

India Cyprus Bilateral Relationship Elevated to Strategic Partnership

May 23, 2026 • vajiramandravi.com



India Cyprus Bilateral Relationship Latest News

- India and Cyprus have elevated their bilateral relationship to a strategic partnership during the visit of President Nikos Christodoulides to New Delhi, signing pacts on defence cooperation, counter-terrorism, and connectivity.

India-Cyprus Bilateral Relations

- India and Cyprus share a longstanding partnership built on shared democratic values, mutual respect for sovereignty, and growing cooperation across multiple sectors.
- Cyprus, a small island nation strategically **located in the eastern Mediterranean**, has been a steady supporter of India in international forums and serves as a key bridge between India and the European Union.

Historical Background

- Diplomatic relations between India and Cyprus were established in 1962, soon after Cyprus gained independence from British colonial rule in 1960.
- Both countries shared common experiences of colonial rule and were active members of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which fostered strong political ties from the outset.
- Indian leader Archbishop Makarios, the first President of Cyprus, was a close friend of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, and this personal rapport laid the foundation for warm bilateral relations.
- India consistently supported Cyprus's struggle for independence and territorial integrity, including its position on the Cyprus problem following the Turkish invasion of northern Cyprus in 1974.

Strategic and Diplomatic Engagement

- The strategic dimension of India-Cyprus relations has grown significantly in recent years:
- **EU Gateway:** Cyprus, as an EU member since 2004, serves as an important gateway for India's engagement with the European Union.
- **UN Cooperation:** Both nations collaborate at the United Nations, with Cyprus supporting India's bid for permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council.
- **Counter-Terrorism:** Cyprus has consistently expressed solidarity with India in its fight against cross-border terrorism.

Economic and Trade Relations

- **Bilateral Trade:** Bilateral trade between the two countries was **USD 140.47 million** for April 2024- March 2025.
- **Investments:** Cyprus is one of India's top 10 foreign investors, with significant cumulative FDI inflows. Cypriot investment routes have been used by global investors to access the Indian market.
- **India-EU FTA:** The recently concluded India-EU Free Trade Agreement opens new opportunities, with Cyprus positioned as a key access point.

Indian Diaspora in Cyprus

- There are around 15,500 Indians living and working in Cyprus (April 2026).
- The Indian diaspora mainly consists of professionals working primarily in shipping, IT, Fintech, farmhands, domestic workers and students.

News Summary: Cypriot President's Visit to India

- The visit of Cypriot President Nikos Christodoulides to India marked a significant milestone in bilateral relations, with both nations elevating their partnership to a **strategic partnership**.
- Cyprus currently holds the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, adding strategic significance to the visit.

Defence Cooperation Roadmap

- MoU between Cyprus Defence and Space Industries Cluster and Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers, paving the way for industrial collaboration.
- Cyprus expressed interest in purchasing items from the Indian defence industry.
- Strengthening cooperation in cyber security, maritime security, and emerging technologies.
- Increased military exchanges and training cooperation between the two countries.
- Establishment of a cybersecurity dialogue to address contemporary threats.

Counter-Terrorism Pact

- Both leaders reiterated their zero-tolerance approach to terrorism, rejecting double standards, state-sponsored terrorism, and any justification for such acts. Key outcomes include:
 - Signing of an MoU establishing a Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism.
 - Strong condemnation of cross-border terrorism, including the Pahalgam terror attack.
 - Cyprus expressed solidarity and unwavering support to India in its fight against cross-border terrorism.

Economic and Investment Outlook

- PM Modi described Cyprus as an “**investment gateway**” between India and Europe:
 - Cyprus is among India’s top 10 investors.
 - Both sides aim to double bilateral investment in the next five years.
 - New opportunities for Indian companies in Cyprus’s infrastructure, energy, and agriculture sectors.
 - New investment opportunities in India’s growing shipping and maritime sectors.
 - Direct flights between India and Cyprus to be launched soon.

India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)

- A significant focus of the visit was the **India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEEC)**. Cyprus has positioned itself as a key partner in this transformative initiative:
 - Cyprus has formed a ‘Friends of IMEEC’ grouping within the EU.
 - The country is offering transshipment facilities to address supply chain disruptions caused by the US-Israel war against Iran.
 - Both sides discussed establishing a Bilateral Connectivity Dialogue.
 - IMEEC is seen as transformational for global trade, connectivity, and prosperity.
 - Both nations emphasised promoting stability in the Eastern Mediterranean and the wider Middle East.

Significance of the Visit

- **EU Engagement:** Reinforces India’s growing engagement with the European Union through Cyprus.
- **Indo-Mediterranean Connectivity:** Strengthens India’s presence in the eastern Mediterranean.
- **IMEEC Acceleration:** Cyprus’s active role can help operationalise this transformative connectivity project.
- **Counter-Terrorism Solidarity:** Strengthens India’s global coalition against terrorism.
- **Defence Industrial Ties:** Opens new markets for India’s defence exports.
- **Migration Framework:** Provides structured opportunities for Indian professionals and students.

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/india-cyprus-bilateral-relationship/>

© Vajiram & Ravi. For personal use only.