebook, Oct. 31; Oct. 26; Business Standard, Nov. 1

Minister Rane's visit to Stockholm focuses on port development

Minister Nitesh Rane, as part of a Maharashtra delegation, visited Stockholm in October 2025 to discuss port development and sustainable maritime technology with Swedish officials and companies. The visit, which included exploring electric hydrofoil



vessels, aimed to strengthen the India-Sweden economic partnership and align with Maharashtra's "Blue Economy" vision.

The Embassy had the honour of welcoming the Minister of Port Development, Government of Maharashtra, and Managing Director & CEO of Maharashtra's government maritime agency, Mr. Ambarayade. The Ambassador engaged in productive discussions with the visiting dignitaries, focusing on the growing economic partnership between India and Sweden, particularly in the areas of port development and infrastructure.

The visit also included an interactive session with members of the Indian diaspora in Sweden, whose contributions continue to play a significant role in deepening bilateral ties and promoting people-to-people connections.

Source: IndiainSweden @facebook, Oct. 16

Uttar Pradesh Speaker's visit to Stockholm

Ambassador Anurag Bhushan welcomed Mr. Satish Mahana, Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Uttar Pradesh, and Kunwar Manvendra Singh, Chairman, Legislative Council, Uttar Pradesh, along with their distinguished delegation.

The high-level event was joined by H.E. Margareta Cederfelt, Chair of the India-Sweden Friendship Group at Riksdag and other respective Members of the Swedish Parliament, H.E. Christian Kamill, Ambassador Interreligious Dialogue and Human Rights at MFA, Dr. Kevin Casas-Zamora, Secretary-General of International IDEA, Mr. Rakesh Verma, Director General, IIIDEM, as well as members of the

Indian diaspora.

Discussions focused on deepening cooperation between Uttar Pradesh and Sweden, promoting democratic governance, innovation, sustainability, and enhanced institutional linkages.

Source: IndiainSweden @facebook, Oct. 17

Namaste Stockholm 2025!

The largest Indian cultural celebration in Sweden, organized by India Unlimited, brought the vibrant spirit of India to the heart of Stockholm once again. The event was officially inaugurated by Her Excellency Ms. Parisa Liljestrand, Minister for Culture of Sweden, Her Excellency Ms. Margareta Cederfeldt, Chair of the Sweden-India Friendship Group, and Mr. Anurag Bhushan, Ambassador of India to Sweden.

This year, the Embassy of India actively participated at Namaste Stockholm. The Embassy booth was the heart of the celebration — buzzing with energy, color, and culture!

From mehndi and photo booths to engaging quizzes, tourism showcases, handicrafts, and artifacts, visitors got to experience India in all its vibrancy. The excitement peaked when Ms. Patricia Petersson and Mr. Ashutosh Kumar won a round trip to India courtesy of Emirates Airlines. A memorable day that marks yet another successful milestone in the ever-growing bond between India and Sweden — a celebration of culture, connection, and collaboration.

Source: IndiainSweden @facebook, Sept. 15



Indian youth footballers join Swedish academy for elite training exchange

Five young footballers from the Chennai-based FC Madras have embarked on an elite training program in Stockholm, marking a new step in India-Sweden sports collaboration.

Hosted by IF Brommapojkarna, one of Europe's leading youth academies, the initiative reflects a growing recognition of India's emerging football talent and the value of India-Sweden sports partnerships.

During their nearly month-long stay from October 1-24, the players underwent intensive training sessions in tactical awareness, technical skills, and physical conditioning. The exchange also included classroom modules on the theoretical skills needed for professional athletes.

The selected players represented three youth categories: 14-year-old Areez (Tamil Nadu), U-16 midfielder Adithya (Maharashtra), and U-18 stars Shamil (Kerala), Aathilingesh (Tamil Nadu), and Rajesh (Tamil Nadu). Each was chosen through FC Madras's talent-identification system.

Technical Director Venkatesh Shanmugam and U-14 Head Coach Suren Chettri, both former India internationals, accompanied the team. Their goal was to observe training methodologies at IF Brommapo-

jarna and integrate best practices into the academy's programs in Chennai.

This marks FC Madras's first European training partnership, building on previous partnerships with teams in Turkey and Malaysia. The initiative is entirely funded by FC Madras, underscoring its long-term vision to develop world-class youth talent within India. According to club CEO Abhishek Yadav, the project aims to be a "benchmark for Indian academies to push their boundaries and think globally," adding that he does not "see this as a cost but as an investment in the future of Indian football."

Source: DT Next (Oct. 2025)



Strengthening India-Sweden innovation partnerships

A high-level delegation from Karnataka, India's innovation hub and home to Bengaluru – the Silicon Valley of India, visited Stockholm to explore new opportunities for collaboration.

Led by Mr. Sharath Kumar Bache Gowda (Chairman, KEONICS & MLA), along with senior officials from the Department of Electronics, IT & BT, the delegation highlighted avenues for cooperation in technology, innovation, and co-creation.

This engagement is part of the Sweden India Innovation Bridge, fostering connections between startups, companies, and institutions. The collaboration will culminate in a Swedish delegation visit to the Bengaluru Tech Summit in November 2025.

Source: Sweden in India@Facebook, Sept 6, 2025



SPECIAL FEATURE

Sweden and Ukraine Deepen Defense Ties with Fighter Jet Deal



Ukraine's efforts to modernize its air-defense capabilities took a major step forward this week as it signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with Sweden to purchase up to 150 of Saab JAS 39 Gripen fighter jets. The agreement, confirmed during Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's visit to Sweden on October 22, signals a deepening defense cooperation between the two nations and could become one of the largest combat aviation agreements in Sweden's history. If finalized, it would not only boost Ukraine's air power but also reinforce Sweden's growing role in European and transatlantic defense production.

Manufactured by Saab, the JAS 39 Gripen is a lightweight, single-engine, supersonic multirole fighter designed to be extremely cost-effective and easy to maintain. Originally developed to defend Sweden's airspace during the Cold War, the Gripen was built to operate from short or improvised runways. This feature is especially important for Ukraine, as its country has constant damage to its infrastructure from Russian attacks. Its adaptability and cost effectiveness make it a strong alternative to US-made F-16s and F-35s. Compared to these American fighter jets, the Gripen's relatively low cost and flexibility make it ideal for Ukraine's current wartime conditions. The Gripen's electronic warfare systems designed to resist GPS jamming and radar interference are also extremely useful against Russia's evolving cyber warfare capabilities.

Although the LoI leaves key details open, including the timeline for production and funding, Prime Minister Kristersson has signaled that Sweden is "committed to exploring all the possibilities in providing Ukraine with a large amount of Gripen fighters in the future." He suggested, for example, that funding could come from frozen Russian assets located in European countries. Zelensky, for his part, has stated that "Gripens are a priority," further noting that he hopes to begin deploying Gripens in battle as early as 2026.

Sources: Guardian UK (Oct. 2025); Reuters (Oct. 2025); CNN (Oct. 2025)

SPECIAL FEATURE

Between Two Worlds: Indian Developer's Viral Reflection on Life in Sweden and Back Home

In September, Dev Vijay Vargiya, an Indian software developer, captured global attention with an Instagram video documenting his first day back at work in India after living in Sweden. With humor and honesty, he compared the daily realities of both countries: the challenges of public transport and office security in India, the structured work-life balance in Sweden, and the superior food in India.

His video did not just stop at workplace differences. After his video went viral, Dev followed up with an honest discussion on the broader struggles of living abroad, from Sweden's high cost of living and harsh weather to the loneliness many expats face. Yet, he also acknowledged the benefits of his time in Sweden, offering a balanced perspective. Dev's story resonated far beyond India's expat community in Sweden. It sparked conversations among anyone who has experienced the ups and downs of adapting to a new country, making it a relatable and engaging snapshot of life between two very different cultures.

Sources: *The Economic Times*, *India Times* (Sep. 2025)



SPECIAL FEATURE

India's Self-Reliance Campaigns in Textiles and Agriculture

Over the past month, India has unveiled a series of major domestic initiatives that reflect a confident, reform-oriented economic strategy. At the core of this strategy is India's Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Self-Reliant India) vision, which seeks to strengthen domestic capabilities while remaining open to global partnerships.

The latest government economic review projects robust growth for FY 2025–26. Supported by steady domestic consumption, infrastructure investment, and export diversification, India remains one of the fastest-growing major economies. The report also underscored New Delhi's intent to expand trade beyond traditional partners such as the United States and China.

A key policy milestone was the launch of the "Swadeshi Campaign", a nationwide initiative to revitalise India's textile, handloom, and handicraft sectors. The campaign aims to integrate heritage craftsmanship with sustainability and contemporary design, positioning India's textile market to reach an estimated USD 250 billion by 2030.

Agriculture has also taken centre stage with the Cabinet's approval of the Mission for Aatmanirbharta (Self-Reliance) in Pulses, a six-year programme worth ₹114.4 billion targeting full self-sufficiency in key legumes by 2031. Taken together, these reforms highlight India's pursuit of sustainable growth and self-reliance.

Sources: *Ministry of Textiles* (Oct. 2025); *Times of India* (Oct. 2025); *Reuters* (Oct. 2025); *Government of India* (Oct. 2025).



INDIA-NORDIC

India–Denmark: Advancing the green strategic partnership

In a telephonic conversation on September 16, 2025, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen reaffirmed their shared vision for a sustainable future. The two leaders expressed support for the early conclusion of the India–EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA), emphasizing its potential to enhance economic resilience amid global uncertainty. Discussions also covered regional stability and climate action, underscoring Denmark’s backing of India’s leadership in hosting the 2026 AI Impact Summit.

Beyond diplomacy, cultural and community initiatives flourished. The inaugural Namaste Denmark Festival, held in Copenhagen on September 6, drew nearly 10,000 visitors for a vibrant celebration of Indian music, dance, and cuisine. The Embassy of India in Copenhagen also celebrated Ayurveda Day, Hindi Day, and the 156th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, reflecting the continued resonance of India’s cultural heritage abroad.



India’s growing engagement in the Nordic startup ecosystem was also evident at the Nordic India Startup Summit – TechBBQ, where Embassy officials joined Danish counterparts and industry leaders to promote innovation-driven collaboration.

On October 6, 2025, India and Denmark reaffirmed their commitment to a Green Strategic Partnership at the Steering Committee Meeting on Energy Co-operation. Co-chaired by Mr. Pankaj Agarwal, Secretary, Ministry of Power, and Lars Frelle-Petersen, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Climate, Energy and Utilities, Denmark, the meeting reviewed prog-



Namaste Denmark Festival in Copenhagen (September 6)

ress in renewable energy, energy efficiency, and green hydrogen. Both sides agreed to expand cooperation on clean technologies, leveraging Denmark's expertise and India's dynamic market.

Sources: The Times of India; EU-India Association; Embassy of India, Copenhagen – Events and Cultural Activities; facebook.com

Denmark and India collaborate to advance green fintech at Global Fintech Fest 2025

At the 6th edition of the Global Fintech Fest (GFF) 2025 in Mumbai, Invest in Denmark and Copenhagen Fintech, in partnership with Startup Réseau, hosted a thematic interaction on “Green Fintech,” bringing together Danish and Indian stakeholders committed to driving sustainable innovation in financial services.

The closed-door session convened policymakers, industry leaders, investors, ecosystem enablers, and high-growth ventures, all working at the intersection of sustainability and finance, to explore collaborative pathways that accelerate climate-aligned financial innovation.

This was followed by the launch of a report titled ‘Green Fintech – Denmark: Digital Solutions for a Sustainable Future’. The report features several innovative startups and cluster organizations in both Denmark and India, with the aim of triggering conversations around collaboration between the two countries.

Source: copenhagenfintech.dk (Oct. 2025)

India-Finland: Deepening collaboration in innovation and social policy

In a September 24, 2025 address, President Alexander Stubb hailed India as an “emerging superpower” and urged closer Western engagement. He praised India's balanced diplomacy amid global challenges, noting Finland's intent to deepen cooperation in technology and education.

Bilateral promotion continued through the Finland-India Roadshow 2025, where Ambassador Hemant H. Kotalwar highlighted expanding opportunities in

trade, innovation, and higher education. Finland's attractiveness for Indian students also continued to grow, with over 2,600 students enrolled in Finnish universities, drawn by world-class education and clear post-study opportunities.

The Embassy of India in Helsinki strengthened outreach through initiatives such as a Consular Camp in Oulu (October 6), serving the region's Indian community while highlighting Oulu's role as a hub for 5G, IoT, and HealthTech innovation. On October 1, Ambassador Kotalwar met Finland's Minister of Social Security, Sanni Grahn-Laasonen, to explore joint initiatives in social security, digital welfare systems, and health technology.

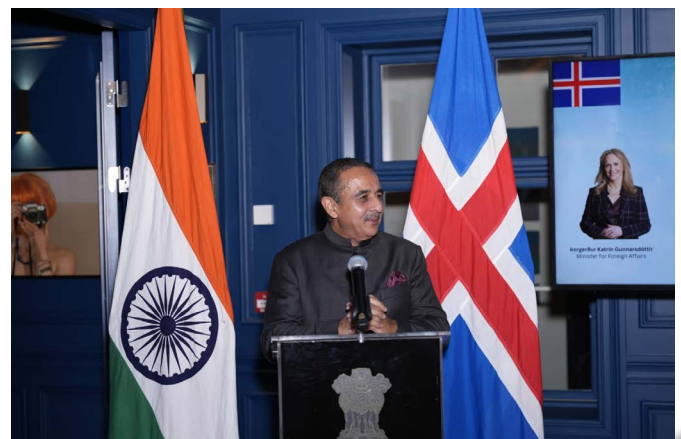
Sources: Business Standard; Embassy of India, Helsinki

India-Iceland: Cultural diplomacy and strategic dialogue

At the 2nd India-Nordic Track 1.5 Dialogue in Reykjavík (September 5), Minister of State Kirti Vardhan Singh and Icelandic Foreign Minister Thorgerdur Katrin Gunnarsdottir discussed regional cooperation in trade, tourism, and technology.

The dialogue aimed to strengthen engagement, build trust, and foster policy recommendations on areas of mutual concern. The Embassy also supported the “One Tree in the Name of a Mother” campaign, reinforcing shared sustainability goals.

During the event, the MoS also engaged with senior officials, scholars, and think tank representatives from Nordic countries. Singh also visited the Indi-



an Embassy in Reykjavík, reviewing the progress achieved on the '3 Ts' (Trade, Tourism, and Technology). He discussed the ideas for further promoting bilateral trade, tourism, and technological collaboration. In addition, he held a vibrant interaction with the members of the Indian community and friends of India during his visit to Iceland.

On September 25, the India–Iceland Cultural Connect at Garðabær International School engaged students with Amar Chitra Katha comics translated into Icelandic, fostering cross-cultural learning. The Embassy also hosted a roundtable on the India–EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) on September 26, with Icelandic business leaders focusing on renewable energy, fisheries, and investment collaboration.

The Indian Film Festival in Reykjavík (October 5–6), organized by the Embassy with support from the NFDC, featured films such as *Major* and *12th Fail*, celebrating Indian storytelling and strengthening people-to-people bonds.

Sources: Embassy of India, Reykjavík; NFDC; India–EFTA TEPA Updates; facebook.com; Kirtivardhan Singh @ facebook



India–Norway: Expanding maritime and climate cooperation

India and Norway held their first Maritime Security, Disarmament, and Non-Proliferation Dialogue in Oslo on September 12, 2025. Led by Joint Secretary Muanpui Saiawi (MEA) and Director General Jon Elvedal Fredriksen, the dialogue focused on maritime safety, countering illicit activities, and protecting ocean-based infrastructure.

Parallel discussions addressed green maritime technologies, ferry electrification, and offshore wind, aligning with India's Maritime India Vision 2030. Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal underlined India's ambition to become a global maritime hub through sustainable innovation.

On climate collaboration, Tom Rødahl, Secretary General of Norway's Ministry of Climate and Environment, hailed India as a "vital partner in global climate action." Both nations reaffirmed commitments to the Paris Agreement and co-investment in renewable technologies. Following the signing of the India–EFTA TEPA, Norway announced plans to invest USD 100 million in India over the next 15 years, focusing on green technology and environmental innovation.

Sources: *The Economic Times*; *The Tribune India*; *India in Norway*

INDIA-EU

European Commission adopts new EU-India Agenda in parallel to progress in EU-India FTA negotiations.

On September 17, H.E. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, announced during her presentation of the Political Guidelines for 2024-2029, the adoption of the new Strategic EU-India Agenda. She stated, “Now is the time to double down on partnerships rooted in shared interests and guided by common values. With our new EU-India strategy, we are taking our relationship to the next level.” This new agenda aims to build stronger bilateral relations between the EU and India, with the goal of raising cooperation to a higher level. This agenda focuses on the following issues: prosperity and sustainability; technology and innovation; security and defense; connectivity and global issues; enablers across pillars. It was approved by the Council of the EU on October 20th.

This strengthening of relations comes as EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations are progressing. On September 4, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi held a joint call with President of the European Council H.E. Antonio Costa and President of the European Commission H.E. Ursula von der Leyen, reaffirming their shared commitment to an early conclusion of the FTA before the end of 2025, and the implementation of the IMEEC corridor. On September 9, Commerce & Industry Minister Shri Piyush Goyal announced that 60–65 percent of the trade agreement chapters were already finalized. The 13th round of FTA negotiations then took place in New Delhi, led by European Commissioner for Trade Maros Sefcovic and Commissioner for Agriculture Christophe Hansen. And the 14th round of negotiations was concluded on October 10 in Brussels. At this time, negotiation were concluded on 11 chapters, which include customs and trade facilitation, digital trade, as well as sustainable food systems. Later in October, the delegation of the EU Committee on International Trade will be visiting

India, to further and accelerate FTA negotiations. Meanwhile, a delegation from the EU’s Political and Security Committee (PSC) visited New Delhi to discuss foreign policy, security, and defense issues ahead of next year’s EU-India Summit and reiterated their commitment to concluding the Security and Defense Partnership and Security of Information Agreement.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (Sept. 3) and (Sept. 12); European Commission, (Sept. 17); BBC News, (Sept. 10)

First coordinated exercise in the Indian Ocean between Indian, EU naval forces

On September 10, Operation ATALANTA’s flagship ESPS Navarra conducted different activities with the Indian Navy ships INS Tir, INS Shardul, and ICGS Sarathi, belonging to the Indian Navy’s First Training Squadron. They highlighted the importance of joint training at sea, with the aim of increasing the coordination and interoperability between ATALANTA and Indian Navy. The Indian Navy cadets were briefed on Operation ATALANTA structure, tasks, and main activities providing them with valuable insights. Cooperation with other naval forces operating in the region is key to improving maritime security. The information sharing and intelligence strengthens accurate awareness of the maritime environment, ensuring effective execution of the mission assigned to ATALANTA, to provide maritime security in the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea.

Source: EUNAFOR, (Sept. 10)



India-EU 15th Counter-Terrorism Dialogue

On September 9, the 15th Counter-Terrorism dialogue between India and the EU in Brussels was held. Led by Mr. Maciej Stadejek, Director for Security and Defense Policy in the European External Action Service, and Mr. K.D. Dewal, Joint Secretary (Counterterrorism) in the Ministry of External Affairs of India. Both parties stressed the importance of cooperation in multilateral fora, such as the United Nations, the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and the FATF. Then shared updates on the key developments of their respective counter-terrorism policies and discussed important topics in the fight against terrorism.

This India-EU dialogue was followed by the 17th Meeting of the India-France Joint Working Groups on Counter Terrorism, on September 11th, in Paris, France. The discussion on bilateral and multilateral cooperation focused on intensifying capacity-building measures through training and exercises. The two sides discussed cooperation in the UN, FATF, and NMFT.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (Sept. 10); (Sept.12)

Second Meeting of the India-France Special Task Force on Civil Nuclear Energy

France and India gathered for the Second Meeting of Special Task Force on Civil Nuclear Energy on September 22 in New Delhi, co-chaired by Foreign Secretary Mr. Vikram Misri and Secretary-General of the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Ms. Anne-Marie Descôtes. This meeting started with a complete overview of progress made over the past year. Both parties agreed to remain in touch regarding various key aspects of bilateral civil nuclear cooperation. They reaffirmed the primordial engagement in emerging technologies like Small and Advanced Modular Reactors (SMRs/AMRs).

Mr. Vikram Misri and Ms. Descôtes also discussed developments in bilateral cooperation and further strengthening partnership between the two countries, by furthering projects and cooperation in sec-



tors such as innovation and technology, defence, space, counter-terrorism cooperation. As well as further cooperation with third countries trilaterally.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (Sept. 22); The Daily Guardian (Sept. 23)

German Foreign Minister visits India

During the first week of September, H.E. Mr. Johann Wadephul, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, held talks with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar (EAM), in addition to a meeting with Mr. Piyush Goyal, Commerce & Industry Minister. During these meetings, the delegations reviewed the German - Indian Strategic Partnership and agreed on gratis visas for short-term school and college visits. This official visit was an opportunity to enhance collaboration in areas such as green technology, digital transformation, AI, space



cooperation, and sustainable urban development. As well as discussions regarding the Russia-Ukraine and the Middle East conflicts, as well as prospects of a new bilateral consultation mechanism on the Indo-Pacific region. This year, India and Germany are celebrating 25 years of Strategic Partnership.

Source: Ministry of External Affairs, (Sept. 3)

India, European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade Agreement comes into effect

On October 1, the India-European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) came into effect. This agreement was signed in March 2024 in New Delhi, with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and Liechtenstein. It is the first FTA signed by India that is committed to investment and job creation.

As such, this agreement will enable the creation of 1 million direct jobs in India and aim to increase the stock of foreign direct investments by USD 100 billion in India in the next 15 years. TEPA will increase exports specifically in IT, business services, education, and audio-visual sectors.

Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry (Sept. 30)

INDIA-GLOBAL

First Visit of Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Sir Keir Starmer to India

Following the invitation of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom the Rt Honourable Sir Keir Starmer MP visited India for the first time on 8-9 October 8-9, 2025.

During this visit, both Prime Ministers discussed diverse aspects of the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in line with 'Vision 2035', the 10-year Roadmap of initiatives focusing on trade and investment, technology and innovation, defence and security, climate and energy, health, education and people to people relations.

Furthermore, the two leaders engaged with businesses and industry leaders on opportunities presented by the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). As well as exchanging views on issues of regional and global importance. Finally, they both attended the 6th edition of the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai on October 7.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (Oct. 4); BBC (Oct.9)



India-Canada Joint Statement: Renewing momentum towards a stronger partnership

India and Canada announced a joint statement, 'Renewing Momentum Towards a Stronger Partnership,' outlining measures to restore bilateral relations after talks between their foreign ministers on October 13, 2025. The key highlights include a "New Roadmap" for the relationship, a focus on enhanced trade, investment, and cooperation in sectors like clean energy, technology, and critical minerals.

The delegations discussed an invitation for Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney to visit India in February next year for the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit. While Mr. Carney has not yet accepted the invitation, a senior official from the Canadian Prime Minister's Office was present during the meetings, indicating the visit to India was being considered seriously.

Sources: Ministry of External Affairs (Oct. 13); The Hindu (Oct. 13)



EDITOR'S NOTE

The past few months have witnessed a vibrant phase in Indo-Swedish relations, marked by a wide range of engagements spanning clean energy, circular manufacturing, artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and smart cities. Sweden continues to position its partnership with India around the twin pillars of innovation and sustainability. As Ambassador Jan Thesleff remarked at the launch of Time for Sweden in New Delhi, bilateral ties are “future-oriented and anchored in the green transition.” The flagship event spotlighted Sweden’s capabilities in clean energy, smart industry, and digital transformation, while underscoring Swedish companies’ long-term commitment to India’s growth journey. This forward-looking vision was further strengthened by the visit of a Swedish SME delegation in September 2025 under Business Sweden’s Focus Asia program.

Momentum was equally visible at the 12th India-Sweden Innovation Day held in Stockholm, co-organized

by the Embassy of India in Sweden. The event reaffirmed the growing synergy between diplomacy, technology, and climate action—an especially timely dialogue in the run-up to COP 30.

Meanwhile, progress continued on broader economic fronts. Negotiations on the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) advanced steadily, with both sides reiterating their aim to conclude the pact by the end of 2025 and to operationalize the IMEEC corridor. The adoption of the new Strategic EU-India Agenda by the EU Council was welcomed as a step toward deepening cooperation in sustainability, technology and innovation, security and defense, connectivity, and global governance. Complementing these developments, the India-European Free Trade Association Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) entered into force on October 1, further enhancing trade, investment, and employment opportunities in India.

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Disclaimer: The views expressed here are as published in the original sources and not of the ISDP or the SCSA-IPA.

CONTRIBUTORS: This newsletter was prepared by SCSA-IPA.

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The Institute for Security and Development Policy is a Stockholm-based independent and non-profit research and policy institute. The Institute is dedicated to expanding understanding of international affairs, particularly the interrelationship between the issue areas of conflict, security and development. The Institute’s primary areas of geographic focus are Asia and Europe’s neighborhood.

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