

Interview of Ambassador of India
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Question 1: Could you tell in brief about the Indian Show 2014 that is due in Moscow in September? What are the organizer's main goals? What does India expect from the show?

Answer: The "India Show" in Crocus Expo Hall Moscow from September 24 to 26 will showcase products and services from more than 80 Indian companies from various sectors including pharmaceuticals, leather, engineering, chemicals, textile, apparels and agro-products. The objective is to help Russian and Indian entrepreneurs to recognize the tremendous business opportunities and provide an impetus to bilateral trade.

This show will give a platform for business-to-business meetings and presentations on trade and investment opportunities. A number of sectoral workshops are being held – on pharmaceuticals, banking, leather industry, etc. We will have a special focus on our Prime Minister's "Make in India" initiative – an invitation to all foreign entrepreneurs and industries to make India their manufacturing hub. This should be of special interest to Russian industry.

We have invited officials and business representatives of all regions of Russia to visit India Show and to interact with India business representatives. Two regions – Samara and Yaroslavl will make presentations at the Show of opportunities for economic collaborations with their regions.

Question 2: What impact may Western sanctions against Russia have on Russian-Indian business interaction? What are the industries that have the greatest potential in current conditions?

Answer: I would not look at India-Russia trade and economic cooperation through the prism of external factors. As we know, Russia and India have had a long and time-tested mutually beneficial relationship in all areas. We have tremendous opportunities bilaterally which we should tap. India's business entities are keen to expand bilateral trade. I would emphasize that the full potential of bilateral trade has not been tapped and much still remains to be done in this area.

In the current stage of development of economies of our two countries, there are mutually beneficial opportunities in virtually all sectors of our economy. Indian companies would be interested in the growth of direct deliveries of Russian coking coal, liquefied natural gas, rough diamonds, precious metals, minerals and fertilizers, as well as joint collaboration and production through technology transfers in heavy engineering, metallurgy, power and other fields. Two-way investment flows need to be augmented.

Question 3: Russia's economy has not been thriving recently, its growth rates are close to zero. Is Indian business afraid of investing in Russia in such conditions?

Answer: The world economy has been witnessing a slowdown and major economies of the world are at different stages on the recovery path. These are normal business cycles. We look at relations with Russia in a long time framework.

I believe there is a lack of information about the opportunities the Russian market can offer among the Indian business community. We are working to bridge the gap through exchanges of business delegations and through organizing and participating in business events and exhibitions.

Current growth rates is not the only factor for long-term investment decisions. There are multiple other factors like future growth prospects, legal framework, existing regulations, return on investment, etc. which determine them. In the presence of enabling circumstances for investment, I do not see any reason for Indian investors to be afraid of investing in Russia.

Question 4: What are the main barriers that Indian businessmen face in Russia?

Answer: As I have mentioned, an information gap is the main barrier to a far more vibrant economic engagement between India and Russia. Other than this all conditions are in fact very favourable to a quantum jump in trade and investment flows. Our bilateral relationship is strong; we have regular people-to-people exchanges and many cultural affinities; and there are complementarities in our economies that encourage mutually beneficial economic exchanges. More regular exchanges of business delegations and participation in business-to-business meetings should promote this objective.

Question 5: What would you like to tell Russian businessmen who are interested in cooperation with India?

Answer: I would like to draw the attention of Russian businessmen to the diverse opportunities that today's India presents – as a source of a wide range of Russian requirements from commodities to sophisticated manufactured products; as a destination for an equally wide range of Russian products from minerals to engineering items; and as a partner for joint ventures and joint manufacturing - not only for our two markets but also for those in third countries. There is perhaps not full recognition in corporate Russia of the developments in the Indian economy, particularly over the last couple of decades that have created opportunities for Russian business in India.
