

# Varta Patrika

BUSINESS | EDUCATION | SUCCESS STORIES | COMMUNITY | LIFESTYLE | TRAVEL

How the XXIII  
Russian-Indian Forum Went

"Mayak":  
How to Find Support

Just Like in the Movies:  
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# Varta Patrika

Varta Patrika Magazine. No. 3.

**Founder and Publisher:**  
"ANO for Assistance to  
Compatriots of India 'Blizhniy Klub'";

**Media Registration Certificate Number:**  
No. FS77-65336 (12.04.2016).

**Printing:**  
LLC "Format", Nizhny Novgorod,  
178 Gagarin Ave.

**Release Date:**  
16.03.2026

[info@nriclub.ru](mailto:info@nriclub.ru)

## Publisher



Nair Devadathan  
[d.nair@ic.media](mailto:d.nair@ic.media)

## Project Coordinator



Jesly Thekkattil Mathew

## Managing Editor



Dmitry Kurbatov  
[d.kurbatov@nriclub.ru](mailto:d.kurbatov@nriclub.ru)

## Executive Editor



Yasmin Raid Alvaid

## Proof Reader



Liliya Rayanova

## Designer



Deepak Muthatil

## Contributors to this Issue:



Leila Turayanova



Viktoria Filatova



Mansi Parashar



Alesya A. Khanevskaya



Dariya Karaseva



Maria Savchenkova



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# Ayurveda and Yoga



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# Spring Awakening

Dear friends, compatriots, and readers,  
This is the third issue of our magazine.

We were meant to meet you back in October last year, but the autumn of 2025 was a time of challenges for us — organizational matters forced us to take a pause. However, as they say in Russia, “after a long winter, spring always comes.”

Today, as nature awakens, we too emerge from our slumber with renewed strength and fresh energy. Our forced break was not a time of inactivity — it was a period of reflection and preparation for more thoughtful and in-depth content.

In our very first issue, I promised you that our main mission would be to introduce people who serve as living “catalysts” of Russian-Indian friendship. In this issue, we present a story that deeply moved me and feels highly symbolic. It is the story of Mr. Gorchakov and his family. To me, this couple embodies how closely and intricately our destinies, cultures, and hearts are intertwined. I chose their story as the central theme of this issue, and I need to know: Will this choice resonate with you? Does my perspective align with your expectations? We truly look forward to your feedback.

This issue is rich in meaningful content. I strongly recommend paying attention to Dr. Kulik’s article. It is not just a text, but a deep analysis of the traditional structure

of Indian family businesses — a topic that holds the secret to the success of many global corporations. You will also find, in this issue, Ms. Turyanova’s detailed report on the December summit. Although the summit took place at the end of the year, its outcomes will shape the direction of our relations for years to come.

A special pride of this issue is our new names. We are opening the door to young authors: Mansi and Alesya. A fresh perspective and new energy are exactly what our community needs. Please take a moment to appreciate their first steps on the pages of our magazine.

And finally, I invite you to enjoy our photo gallery. We have captured the ceremonial moments of awarding the Order of the great merchant-traveler Afanasy Nikitin. These images stand as proof that the bond between our countries, established centuries ago, is alive even today.

We have returned to continue our dialogue. Thank you for being with us. Enjoy your reading!

Sincerely,

**Nair Devadathan**

Publisher and Editor-in-Chief  
d.nair@ric.media



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Dear readers,

The team of Varta Patrika is pleased to present our first issue of the new year 2026. We are happy to share with you the results of the work of ANO “Near Club – Compatriots of India in Russia” in 2025.

As our most attentive readers may recall, our main event last year was the organization of the first Russian-Indian Award named after Afanasy Nikitin. On India’s Independence Day, August 15, we honored more than 20 individuals who, across various fields — from diplomacy to science, from medicine to sports, from business to culture — have made significant contributions to strengthening the ties between Russia and India and continue to do so, in our countries, societies, and cultures. Much time has passed since the award ceremony, but with the release of this new issue of Varta Patrika, we proudly highlight these distinguished individuals and share more about their personal and professional journeys.

The central figure of this issue, symbolizing the connection between our countries, is prominent Russian entrepreneur Konstantin Gorchakov. In an exclusive interview, he and his wife, Oksana, share their story of moving to India, living in a unique environment, and immersing themselves in Indian spiritual practices. We believe their example can inspire many representatives of the Russian business community.

In this issue, we are also proud to introduce, for the first time, the social project “Mayak,” launched last year. This initiative helps connect Indians in need of assistance — anywhere in Russia — with organizations in both Russia and India that are ready to provide support in real time.

On January 26, millions of Indians around the world celebrate another major holiday — Republic Day — and we have prepared this issue in honor of the occasion. In this edition, thanks to a team of young Indologists, you will discover lesser-known aspects of India, including its technology, innovation, science, culture, cinema, education, and tourism.

Finally, our authors are pleased to present an overview of the most interesting events across cities and regions of Russia for Indian audiences. This vibrant mosaic of events reflects how actively our countries are coming closer together.

We congratulate you on the New Year and wish you an enjoyable reading experience!

With sincere regards,

**Dmitry Kurbatov**

Issue Editor, Secretary of ANO “Near Club – Compatriots of India in Russia”

d.kurbatov@nrclub.ru



LEILA TURAYANOVA



## 23rd Russian-Indian Forum: Agreements and a Focus on Friendship

On December 4–5, the 23rd Russian-Indian Summit took place in New Delhi. It was remembered not only for its formal outcomes and signed agreements, but also for the remarkably warm and heartfelt atmosphere that was felt even by those following the events on their television and mobile screens.

From the very first moments, it was clear that the summit would be special: at the aircraft steps, Russian President Vladimir Putin was personally welcomed by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Then, in a break from protocol, they travelled together in the Indian leader's car to an informal dinner at his residence.



## A Close Friendship

It is well known that the personal relationship between Putin and Modi is marked by a special warmth. "Our relations with India are developing in many areas, and I am very pleased to have the opportunity to meet Prime Minister Modi, with whom we are connected not only by professional ties but also by personal, friendly relations," the Russian leader emphasized in an interview with Aaj Tak and India Today ahead of his visit to India.

During the summit, the So Sorry studio of the India Today Group released an animated video in which characters modeled on Modi and Putin ride a motorcycle together, singing a song about friendship. The plot was inspired by the iconic Bollywood film *Sholay* (released in the Soviet Union as *Revenge and the Law*), where two close friends, played by Dharmendra and Amitabh Bachchan, overcome all obstacles

together and defeat the villain.

The summit demonstrated that, much like in the famous film, Russian-Indian friendship has withstood all challenges. Despite sanctions, uninterrupted supplies of Russian oil to India will continue. Cooperation in nuclear energy is also developing successfully, with Moscow offering New Delhi advanced technologies in the construction of small modular reactors. Additionally, the success of India's "Operation Sindur" in May 2025 was supported by the S-400 air defense missile systems supplied by Russia.

## Symbolism of the Visit

India is a country where any event can acquire a deeper religious meaning. The visit of the Russian president also gained such symbolic significance.

In Varanasi, residents performed an aarti

ritual in front of a portrait of Putin. Aarti is a Hindu ritual of worship using lit lamps, usually performed before a murti — a statue or image of a deity. It can also be conducted to welcome a guest or before a photograph of a respected person as a mark of special reverence.

Prime Minister Modi also presented Putin with a Russian-language edition of the Bhagavad Gita. The Bhagavad Gita is part of the ancient Indian epic Mahabharata and one of the most important philosophical texts in Hinduism.

### Focus on the Economy

During the visit, the main focus was on developing and diversifying bilateral economic ties. Trade turnover reached approximately \$65 billion, though the growth was largely driven by exports from Russia. To address this imbalance, Russian businesses are ready to increase imports of goods and services from India.

As part of the summit, a business forum was held, attended by leaders of key Russian ministries and agencies, as well as

representatives of the business community directly engaged with India. The leaders of both countries took part in the plenary session.

“The Russian delegation has come not only to discuss energy issues, not only to place orders and sign contracts for oil or gas supplies — we want to develop multifaceted relations with India across various areas,” Putin emphasized. Modi, in turn, outlined five priority

*Good news for Russian tourists planning a trip to India is the abolition of the consular fee for obtaining an electronic tourist visa valid for up to 30 days. Plans are also underway to introduce a mutual visa-free regime for group tourist travel. In addition, both sides are working on simplifying visa procedures for entrepreneurs and business representatives.*



sectors for strengthening cooperation: logistics, the maritime sector, automobile manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, and the textile industry.

Among the key outcomes of the summit was a program for developing strategic areas of Russian-Indian economic cooperation, aimed at achieving a trade turnover of \$100 billion by 2030. A commercial agreement was also signed to build a large Russian-Indian pharmaceutical plant in the Kaluga region, focused on producing anti-cancer medicines using advanced Indian technologies.

In addition, an intergovernmental agreement was signed on the temporary employment of citizens of one country in the territory of the other, guaranteeing the rights of Indian labor migrants in Russia. The number of Indian workers continues to grow: by the end of 2025, around 40,000 Indians had received work permits in the country.

There was also good news for Russian tourists planning a trip to India — the consular fee for issuing electronic tourist visas for stays of up to 30 days has been abolished. Plans are underway to introduce a mutual visa-free regime for group tourist travel. Furthermore, both sides are working on simplifying visa procedures for entrepreneurs and business representatives.

### Hearing the Voice of Russia in India

Another major event during the summit was the launch of the RT India television channel. It is no secret that coverage of the Russian agenda in Indian media is often influenced by Western narratives. The new RT channel aims to help address this.

The launch was preceded by a large-scale advertising campaign: billboards featuring Vladimir Putin and Narendra Modi appeared in major Indian cities, and a branded “Museum of Russia and India” train began running in the Delhi Metro, showcasing the history of relations between the two countries.

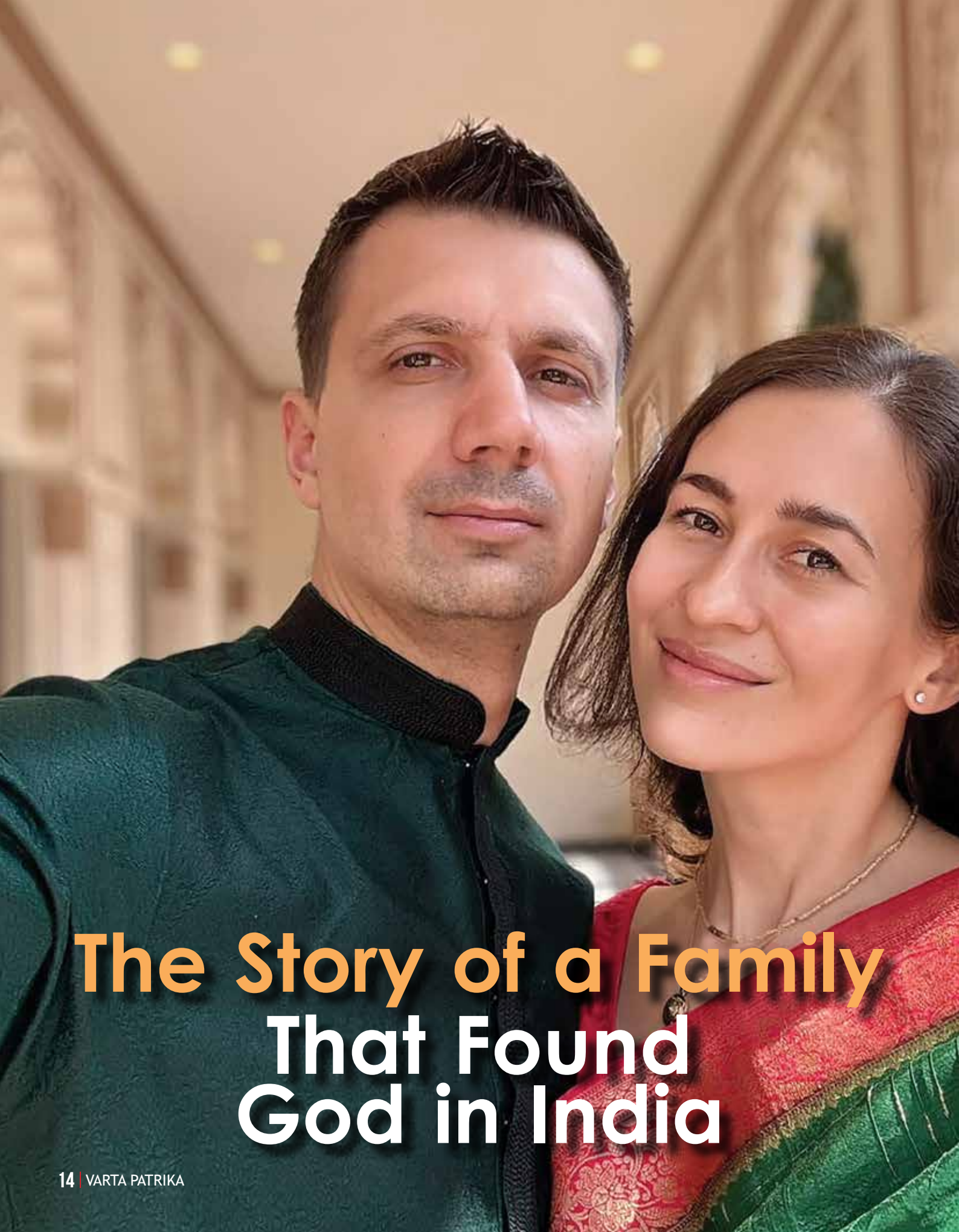
At the official launch ceremony, a moving video was presented, reminding viewers that the strong foundation of today's friendship between Moscow and New Delhi was laid decades ago, during the Soviet era. Using artificial intelligence, historical figures such as Jawaharlal Nehru, Nikita Khrushchev, Yuri Gagarin, Rakesh Sharma, Leonid Brezhnev, and Indira Gandhi were “brought to life,” with their statements about Soviet-Indian relations voiced once again.

“Our peoples are like brothers in spirit and in all their aspirations,” said Nikita Khrushchev.


“India from above is very beautiful. But on the ground, it is even more beautiful. It is dear because true friends live here,” said the first cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin.

“Cooperation between India and the Soviet Union has benefited millions and harmed no one,” — in these words of Indira Gandhi lies, perhaps, the secret of the enduring strength of relations between the two countries.





# The Story of a Family That Found God in India



Today, we would like to introduce you to an extraordinary family whose story is an example of how personal paths, running parallel for decades, can converge at one point, thanks to India, the ancient spiritual tradition of Sanatana Dharma, and the grace of a Satguru. Oksana and Konstantin Gorchakov met in India, a country that brought them together not only through business but also through a deep connection that each of them developed after going through their own journeys of search and personal crises. Living between Russia and India, and raising their daughter within the Indian spiritual tradition, they share their story.

## Oksana's Story

### From a Small Town to Life in Moscow

Being from a small town in the south of the Chelyabinsk region, I felt an interest in mysticism, philosophy, and religion from an early age. However, my career path for more than 10 years was in the banking sector, where I grew from a regional marketing specialist to the head of social and entrepreneurial programs at a large federal bank in Moscow.

### The Other Side of a Successful Career

It was the kind of job one could only dream of: I led a department that created programs to support small businesses. I regularly interacted with dozens of entrepreneurs across different regions of Russia, which was truly inspiring. However, it wasn't always easy — being part of a large corporate system meant dealing with various challenges.

I quickly realized that simply being professional and doing your job well, even exceeding expectations, is not enough. There will always be people and circumstances you depend on but cannot control. Realizing that the only thing I could truly influence was myself, I began searching for ways to manage and transform my mind. I attended psychological training sessions and started long-distance running, which felt similar to meditation. After completing three marathons (42.1 km) in different countries, I understood how much it depends on our mind — not only whether we reach the finish line, but also what the journey feels like. Now I know that even Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita “complained” to Lord Krishna that controlling the mind is more difficult than controlling the wind. Spiritual practice can help with this—but at that time, spirituality still felt distant.

### Moving to London and Discovering Ancient Indian Spiritual Practices

The year 2017 became the peak of my corporate career: a charity run I created within the bank grew into an event with thousands of participants across ten cities in Russia and three countries. I won a prestigious scholarship and moved to London to study public administration, while continuing to work remotely in Russia. But in 2018,



everything suddenly changed: the bank where I worked was nationalized, and I had to resign. Finding a job in London on a student visa as a Russian citizen was nearly impossible. I felt lost.

That was when I first met a disciple of my future Teacher. She spoke about some Guru and about the practice of Atma Kriya Yoga\* — and all of it sounded strange and even suspicious to my mind at the time, as I was deeply absorbed in my own problems. Like Arjuna, I stood on my own Kurukshetra, not understanding what I should do with my life and wanting to escape from everything. Yet it was during this period that I first attended Om Chanting\*\* — for forty-five minutes, we chanted “Om” in Green Park. It felt unusual, and at the same time, surprisingly good.

### **First Trip to India and a New Phase in My Career**

In the end, I couldn't stay in London. It was a painful experience, and I began to face health issues. Because of this difficult moment, I found myself — almost without realizing how — in India, at a Vipassana retreat in a village near Mumbai. They say you cannot come to India unless the country calls you. That is exactly what happened to me: I went there almost to save myself, driven not by reason, but by an instinctive feeling that “I need to be there.” Those ten days of silence and meditation transformed my life: they healed me, brought me back to myself, and opened the door to a deep relationship with India — a country I would return to many times to restore myself and feel that sense of inner freedom again.

After returning to Russia, I resumed work, this time in a state-owned bank, working on a large social project. Over the next three years, I developed a national entrepreneurship training program for the wives of military personnel. The task was ambitious and inspiring, but it became increasingly difficult: within the corporate environment, I felt like I couldn't breathe. Despite good results, recognition of the importance of my work, and career growth, I felt an increasing emptiness inside. Only during my trips to India did I feel a deep inner happiness and a sense that I had returned home.



## The Year Everything Changed: Meeting the Teacher

Gradually, a desire grew within me to consciously step onto a spiritual path. I realized it was becoming more important for me to give space to God in my life. I was drawn to the tradition of Sanatana Dharma, while at the same time I explored Orthodoxy and visited monasteries, trying to understand where my true path lay.

The summer of 2021 became especially significant. While on vacation in St. Petersburg, I came across the Bhagavad Gita in a simple translation by Boris Grebenshchikov in a bookstore. This text deeply moved me — it answered all the questions I had carried within me for so long. I bought several copies and gave them to friends, but no one seemed to understand my excitement. It turned out that everyone around me already knew about the “Gita” — except me. From that moment, it felt as if someone had pressed a “restart” button in my life.

A few days later, my friends “by chance” invited me to a concert by Sati Kazanova, where for the first time an online darshan of my future Teacher — Paramahansa Vishwananda — was taking place. The moment I saw His face, I felt that unmistakable sensation: I was home. Tears flowed uncontrollably. But soon, everyday life dimmed that experience, and the mind once again forgot.

Meanwhile, at work — which had always been central to my life — things were becoming increasingly difficult without any clear reason. Now I understand: this is what happens when life is driven only by the mind, without a steady spiritual practice. At the same time, knowledge about the tradition of Sanatana Dharma and the importance of a Teacher began to come into my life. I read Autobiography of a Yogi and discovered Two Lives by Concordia Antarova, a follower of the Roerichs, who were deeply connected with India. Continuing my search for ways to “fix” my inner state, I attended a past-life regression session with a well-known practitioner and founder of an institute of regression therapy. During the session, while under hypnosis, I asked: “Do I have a Teacher?” I was shown the image of Gurudev, and a clear message followed: “Go to Him.”



The preparation for meeting the Teacher seemed to unfold effortlessly. Circumstances aligned: around the same time, I received initiation into the spiritual practice that Gurudev had given to the world — the very same Atma Kriya Yoga I had first heard about back in London in 2018. I was initiated by the well-known singer and disciple of Gurudev, Sati Kazanova, who performs mantras in Sanskrit. This event, along with the practice itself, began to transform my consciousness and inner state. Soon after, I felt a natural inclination to become a vegetarian — and I have remained so ever since.

At the end of the year, I decided to travel for a personal meeting with the Teacher at His ashram in Germany, and once again Gurudev demonstrated the power of His grace. It was another wave of COVID, and strict quarantine rules were in place across Europe. I did not have a vaccination certificate approved by the EU, and upon arrival in Frankfurt, I was detained with the threat of visa cancellation and deportation. However, after the police officers saw a photo of the Teacher, I was released. At our first meeting, simply being in the presence of the Teacher, I felt that having found God in my life, I no longer had anything to worry about. As Krishna says in the Bhagavad Gita, the Lord personally takes responsibility for the well-being and prosperity of those who worship Him with love (9.22).

### Moving to India and Discipleship

The remarkable year of 2021 ended with a trip to Varanasi — a city where, it is said, Shiva destroys everything that prevents the soul from moving toward God. This is exactly what happened in my life: by February 2022, circumstances unfolded in such a way that I left for India — to my Teacher and to God.

In May 2022, I accepted discipleship under Paramahansa Vishwananda and remained

in Vrindavan, in my Teacher's ashram. This marked the beginning of a new stage and a conscious spiritual path.

For the first time, I realized how little a person actually does, and how great the presence of the Divine is when one builds a relationship with Him. With the guidance of Gurudev and a senior disciple, Swamini Abhirami, who had lived in Vrindavan for many years, I was responsible for organizing a concert by Sati Kazanova at the Russian Embassy in Delhi and conducted my first pilgrimage across sacred places in India for Russian entrepreneurs. Gurudev blessed me to stay in India and establish a consulting company.

### Meeting My Husband and the Birth of Our Daughter as the Guru's Grace

The entire year of 2022 passed in pilgrimages, meetings, journeys to sacred places, and immersion in the tradition of Sanatana Dharma. Within me grew a desire to discover what I was meant to dedicate my life to — my dharma. Before meeting the Guru, I had lived driven by ambition. Now, my heart longed to understand and begin living what God wanted from me. As it is said in the Bhagavad Gita, it is better to imperfectly follow





one's own dharma than to perfectly follow someone else's (18.47).

Gurudev blessed the launch of a consulting company in India, and from the moment I accepted discipleship, I tried to do what the Teacher considered best for me. I wasn't thinking about relationships, but during the company registration process in Delhi, while resolving various challenges, I met my future husband. We "met" in a chat of Russian entrepreneurs in India: I was looking for a second Indian director for my company, and he offered help. We first met in person after my pilgrimage to the sacred places of Tamil Nadu, where I performed a kora around the sacred mountain Arunachala and visited a temple where Shiva is worshipped in the form of Nataraja. To my amazement, when I met this Russian entrepreneur in Gurgaon, I saw that the wallpaper on his phone was an image of Shiva. My future husband turned out to be not only a businessman, but also a vegetarian Vaishnava. Our relationship began almost immediately.

Later, Lord Shiva manifested in our lives many more times — during pilgrimages to Varanasi, while circumambulating the sacred

Mount Kailash, and at the birth of our daughter. She was born on the day of Akshaya Tritiya and falls asleep to the Tryambakam mantra.

In the tradition of Sanatana Dharma, it is said that the Satguru is even more significant than God in a person's life, because without His grace, it is impossible to know God. My life is a living proof of this. The grace of my Gurudev, Paramahansa Vishwananda, made the impossible possible. Without Him, I would never have dared to leave my position at the bank, pack my belongings, and move to India. What some considered madness became an act of trust in my Teacher — and led me to find not only God, but also my husband and daughter.

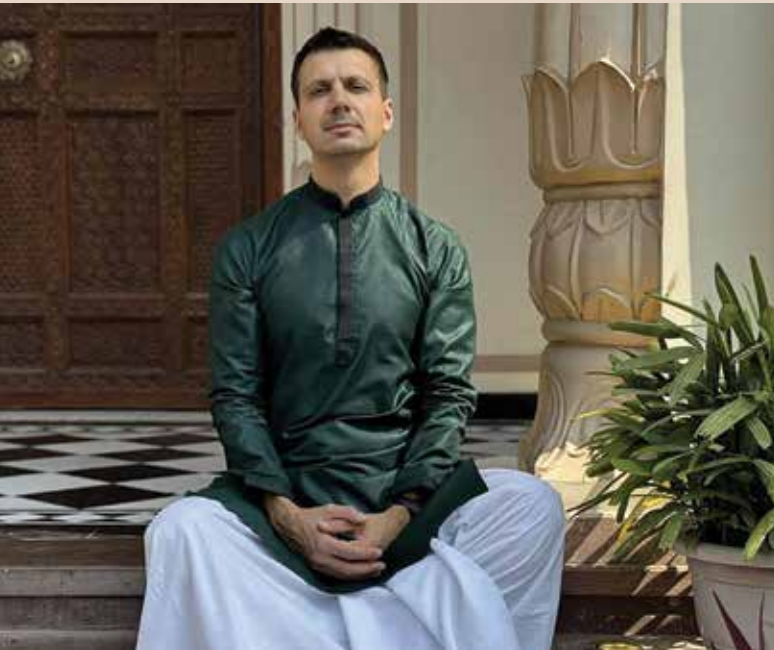
### **Konstantin's Path: The Search for Meaning**

From an early age, I was interested in the structure of the world and the patterns that go beyond material science. There was a feeling that a higher knowledge exists — one that cannot be reduced to formulas and theoretical constructs. However, after graduating from university, my focus shifted toward entrepreneurship. I built my own business and concentrated on material success, studying books, lectures, and modern techniques of management and personal effectiveness. Despite the wide range of knowledge I gained, I could not find a stable system that truly led to both inner and outer fulfillment. By the age of thirty, I came to understand that material methods cannot explain the fundamental principles of life — the answers must be sought in the spiritual realm.

During this period, I studied Orthodoxy as well as Western and Eastern philosophical schools, but none of them provided a complete picture. At the age of thirty, I almost accidentally found myself in a pilgrimage group traveling to India. At that time, I knew almost nothing about Hinduism, but the prospect of visiting the Himalayas and ancient temples genuinely intrigued me.

### **Discovering Hinduism**

Over the course of a month, we visited Rishikesh, Badrinath, and Vrindavan. With each passing day, a growing realization emerged: behind the outward complexity and unfamiliarity of the tradition lay a coherent



and profound system of spiritual knowledge. Upon returning to Russia, I began studying the Bhagavad Gita and Shrimad Bhagavatam, joined the Moscow branch of ISKCON, and immersed myself in the practices of japa meditation and sankirtan. Together with like-minded people, we organized monthly harinamas in Moscow and published several editions of the magazine Insight, featuring transcripts of lectures by spiritual and public leaders promoting spiritual knowledge and traditions. Over several years, we also organized pilgrimage trips to India.

### **International Business and Spirituality**

A few years after beginning my spiritual practice, my partners and I launched a business in Africa. In Uganda, we opened a factory producing fiberglass reinforcement (GFRP rebars), and it was there that I met representatives of the Swaminarayan school. This strengthened my understanding that my connection to Vaishnavism was not accidental: wherever I went, the philosophy of Sanatana Dharma manifested through people and circumstances.

Two years after launching the enterprise in Uganda, my partners from Gujarat invited me to open a similar factory in Rajkot. That is how I returned to India — this time with business

interests. In total, India became my home for nearly four years.

During the 2020 pandemic, I traveled to India for three months to assist with launching production, but due to border closures, I remained there for almost a year. During that time, I contributed to adapting international standards for GFRP rebars in BIS and NHAI, delivered a lecture at the Civil Engineering faculty at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, and met with Nitin Gadkari, the minister of transport in India, presenting an innovative material later implemented in NHAI infrastructure projects.

After returning to Russia, I headed a project portfolio management office in a construction company and worked on a major infrastructure project related to gas field development in Urengoy. Later, together with partners, we founded a private investment fund focused on waste management and environmental technologies.

### **Return to India and Meeting My Future Wife**

In 2022, I returned to India again — this time for three years. During this period, we established two companies focused on waste management technologies and launched a new GFRP rebar plant in Haryana. I actively cooperated with the municipalities of Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Gurgaon, concluded a cooperation agreement with JBM Enviro, and, in the direction of GFRP, we became technological partners of the Jindal group, signing agreements with my friends Sahil and Pratik Jindal.

During this business trip, I met my future wife. Together, we founded the consulting company BS Consulting, whose primary goal is to help Russian businesses establish partnerships with Indian counterparts. The company runs a private Telegram channel where it publishes analytical materials on India's economy and culture, and has produced around 50 research reports across various industries. In collaboration with Indria Consulting, which my wife had founded earlier, we organized two business missions for Russian entrepreneurs and the private investment fund Dome Foundation. During these trips, participants visited Vrindavan and Varanasi, got acquainted with the culture

of Sanatana Dharma and the specifics of doing business in India. Our materials have been published by RBC and the Higher School of Economics in Russia. My wife and I are also speakers at panel discussions at the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO and SberUniversity on the topic of doing business and building connections with India.

### The Birth of Agathia Devotional Arts

In 2024, a significant event for our family took place — a pilgrimage around the sacred Mount Kailash. This experience symbolically concluded a long journey and defined our future direction: integrating professional, cultural, and spiritual missions.

Even before the pandemic, friends had asked me to create a murti of Lakshmi-Nrisimha for a home altar. The project was challenging but successful. Three years later, my wife, inspired by an image of Nrisimha, suggested creating a murti of Goddess Durga. Although initially postponed due to production limitations in India, the idea was revived in 2025 after the birth of our daughter, Agatha. This led to the creation of the brand Agathia Devotional Arts, specializing in high-quality bronze murtis and ritual items for home altars.

At present, the work on the murti of Goddess Durga has been completed. Goddess Lakshmi, Lord Shiva, and Radha-Krishna are currently in preparation for release. We perform



daily puja at our home altar, and initially the project had no commercial purpose — we were simply striving for a level of beauty and quality for our own altar that we could not find in available products. However, interest from friends and devotees revealed the potential of this direction. In the near future, we plan to release a small series of murtis for distribution among followers of Sanatana Dharma and collectors in Russia, India, and other countries.

### Family as Service to the World

According to Konstantin and Oksana, raising their daughter in alignment with spiritual values, they see their family's mission as serving their Teacher through pilgrimages and business tours that strengthen cultural and economic ties between Russia and India.

Having accepted discipleship under a Vaishnava acharya and Satguru, Oksana received qualification as a teacher of sacred texts and Indian philosophy from Bhakti Marga Academy and teaches the Bhagavad Gita to those seeking happiness or a deeper understanding of India.


“My Teacher speaks about the beauty of Sanatana Dharma — a path that offers knowledge of the Divine and practices for working with consciousness, needed by everyone in the modern world, regardless of religion, nationality, or lifestyle,” Oksana shares.



VIKTORIA FILATOVA

# How to Do Business the Indian Way: says orientalist Lidiya Kulik

Trade turnover between Russia and India exceeded a record \$70 billion in 2024, according to India's Ministry of Industry and Trade. This is the highest figure in modern history between the two countries. Russia has become one of India's main trading partners, and this cooperation is gaining momentum despite the threat of Western sanctions. What cultural characteristics of Indians should be taken into account when entering this rapidly growing market?

A portrait of Lidiya Kulik, a woman with long dark hair, wearing a light blue blazer and a necklace. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile.

Senior Research Fellow at the "Center for Indian Studies" of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Candidate of Historical Sciences, and Head of the India Studies Program at the SKOLKOVO School of Management, Lidiya Kulik, believes that the mentality of Indians is very similar to that of Russians. She explained to readers of "Vechernyaya Moskva" how this can help in doing business.

**Lidiya, why, despite the risks of Western sanctions, does India continue to cooperate with Russia?**

First of all, I would like to point out that any generalizations about India should be made with great caution, because India is an exceptionally diverse and multifaceted country. It combines and accommodates many contradictions that, from our point of view, seem absolutely incompatible. That is why researchers say: "Whatever



you say about India, the opposite statement will also be true."

As for sanctions, India does not consider unilateral sanctions to be legitimate. Moreover, it is interested in maintaining stable relations with Russia. The relationship between our countries is characterized by unique trust, reliability, and stability. Throughout history, Russia's actions in the broader geopolitical context have never been directed against India, and likewise, India's actions have not been directed against Russia. Any difficulties that arise between our countries are resolved in a friendly and constructive manner.

Of course, Western sanctions pose additional risks for Indian companies and entrepreneurs. They approach this issue very cautiously, especially if a company has established partnerships in the West. It cannot be said that the full potential of our trade and economic relations has been realized. Our ties would be much broader and more effective if these restrictions did not exist. On the other hand, it is precisely because of the difficulties in the West that Russian business has finally turned its gaze to the East.

***Of course, Western sanctions pose additional risks for Indian companies and entrepreneurs. They approach this issue very cautiously, especially if a company has established partnerships in the West. It cannot be said that the full potential of our trade and economic relations has been realized.***

All this time, India has been under considerable pressure due to its cooperation with Russia. Yet the country has consistently shown resilience, defending its interests and pursuing an independent foreign policy. The goal of this policy is to ensure stable conditions for the development of its own economy, to preserve and create jobs for Indians, and to develop the country. The vast Indian market is of interest to all Western partners. Companies from around the world want to operate in this rapidly growing market, and it is important for them not to spoil relations with the Indians. Applying pressure in dialogue with New Delhi is completely unacceptable.

## **It is believed that primarily large Russian businesses have a presence in India. Are there niches for smaller entrepreneurs that could interest Indians?**

Indeed, it is mostly the major state projects that are making headlines. They are the foundation of our trade and economic relations with India. Recently, however, we have seen a growing number of inspiring examples of medium-sized companies successfully entering the Indian market and finding their niche. These businesses span a wide range of sectors—from IT and high tech to consumer goods. For instance, there is a highly successful lighting equipment manufacturer that has established production in India and adapted its products specifically for the Indian consumer. In the consumer goods sector, a Russian brand of children's festive wear is performing exceptionally well. This company entered the Indian market and carved out a unique niche: "not China, not Europe, and not India." Indian customers appreciate that the products are made in Russia, valuing both the quality and the excellent design. Since children are a top priority in India—and given the cultural emphasis on frequent family celebrations and holidays—the brand has been very well received.

The Indian market is highly price-sensitive. At the same time, a distinctive feature of the local consumer is the constant search for the highest quality at the lowest possible price. Whether in retail or the B2B segment (business-to-business), you have to know how to impress the Indian buyer. The price-quality ratio is of paramount importance, even more so than in our country. When it comes to equipment, for example, it should be machinery that can withstand harsh climates, heavy usage, and power surges. At the same time, in addition to reliability and affordability, a supplier is expected to provide after-sales service, financing options, and a trade-in system for used machinery on the secondary market.

## **Do we need intermediaries like**



## **the Moscow Export Center (MEC), established with the support of the city's Department of Entrepreneurship and Innovative Development, to break into the Indian market?**

Such government agencies are created to help Russian exporters in foreign markets, and they can indeed be invaluable, particularly in the initial stages. For instance, they facilitate participation in international exhibitions by organizing joint stands for Russian and Moscow-based companies, coordinating with the local media, and providing market analytics. Incidentally, exhibitions in India are an ideal platform for a first introduction to industry peers. Indian business circles traditionally take trade fairs very seriously. Therefore, the support of institutions like the MEC in such forums is an exceptionally effective tool for navigating the Indian business landscape and market for the first time.

## **Does the Indian caste system affect business?**

The caste system remains one of India's most intriguing phenomena that concerns

***The caste system remains one of India's most intriguing phenomena that concerns the Russian public. Discrimination based on caste is constitutionally prohibited in India. While caste-based discrimination is constitutionally prohibited, the practice of 'positive discrimination' is widespread and legally enshrined. This provides guarantees for education, employment, and advancement to historically marginalized groups through reserved quotas in government bodies and educational institutions.***

the Russian public. Discrimination based on caste is constitutionally prohibited in India. While caste-based discrimination is constitutionally prohibited, the practice of 'positive discrimination' is widespread and legally enshrined. This provides guarantees for education, employment, and advancement to historically marginalized groups through reserved quotas in government bodies and educational institutions. Among educated Indians, as in most parts of the world, it is considered bad form to acknowledge caste differences or show disrespect toward those from lower social strata. An entrepreneur working in a major city and engaging with professionals is unlikely to encounter overt discrimination. In large cities, rising incomes and social mobility are gradually blurring traditional boundaries. The situation can be more difficult in rural areas and small towns, where one may encounter rather unfortunate cases. However, it is worth noting that charity, philanthropy, and care for those in need are central to Indian life, with traditions of public service being particularly strong among Indian entrepreneurs.

**Is it true that connections are so**

**important in India that an entrepreneur must be introduced by a mutual acquaintance?**

Yes, connections are paramount. This is due to the incredibly high social density of Indian society. The social fabric is held together by countless 'invisible threads'—obligations, shared ventures, and family ties built over generations. To put this in perspective: an average Indian might have 3,000 to 5,000 friends on social media, a huge portion of whom are relatives. A typical wedding hosts a thousand guests and involves a series of events lasting a week, or sometimes even a month.

If you plan to do business in India, you must weave yourself into this social fabric. Therefore, physical presence and personal interaction are essential. If an Indian introduces you to their friends or business partners, it grants you immediate credibility. It ensures you are treated with far more attention than a 'stranger off the street,' for whom an Indian businessman simply may not have time. After all, every Indian's calendar is already packed with extensive personal commitments to family, friends, and long-standing partners.

**Indians are known for their enthusiastic self-promotion. It is common for young startups to label themselves as 'market leaders' and 'top-tier professionals.' How can one navigate this without being misled?**

While we may be prone to excessive modesty, Indians are accustomed to speaking loudly about their achievements. This is driven by the intense competition within Indian society; from a young age, individuals must fight for their 'place under the sun.' To succeed in India, you simply have to stand out against a backdrop of millions.

For Russian entrepreneurs, this means that every piece of information they hear must be verified. Today, there are numerous tools for this — from digital platforms providing official corporate data to long-standing industry associations. They have existed for decades.

Every sector has its own circle of reputable organizations that are worth consulting when starting work in the country. It is also wise to cross-reference facts with official Russian experts on the ground, such as the Russian Trade Representation.

Before entering negotiations, one must research the market, identify the key players, and propose meetings. It is always beneficial to attend trade fairs, get acquainted with the participants, and ask plenty of questions. This large pool will gradually narrow down to two or three potential partners with shared interests. However, expect the negotiation process to take time. Nothing is decided in a single trip. Indians are uncomfortable doing business with people they don't know well. Therefore, when planning any business with Indians, always allocate extra time for preliminary work. Long-term relationships are the ultimate key to success.

### **What other risk factors should be considered, given the local specifics and mindset?**

When it comes to the formal reliability of companies, the risks are relatively low, as corporate data is easily verifiable through digital platforms. The real risks lie in missed deadlines or extreme weather conditions that could damage goods in transit. Unfortunately, no one is completely immune to unscrupulous partners. Therefore, the better you know your counterparts—and the social circles in which they live and work—the more secure your joint business will be. This applies to both the Indian and Russian sides. Once you have found reliable partners, you must cherish those relationships and work diligently to build strong, lasting bonds.

### **Is it true that because Russia is often portrayed negatively on social media, Indians have a poor perception of us, requiring significant effort to smooth over this impression?**

I wouldn't say so. Despite the fact that

every effort has been made to damage our reputation, the attitude toward us remains very friendly. While Indians may be wary of sanctions-related risks—especially if they have Western partners—the general sentiment toward Russia in India is overwhelmingly positive.

### **Is it true that Indians are relatively open during negotiations, and that their traditions feel more familiar to us compared to the 'high-context' cultures of Iran or China, where different considerations apply?**

In general, communicating with Indians is quite easy and comfortable. The formal side of negotiations usually appears at the very beginning. India is rich in traditions and rituals—for instance, lighting ceremonial lamps to mark the start of an important event or conference, or welcoming guests with garlands of fresh



flowers. Everyone introduces themselves and exchanges business cards. However, the talks often transition into a friendly, informal atmosphere and can last quite a long time. The conversation might drift across various topics, from Indian landmarks to Russian-Indian relations and local cuisine. When a business meeting turns into a simple human connection, it's a good sign. Indians may joke about themselves and truly appreciate humor. One challenge, however, is that any form of confrontation is uncomfortable for them; they rarely say 'no' directly. On a practical note, it is best to bring a professional translator with you to meetings, as finding a high-quality specialist on the ground in India is nearly impossible. To conclude a meeting, it is always wise to outline mutually agreed-upon next steps. Ultimately, Indians are open, generous, and hospitable people who value friendship just as much as we do.

### **What gifts should be avoided when dealing with Indian partners?**

As I mentioned, negotiations in India are associated with a vast number of different rituals. For example, every gift is presented by hand, and a photograph is almost always taken at that moment. Therefore, giving and receiving gifts is a significant part of


business culture. There are neutral gifts that can be suitable to present at the first meeting, such as souvenirs or sweets. However, under no circumstances should you bring alcohol or leather products to an initial meeting. Indians have a deep reverence for all living things, and many of them are vegetarians.

### **Is it true that for an Indian, family matters always take precedence over business?**

Yes, family always comes first for Indians. Indian men bear great responsibility for their extensive network of relatives. They have numerous family obligations that truly do outweigh business concerns. At the same time, Indian entrepreneurs possess a sharp business acumen and are highly successful, so it cannot be said that they lack interest in commerce. However, in an Indian's value system, family, spirituality, social service, and even friendship are more important than money or deals. This is perhaps what distinguishes Indian culture, for example, from Chinese culture. These shared priorities actually bring Russians and Indians closer together. If you look past the Western business approach that has taken root in Russia in recent years, you'll find that for our businesses—and Russians in general—traditional family values and a spiritual core are placed first.

### **DOSSIER**

Lidiya Kulik graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO University) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Faculty of International Relations, with a dual regional specialization — South Asia (Eastern track) and the United Kingdom (Western track). She defended her PhD thesis on "The Role and Place of India in the System of the United Kingdom's Foreign Policy Coordinates from 1997–2016." She holds an MBA from the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO, specializing in entrepreneurship and emerging markets. She has participated in international conferences and seminars in Russia, India, China, and the United Kingdom.



***Yes, family always comes first for Indians. Indian men bear great responsibility for their extensive network of relatives. They have numerous family obligations that truly do outweigh business concerns.***

**DMITRY KURBATOV,**

Secretary of the ANO "NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia"

# Results of the first Russian–Indian Afanasy Nikitin Prize

On August 15, 2025, India's Independence Day, a significant event in the field of public diplomacy took place: the presentation of the First Russian–Indian Afanasy Nikitin Award.

The gala evening was organized by the ANO "NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia," which, with the support of the Embassy of India in Russia, established the Afanasy Nikitin Medal "Friendship Through the Ages." This medal recognizes outstanding achievements in strengthening the Russian–Indian partnership across various fields, including education, science, culture, politics, diplomacy, healthcare, and public affairs.

Opening the ceremonial event, Devadathan Nair, head of the ANO "NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia," presented the organization's key achievements during its first year of operation. Results of the first Russian–Indian Afanasy





Deputy Chief of Mission of the Embassy of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation Mr. Nikhilesh Giri

Nikitin Prize, Dmitry Kurbatov, Secretary of the ANO “NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia”. Mr. Nair emphasized that over the past year, the NRI Club has come a long and challenging way, from a modest idea of individual representatives of the Indian diaspora in Russia to organizing its first cultural events, round tables, and international competitions, forming a foundation for Russian-Indian business cooperation at the small and medium-sized business level, and publishing a magazine about the Indian diaspora in Russia, “Varta Patrika,” the latest issue of which was presented to the audience.

Continuing the program, Dmitry Kurbatov, Secretary of the ANO “NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia,” spoke about the Club’s future plans. Within the coming year, the

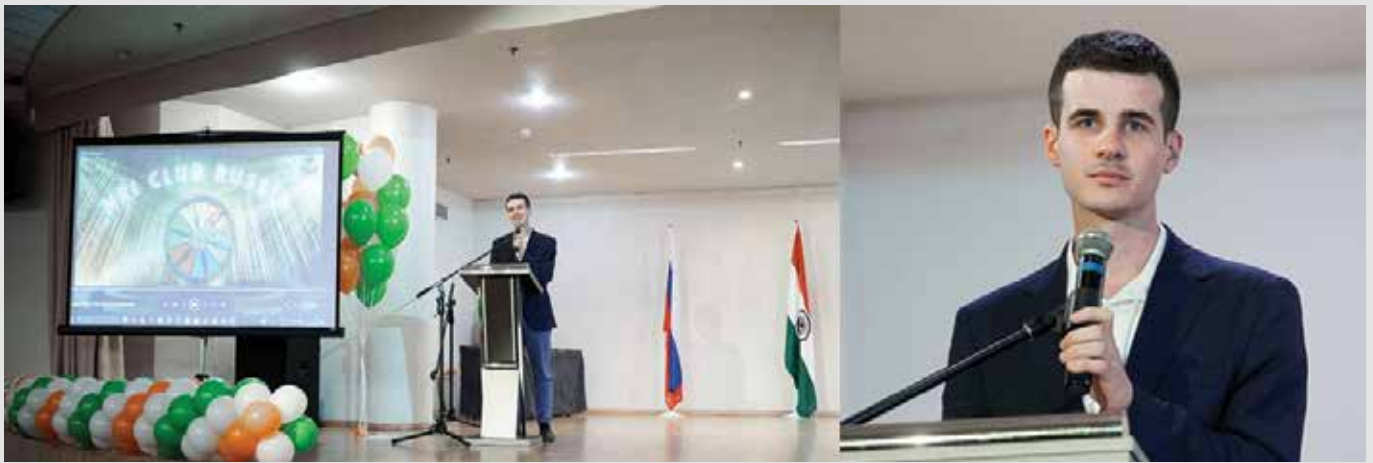
“Mayak” platform is planned to be launched. It will be aimed at addressing, in real-time, the challenges faced by Indians living and working in various regions of Russia by promptly connecting those in need of assistance with relevant Russian and Indian organizations. It will also help inform the Indian community about opportunities available in Russia, taking into account users’ professional backgrounds and personal interests.

In addition, in the medium term, plans include the creation of a nationwide youth research laboratory for the purpose of studying Russia and India, as well as bilateral relations in various fields.

The event was also addressed by an honored guest, Deputy Ambassador



Devadathan Nair – Head of the “Blizhniy Klub – Compatriots of India in Russia” Autonomous Non-Profit Organization



Dmitry Kurbatov – Secretary of the “Blizhniy Klub – Compatriots of India in Russia” Autonomous Non-Profit Organization



Anika Kaul and Arnav Kumar

Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation, Mr. Giri Nikilesh. According to the high-ranking diplomat, initiatives such as those implemented by the ANO “NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia” contribute to bringing the peoples of Russia and India closer together and fostering intercultural exchange, thereby strengthening the foundation of the Russian-Indian partnership.

The following figures were awarded the first Afanasy Nikitin Prize:

**1. Mikhail Mikhailovich Mgeladze** – Russian diplomat, Ambassador Extraordinary

and Plenipotentiary, Consul General of Russia in Madras (Chennai, India) in 2002–2005, Deputy Director of the African Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation in 2005–2006, — for his invaluable contribution to the development of Russian-Indian state and public relations;

**2. Fyodor Anatolyevich Rozovsky** – formerly the head of the Rossotrudnichestvo representative office in the Republic of India, director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture (Russian House) in New Delhi, an active participant in the Russian Association for International Cooperation (RAMS), a member of the board of the Society for Friendship with



India, and vice-president of the Society for Friendship with the Republic of Bangladesh. In 2011, Fyodor Anatolyevich was awarded the medal of the Order "For Merit to the Fatherland", 2nd degree — for his significant contribution to the development of Russian-Indian relations;

**3. Denis Vladimirovich Filetkin** – Vice-Rector for International Affairs of the N.P. Ogarev Mordovia State University (since 2022), previously a statesman, military serviceman, and assistant to the rector of N.P. Ogarev Mordovia State University for international relations — for active patriotic and civic education work with Russian and foreign students, including Indian students;

**4. Vladimir Vladimirovich Egorov** – President of the Russian Professional Association of Specialists in Traditional Medicine and Wellness Practices, President of the International Academy of Sciences of Traditional and Integrative Medicine, Deputy Chairman of the Expert Council on Improving Legislation in the Field of Complementary Medicine under the State Duma Committee on Health Protection of the Russian Federation, Deputy Chairman of the Coordination Council for Legal and Regulatory Policy in the Sphere of Traditional Medicine of the Ministry of Health of the Russian

Federation, and Assistant to the First Deputy Chairman of the Health Protection Committee of the State Duma of the Russian Federation — for his contribution to the development of Russian-Indian cooperation in healthcare;

**5. Elena Bakhadyrova Ulmasbaeva** – a long-time Iyengar yoga teacher (over 40 years of experience), founder and head of the "Yoga Praktika" network, under whose auspices various master classes, seminars, and courses are organized — for promoting the culture and philosophy of yoga in Russia.

**6. Khan Tanvir** – founder of the Russian Cricket League (ROO "Russian Cricket League," established in 2000), coach of the Russian national cricket team — for his contribution to the development of Russian-Indian cooperation in sports;

**7. Kanta Devi** – psychologist and English teacher in a Russian school, deputy secretary of the Indian community organization "Hindustani Samaj", head of the women's club at the ANO "NRI Club – Compatriots of India in Russia", and Secretary for Cultural Affairs of the "Overseas Bihar Association". Ms. Devi has been actively uniting and promoting the Indian diaspora in Moscow for over 17 years, promoting Indian culture in Russia through dance, music, theater, poetry, and literature. In 2024, Kanta Devi



served as the host of the ceremonial meeting between the Indian community in Moscow and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi — for promoting Indian culture and values in Russia.

**8. Sudha Rani Gupta** – General Director of the Interregional Public Organization “Center for Spiritual Development”. In 1989, Ms. Sudha arrived in Moscow as part of a delegation of Raja Yoga teachers from the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University, at the official invitation of the Department of Physical Education and Sports of the USSR Ministry of Health. Soon, the first yoga training center in Moscow was opened, headed by Ms. Sudha. For over 35 years, under her leadership, educational and socially significant projects aimed at strengthening morality in society have been successfully implemented, for example, “The World in Our Hands”, “Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence”, “A Home Without Corners for a Child, or The World as One Family”, etc. — for educating the

peoples of Russia and India and for the long-term implementation of social and charitable initiatives;

**9. Irina Arkadyevna Kraeva** – Rector of the Moscow State Linguistic University (MSLU, formerly the Maurice Thorez Moscow State



Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages) (since 2018). In her position as Rector, Irina Arkadyevna actively promotes the expansion of cooperation between MSLU and various Indian universities, the signing and implementation of cooperation agreements, which make it possible to develop joint research in various fields, and to intensify academic mobility and academic exchange programs. Thus, in June 2023, an agreement was signed between MSLU and the Institute of Social Welfare and Business Management in West Kolkata. In addition, with the personal assistance of Irina Arkadyevna, an agreement was signed between MSLU and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and negotiations are ongoing with other Indian universities — for strengthening the Russian-Indian academic and scientific partnership;

**10. Kartar Singh** – one of the founders of the Gurudwara in Moscow, which is currently one of the most important architectural landmarks in the city for the Indian diaspora. Mr. Singh currently lives in Moscow with his wife, children, and grandchildren, and develops his own business — for promoting Indian culture and traditions abroad.

**11. Elena Anatolyevna Zakharova** is the Director of Repertoire Planning for the Cinema Park and Formula Kino cinema chain. Elena Zakharova has been working in the cinema

industry since 1997. Since 2003, she has held the position of Director of Repertoire Policy in leading Russian cinema chains. Since joining the Cinema Park and Formula Kino cinema chains in 2022, Elena has focused on Indian cinema. For over three years now, the chain has regularly screened films in Tamil and Hindi — for strengthening Russian-Indian ties in the field of cinema;

**12. Irina Nelson** — singer, composer, promoter of a healthy lifestyle and yoga — for her significant contribution to the development of Russian-Indian relations and strengthening ties between the peoples. As part of the ceremony, she presented her new mini-album of mantras, “Lights of Mantras”;

**13. Ekaterina Valeryevna Avdeeva** — member of the General Council of the All-



Ekaterina Valeryevna Avdeeva — Member of the General Council of the public organization “Delovaya Rossiya,” Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Real Estate Corporation “ASTORIUS,” Advisor to the President of the Animal Welfare Foundation “Save Me” on Legal Issues



Russian public organization “Delovaya Rossiya” (Business Russia), Head of the Expert Center on Criminal Law Policy and Enforcement of Judicial Acts of “Delovaya Rossiya”, Advisor to the President of the Animal Protection Fund “Save Me” on legal issues, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the real estate corporation “ASTORIUS”, member of the Expert Advisory Council under the Federation Committee on Constitutional Legislation and State Building, Candidate of Legal Sciences (PhD in Law) — for a significant contribution to strengthening the legal framework for business, protecting entrepreneurship, and implementing socially significant initiatives;

**14. Ramaz Otariovich Chanturiya** — founder of “International Tea House” LLC, General Director of the leading Russian association of tea and coffee producers “Roschaikofe” — for strengthening Russian-Indian business cooperation;

**15. Anita Joaquinovna Carillo-Arcas** — founder and president of the Russian-Indian Ayurvedic Association (ARIA), an expert in Ayurveda and organizer of all-Russian congresses on Ayurveda— for significant

contribution to Russian-Indian cooperation in the field of medicine;

**16. Vinay Shukla** — Mr. Shukla worked for many years as an announcer and editor at Radio Moscow and Radio Tashkent, and was also active as a translator: he translated a number of works from Russian into Hindi by M.A. Sholokhov, M.A. Bulgakov, as well as many other works of Soviet authors. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Mr. Vinay worked as a correspondent for the Indian news agencies



United News of India (UNI) and Press Trust of India (PTI) — for popularizing Russian literature and journalism in India;

**17. Kashmir Singh** — President of the Indian diaspora organization “Hindustani Samaj”, which organizes cultural and educational events aimed at promoting Indian culture and the Hindi language. In 1976–1990, Mr. Kashmir Singh worked at Radio Moscow as a translator from Punjabi to Russian, and in 2006–2015, at Radio Russia as a translator from Hindi into Russian. Since 1984, Mr. Singh has been a member of the Indian community organization “Hindustani Samaj”, where he also held the position of General Secretary — for uniting the Indian community in Russia and promoting Indian culture abroad;

**18. Vadim Viktorovich Kozhenov** — an expert in migration, head of the V.V. Kozhenov Migrant Assistance Center, which provides legal assistance to migrants in Russia, including Indian nationals. In addition, he serves as President of the Foundation for Assistance in Combating Terrorism — for providing legal and administrative support of the Indian community in Russia;



**19. Nikolai Ivanovich Zyaykin** — in 1976, Nikolai Ivanovich began working in the foreign trade organization “Medexport”, which carried out procurement and sale of medical goods and equipment at the interstate level, including cooperation with India. His first business trip to India took place in 1979. Since 1982, Nikolai Ivanovich was sent to Delhi for a long-term assignment from “Medexport”, where he spent three years concluding contracts and various trade agreements, gradually expanding cooperation not only with transnational corporations, but also with large Indian companies such as Cipla, Unique, Torrent, and others. For more than 23 years, Nikolai Ivanovich has worked at the Indian pharmaceutical company “PanBio Pharm” — for significant contribution to strengthening Russian-Indian trade and economic cooperation;

**20. Sergey Ivanovich Lunev** — Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor at the Department of Oriental Studies, MGIMO University (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia), Chief Research Fellow of the “New Oriental Studies” program of the Institute of International Studies of MGIMO University under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia. At the Department of Oriental Studies of MGIMO, Sergey Ivanovich has been teaching since 2005, and is the author of courses on the history and political system of the countries of South Asia — for outstanding research and teaching activities as a specialist in Indology;

**21. Renat Suleymanovich Akchurin (1946–2024)** — Renat Suleymanovich was an outstanding Russian cardiac surgeon. Doctor of Medical Sciences, Professor, Academician of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences and the Russian Academy of Sciences. Renat Suleymanovich headed the Department of Cardiovascular Surgery at the A.L. Myasnikov Institute of Clinical Cardiology of the Russian Cardiology Research and Production Complex of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences. His scientific works and discoveries were widely recognized by the medical community of a number of foreign countries, including India — for outstanding achievements in the field of medicine and healthcare.

**22. Igor Vladimirovich Miroshnichenko** — Rector of Orenburg State Medical University (OrSMU), Doctor of Medical Sciences, author of more than 70 scientific and educational-methodological works. In 1992, he began his teaching career at the Department of Normal Physiology of OrSMU. In 2009, he was appointed Dean of the General Medicine and Dentistry Faculties, in 2010, Vice-Rector for Academic, Educational and Social Affairs of OrSMU. Since 2017, he has been the Rector of the institute, which is one of the most popular destinations for Indian medical students. Awarded a number of regional and federal awards — for strengthening academic interaction between Russia and India in the field of healthcare and creating conditions for training highly qualified medical specialists;

**23. Anna Sergeevna Blagonravova** — Acting Rector of the Perm State Medical University named after Academician E.A. Wagner, co-author of the “National Concept

for the Prevention of Infections Associated with the Provision of Medical Care”. Author of more than 200 scientific works, 6 inventions, 1 scientific discovery, and 3 certificates of state registration of copyright-protected databases. Awarded several regional and federal awards — for achievements in the field of training highly qualified medical specialists;

**24. Ishita Kapur** — Assistant figure skating coach, which she has practiced for more than 15 years. A third-year student of the Faculty of Physical Culture and Sports of the Russian State University of Physical Culture, Sports, Youth and Tourism specializing in figure skating. Ishita's main goals are to contribute to the education of a new generation of figure skaters and the popularization of figure skating in India, to his end, Ishita is engaged in the development of figure skating sections in her home country — for uniting Russian and Indian youth on the basis of a healthy lifestyle and sports;

**25. Dasha Kotvani** – Event management specialist, organizer of numerous events in Moscow and other cities of Russia, contributing to the promotion of Indian culture abroad. Director of the Indian National Cultural Center “SITA”, event manager at the Indian Business Council, as well as Director of Marketing at “The Imperial Tailoring Co.” Her professional experience includes the organization of such large-scale events as Indian festivals in Moscow, “Days of India” and other events



which brought together between 5,000 and 1.2 million participants — for uniting the Indian diaspora in Russia and expanding opportunities for its representatives;

**26. Dmitry Kurbatov** — Secretary of the ANO “Close Club – Compatriots of India in Russia”, postgraduate (PhD) student of MGIMO of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, analyst at the Institute of International Studies, MGIMO University of the Ministry of



Supriya Gupta



Roman Yadav





Foreign Affairs of Russia, specialist at the Center for International Cooperation of the Ministry of Education of the Russian Federation — for the development of Russian-Indian youth cooperation.

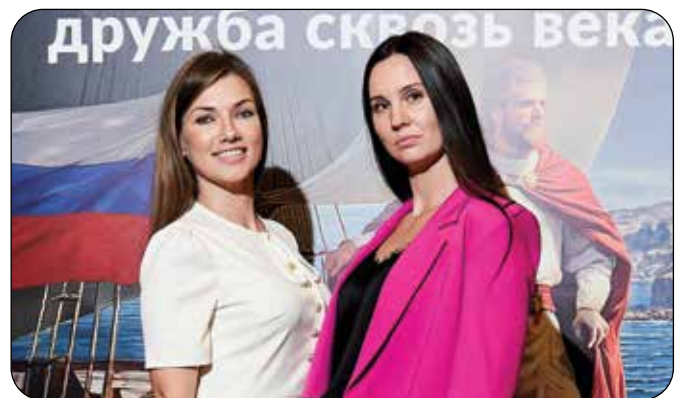
At the conclusion of the official part, during which each of the awardees had the opportunity to deliver a short address or to speak in more detail about their activities in developing Russian-Indian relations, a traditional concert took place featuring dance and musical performances, allowing guests to immerse themselves in the authentic atmosphere of Russia and India.

The first award ceremony of the Russian-Indian Prize named after Afanasy Nikitin became an important concluding event of the first year of activity of the ANO "Close Club – Compatriots of India in Russia", demonstrating the multifaceted nature of efforts to deepen and expand cooperation between the countries, societies, and peoples of Russia and India, as well as creating a platform for networking, rapprochement, and proposing future projects by young and experienced specialists in various fields who are sincerely interested in working for the benefit of both countries.



**A detailed photo report of the event can be viewed via the QR code:**





















Kartar Singh



Ishita Kapoor



Mikhail Mikhailovich Mgeladze



Fyodor Anatolyevich Rozovsky



Nikolai Ivanovich Zyaykin



Dr. Rajeev Ray (receiving for Renat Suleimanovich Akchurin)



Vladimir Vladimirovich Egorov



Irene Nelson



Dariya Sergeevna Antonova



Denis Vladimirovich Filetkin



Elena Bakhadyrovna Ulmasbaeva



Elena Anatolyevna Zakharova



Ramaz Otariyevich Chanturia



Vadim Viktorovich Kozhenov



Anna Nikolaevna Moreva  
(receiving for Irina Arkadyevna Kraeva)



Anna Sergeevna Blagonravova



Dr. Wasim  
(receiving for Igor Vasilyevich Miroshnichenko)



Kashmir Singh



Shukla Vinay



Sudha Rani Gupta



Khan Tanveer



Kanta Devi



Dasha Kotwani



Liliya Ilgizovna Monasypova  
(receiving for Carrillo-Arcas Anita)

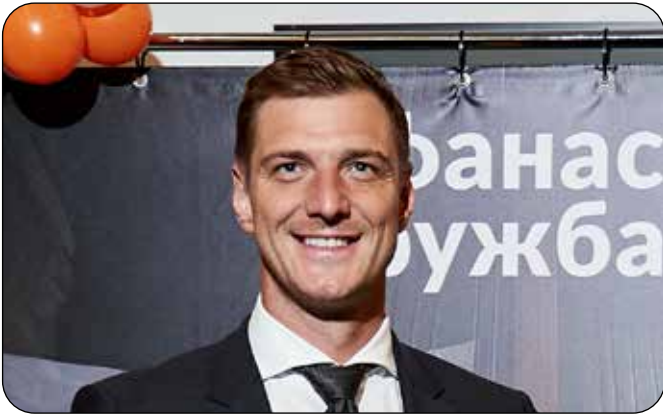


Dmitry Kurbatov































IVAN K

Postgraduate student at Peoples' Friendship University of Russia



MAYAK(МАЯК)

# Launch of the Mayak project: help, support, and unification

The ANO "Near Club — Compatriots of India in Russia" is pleased to announce the long-awaited launch of the "Mayak" project, developed by a team of Indian IT specialists to provide comprehensive support to Indian compatriots living in Russia.

The "Mayak" project is an online service (website) designed to provide assistance, support, consultations, information sharing, and community-building for Indian nationals residing in Russia for various purposes (study, work, family, etc.).

The primary goal of the project is to allow Indian citizens living in Russia the opportunity to seek advice and receive assistance from Russian and Indian specialized organizations on legal, social, humanitarian, psychological, economic and other pressing issues by

contacting one of the support offices (call centers) that assist foreign nationals in Russia, as well as Indian organizations that provide support to members of the national diaspora abroad.

Another distinctive feature of Mayak is the ability not only to send written messages in English or Russian, but also (particularly if you don't know these languages) to record an audio message in one of the widely spoken languages of India. In addition, the project's flexible format allows for relatively quick support for Indians, thanks to the presence of support centre staff in various regions of the Russian Federation (allowing assistance in real time across multiple time zones). Furthermore, Mayak platform users will be able to attach documents and other materials to their requests to facilitate the review process. The service also includes the ability to organize audio or video calls.

In addition to Mayak's core mission, users are given the opportunity to subscribe to a newsletter, monitor current news related to the Indian diaspora in Russia, as well as digests of relevant publications in Russian and Indian media, including informational materials on career, educational, and other opportunities available to Indians in Russia.





**MANSI PARASHAR**

(MGIMO and RUDN)

# Kendriya Vidyalaya School: Home is never too far away



In the heart of Moscow, amid the bustle of city life, stands the Indian Embassy School, Kendriya Vidyalaya. Since its founding in 1987, this institution has become more than just an educational center, but a living embodiment of India, a bridge between the great civilizations of Russia and India, and a comfortable environment for the children of diplomats, businessmen, and Indian compatriots who find themselves thousands of kilometers from their homeland.

The School at the Indian Embassy in Moscow was founded during the heyday of Indo-Soviet relations, but subsequent events led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and brought turbulent changes. Nevertheless, Kendriya Vidyalaya remained a constant presence in the heart of the world's largest country.

This educational institution, founded as a small institution, has grown significantly over

the years and now enrolls approximately 270 students in grades one through twelve, offering courses in Science and Commerce. The school is affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi, and follows the curriculum of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi, India. This allows students wishing to continue their education in India to easily adapt to the educational environment in their home country.

Shanti Kushwaha, a student from the first cohort of the Indian Embassy School, recalls her studies, giving a clear picture of how the school began its mission to educate children of Indian descent. Shanti arrived at the school with little knowledge of English or Hindi, as her Indo-Russian family spoke Russian; however, her classmates and teachers were kind and supportive and helped her feel comfortable. She fondly remembers all the school events,



including the annual school day, Teacher's Day; a sense of belonging to the Indian people is fostered through regular practices such as morning prayers at assembly, celebrating Independence Day, Diwali, and Holi, observing national customs, using the Devanagari script, and more. Such daily contact with the culture of one's homeland is vital for a child growing up abroad, as they grow and develop. This approach helps maintain a strong connection to the principles, traditions, and culture of their home country while living in Russia. Thanks to the school, parents of Indian origin can be confident that their children are learning the culture and traditions of their country.

Every year, when students, parents, and teachers come together to celebrate School Day, it becomes clear that the School at the Embassy of India is more than just a place of learning; it is a family united by bonds of friendship, love, and a shared passion for knowledge. The school also serves as a starting point for integrating new Indian families into the local community. At the same time, the true spirit of India blends beautifully with Moscow's beauty.



Kendriya Vidyalaya in Moscow is a place where the younger generation acquires valuable knowledge and important life experience in a unique socio-cultural environment, where the tricolor proudly flies and Indian values are instilled. This ensures that home never feels too far away for Indian children living in Moscow, and the school serves as a symbol of friendship and cooperation between Russia and India. Thus, Kendriya Vidyalaya represents a miniature India, where the future is carefully nurtured not far from the Kremlin walls.





ALESYA A. KHANEVSKAYA

Alesya A. Khanevskaya

Sheel Kumar  
Producer & Director

# Bollywood and Russia: A New Era in Film Production

**The Second Indian Film Festival in Russia (October 4–15, 2025) – from the bustling hall of the Embassy in Moscow to crowded screenings from Saint Petersburg to Vladivostok – became not just an important event, but a reunion of two cultures that share a deep affection for one another.**

“We love Indian cinema,” Russian President Vladimir Putin recently stated, noting that there is even a TV channel in Russia broadcasting Indian films 24/7. Anyone who has seen Russian audiences dancing to “Awaara” or cheering for “Disco Dancer” knows that this is not nostalgia. It is muscle memory.

In October, the international festival, organized by the Embassy of India in Moscow together with the Ministry of Culture of Russia, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

of India, the Government of Moscow, the Republic of Tatarstan, NFDC, ICCR, and partners, was held during the year of the 25th anniversary of the Russian-Indian strategic partnership. The film festival organizers also built upon the success of WAVES, an Indian media and innovation initiative aimed at promoting intellectual property, collaboration, and cross-border investment. The Embassy of India even organized the arrival of WAVES Bazaar in Moscow—an initiative that turns words into

action, turning film festival conversations into real projects of co-production, training, and distribution.

### Why Now: A Partnership Ready for the Screen

Despite India and Russia being long-time allies, the two countries have not collaborated as actively in film production and distribution. Previously, for various reasons, many potential Russian-Indian film projects were put on hold. The mission of the recent large-scale film festival was to provide momentum to the Russian-Indian partnership in cinema.

Russia is a filmmaker's paradise, the world's largest country with locations suitable for any story. Moscow is ready for filming: there are numerous film crews and professional teams, equipment, studios, and transport and logistics infrastructure. Thanks to "Moskino," producers can receive a 30% cash rebate and compensation for additional costs (up to 15%) through local hospitality and

services. Furthermore, in 2019, India and Russia signed an Agreement on Audio-Visual Co-Production, granting joint projects 'national film' status in both countries (this allows for increased financing, improved film quality, and expanded geographic reach). Thus, the Russian-Indian partnership in the film industry is gaining tangible practical significance.

### Ambassador's Speech: Technology, Talent, and a Wider Stage

His Excellency Mr. Vinay Kumar, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation, spoke from the heart. In the era of silent cinema, plots did not need translation, as emotions spoke for themselves. Then, sound divided audiences by language. Today, thanks to dubbing, through artificial intelligence and other technologies, these barriers have disappeared again. The Ambassador noted that currently, the Prime Minister of India can address the nation in Hindi, and—within an hour—the same speech becomes available in

**St Petersburg** 4 OCTOBER  
Khoaya khoya Chand  
Milan talkies  
Pushkara

**Moscow** 5 OCTOBER  
Pushkara  
Gems (жемчуг)  
Snow flower

**Moscow** 6 OCTOBER  
Khoaya khoya Chand  
Milan talkies

**Kazan** 8 OCTOBER  
Snow Flower  
(opening film)

**Kazan** 9 OCTOBER  
Milan Talkies

**Yakutsk** 13 OCTOBER  
Milan talkies  
Pushkara

**Vladivostok** 15 OCTOBER  
Milan talkies  
Pushkara

**2nd INDIAN KINO FESTIVAL RUSSIA**

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING  
NFDC cinemas of India  
TATARSTAN INITIATIVE MEDIA AGENCY  
COSMO TRAVELS КОСМО ТРЭВЕЛС  
ENSO GROUP  
RUS BIOPHARM



Vinay Kumar  
Ambassador of the Republic of  
India to the Russian Federation



Sudhir Mishra  
Director



Supriya Nayak  
Actress

all UN languages, including Russian. If speeches and stories can spread so quickly, why can't the same happen with films?

And it is not just about cinema on the big screen, but also about content on media platforms, documentaries, and short films. In these genres, Russian studios (including Gazprom-Media) can collaborate with a vast pool of young Indian talent.

### The Universal Language of Cinema

Madhur Kankana Roy, Director of the

Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center at the Embassy of India in Russia, set the tone by recalling the words of the famous director A.A. Tarkovsky: "Films recreate life—its movement, contradictions, and conflict, and emotions are universal. A mother's grief or a friend's loyalty are felt the same in Mumbai and in Moscow." At this year's festival, special attention was paid to issues of intellectual property, training, and industry partnership. The Indian delegation included Ms. Supriya Naik, Ms. Gitika Aggarwal, Ms. Chhaya Kadam, Mr. Himanshu Mehra, Mr. Sarfaraz Alam, Mr. Sheel Kumar, Mr. Pranav Sharma, Mr. Aseem Prakash Bajaj, Mr. Yusuf Mehmood, Mr. Panda Ji, Mr. Anshul Chaturvedi, Mr. Sudhir Mishra, and other filmmakers, many of whom traveled to Kazan for the TIME business forum.

### Sarfaraz Alam: A Bridge Between Russia and India

If anyone embodies the connection between India and Russia through cinema, it is Sarfaraz Alam. He came to Russia in 1996 to study medicine, worked in Indian healthcare, launched the first Moscow-Goa charter flights, and then followed his true calling—film production. After graduating from the New York Film Academy, he filmed "Tears of Nandigram" in India, but in his words, "Russia was my first love."



Neelam Rani  
Consul General, Saint Petersburg

He brought such Indian blockbusters as “Sardar Udham,” “Jugjugg Jeeyo,” and “Runway 34” to Russian cinemas and now leads the co-productions that will define the new decade. A current example of this is the film “Samotsvety” (Gems)—the first official Indian–Russian co-production under the bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of cinema.

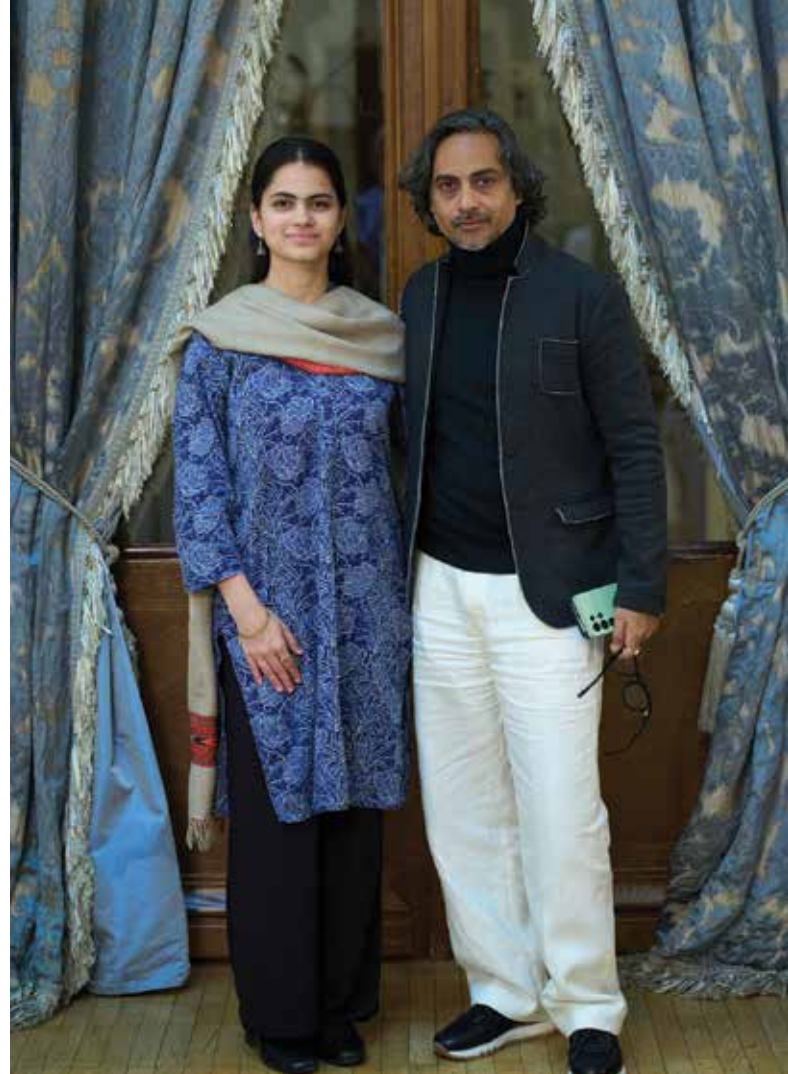
Next is the film “Karova” (“COW”), supported by the Ministry of Culture of Russia, dedicated to the attitudes of different cultures toward the cow (a symbol of motherhood in India). Following that, Mr. Alam filmed “Razgrom” (The Rout), set for release in 2026, the plot of which features a Russian badminton player traveling to India.

Mr. Alam is convinced: “Russians love Indian cinema. If you ask what Indian cinema lacks, the answer is straightforward: it is not a lack of love, but a lack of distribution and proper marketing. The audience is ready; Indian producers must invest more and organize appropriate campaigns.” According to the Indian filmmaker, “festivals like this bring the right people together in one room, and therein lies their special value.”

### **Dr. Tahzeen: The Man Who Set the Machine in Motion**

A neurosurgeon by training and a distributor by calling, Dr. Tahzeen, owner of the Indian Cinema company in Russia, has been promoting Indian films on Russian screens for over ten years. “Cinema is not just entertainment,” says Mr. Tahzeen. “It is a means of cultural exchange and strengthening friendship between nations.” When no one else continued the legacy of Indo–Soviet cinematography, Dr. Tahzeen took it upon himself: “Like most Indians, I have always loved our cinema. When no one supported the idea, I decided to do it myself.”

Dr. Tahzeen believes that the love for Bollywood among Soviet citizens stemmed from eternal values—kindness, family, and traditions. “These themes never go out of style,” Tahzeen asserts. “Russia is turning back to its traditional



Sarfaraz Alam  
Director

roots, and that is exactly what Indian cinema celebrates. The magic will return.”

Thanks to the company Indian Cinema, Dr. Tahzeen now offers Indian films to major chains such as CinemaPark and Cinema 5, as well as digital platforms. “The Indian diaspora,” Mr. Tahzeen adds, “plays a key role in holding festivals and cultural events, while institutions like the Embassy and the J. Nehru Cultural Center help strengthen Russian–Indian ties.” “We have returned to what we once were,” Dr. Tahzeen says with a smile, “only now this machine works in both directions.”

### **A Director Tips His Hat: Sudhir Mishra**

“I am not just a filmmaker—I am a historian,” says Mr. Sudhir Mishra, whose films (“Khoya Khoya Chand,” “Chameli,” and others) have always been complex stories about people, rather than just plots. Mr. Mishra

spoke of Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, and Klimov, and how the iconic Soviet films “The Mirror” and “Come and See” shaped his vision. “Indian theater is incomplete without Chekhov,” Mr. Mishra remarks. “Presenting Khoya Khoya Chand to the Russian audience was not just a screening. It was a dialogue. Films are culture, and understanding each other’s cultures brings people together.”

### Indian Cinema Stars Speak Out

Supriya Naik, the lead actress in the film “Pushkara,” addressed the new generation: “We have moved beyond language and boundaries. I support the girls back home who dare to dream big.”

Chhaya Kadam, lead actress of the film “Snow Flower,” visiting Moscow for the second time, was moved by the audience’s presence and their Q&A session: “I had the feeling that I was watching my own film as if I were making a movie for the first time.” “Invite us,” Ms. Kadam said, “and we will share our stories here

in Russia. Let’s build meaningful dialogue.”

### A Legislator from Kursk Remembers

Mr. Abhay Kumar Singh, a parliamentarian from Kursk, recalls a time when Bollywood rivaled Hollywood in Russia—in terms of budget, quality, and sales volume. In the 1990s, public attention was fixed on the West; now, with the focus shifted to the South and East, cultural ties between Russia and India are being revived. According to Mr. Singh, “Russians and Indians are emotionally similar to one another—for example, we are sentimental and have deep feelings for our relatives and friends. Show modern youth all the best that Russia and India have to offer, and the flame will ignite with new strength.”

Speaking about the Indian diaspora, Mr. Singh asserts that “every Indian abroad is an ambassador—in their manner of behavior, in work, and in culture. Indian compatriots abroad help maintain ties at both the micro and macro levels.”





## Current and Future Films

This year, the festival presented a large selection of Indian films:

- “Snow Flower” (2024) – a drama in Marathi about a young woman caught between two cultures. The film’s key themes are family, love, and unity.
- “Khoya Khoya Chand” (2007) – a Hindi film set during the golden age of Bollywood, telling a story of glamour, ambition, and broken hearts.
- “Milan Talkies” (2019) – a Hindi melodrama about a small town where dreams, love, and the magic of cinema collide.
- “Pushkara” (2023) – a film from the Odia film studio, telling the story of a vanishing tradition and an unusual love story based on faith and change.
- “Samotsvety” (Gems) (2025) – the first official Indian–Russian co–production in the Russian language, about a family that travels to India to rediscover and strengthen their family bonds.

## And the story continues...

On the closing day of the festival, the Deputy Chief of Mission of India to Russia, Mr. Nikhilesh Giri, presented awards and commemorative gifts to Indian and Russian filmmakers, including the teams behind the films “Samotsvety” (Gems) and “Snow Flower.” Mr. Giri concluded his speech with a simple assurance: the embassy will exert every effort to help bring these and future film projects to life. And the creators of the films? They did what creative people do best—they made us experience a vast range of feelings and emotions.



Chhaya Kadam  
Actress

1. If you are an Indian director, plan your next shoot in Moscow—favorable conditions and high-class infrastructure await you. And please, work with local production companies—they know all the nuances and possess the necessary experience and knowledge.
2. If you are a Russian producer, explore the Indian film market, for there is no limit to the talent and stories it offers.
3. And if you are part of the Indian diaspora in Russia, support the exchange of views—invite your Russian friends to an Indian film, and your Indian friends to a Russian one. If you have a story to tell, start filming; at festivals like the one held in Russia this October, new stars are born.

Regardless of the city or the plot, hearts beat in a single rhythm. The credits haven’t started yet—the lights have just gone down.



**DARIA KARASEVA**

Master's Student at MGIMO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia

# India opens consulates in Kazan and Yekaterinburg

Consulates General in Kazan and Yekaterinburg will open new opportunities for compatriots living, studying, or working in these regions. Now, processing documents, participating in cultural and educational programs, establishing business contacts, and traveling between the two countries will become easier.

For Indians living in Russia permanently or arriving for study and work, the consulates will offer new opportunities for convenient interaction. In Kazan, a new center will be established where documents can be processed closer to home, emergency assistance can be received, and residents will be able to participate in cultural programs



aimed at strengthening ties between nations. According to the Indian Ambassador to Moscow, the opening in Kazan is expected in the coming weeks; the city is preparing a business and cultural agenda.

Kazan is a city where East and West, religious traditions, and university life intertwine. It boasts well-developed infrastructure, international universities, and an active business environment. The new consulate will strengthen business contacts, simplify visa procedures, and make the city an attractive destination for

tourists from India interested in Russian culture and the unique cuisine of Tatarstan.

Yekaterinburg, located on the border of Europe and Asia, will host a consular mission responsible for the Ural and Siberian regions. An official government decree has granted the consulate a wide geographical mandate, which means more convenient access to services for residents of multiple regions. The region is of particular interest due to strong demand for educational and medical services, industrial cooperation, and tourist routes across the Urals.

In practice, the establishment of these consulates will lead to more cultural events, educational exchanges, and business forums. For the Indian diaspora, this provides an opportunity to build local communities, participate in joint projects, and represent Indian culture to a wider audience. Shortly after the consulates open, the first joint initiatives will be launched: exhibitions, film festivals, youth exchanges, and professional programs, creating tangible opportunities for collaboration between individuals, universities, and businesses.

**EKATERINA A.**

Master's Student at MGIMO, Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs of Russia

# National Unity Day

## Why November 4 Is an Important Date for Russians

National Unity Day is often considered a relatively new holiday, although the idea of unity in the face of challenges is deeply rooted in Russian history. The holiday serves as a reminder of a time when the country's fate depended on the actions of ordinary people. It unites those who live, work, and build the future of Russia today, including the Indian

diaspora, which has become a notable part of Russia's multicultural fabric.

The holiday dates back to the events of 1612, when a united volunteer militia led by Kuzma Minin and Dmitry Pozharsky liberated



Moscow from Polish invasion, marking the beginning of a new era in Russian statehood. The events of that time formed an important tradition of civic solidarity, which remains significant in modern Russia. People were able to achieve change through collective effort, and this experience remains a moral guide for society.

On November 4, 2025, dozens of events took place across Russia. Messages of unity and respect for diversity were heard at major venues across the country. In his speech, the President of Russia stated: "It was strong cohesion, a sense of responsibility, and duty to the Fatherland that strengthened the foundations of the state and the defense of the sacred right to hold onto our own roots and moral pillars. Today, by preserving these traditions, we protect the sovereignty, honor, and dignity of Russia through peaceful, creative, and military efforts."

An awards ceremony for state honours and the Presidential Prize for contributions to strengthening national unity was also held at the Kremlin. Vladimir Putin highlighted the importance of historical experience



and emphasized that "the cohesion of the people strengthened the foundations of the state and allowed us to defend the right to preserve our roots and moral pillars." Special recognition was given to those working in social, cultural, and educational fields. Among the laureates were the creators of the "Russia" exhibition project, the organizers of the "Great Ethnographic Dictation," representatives of religious communities, as well as international figures supporting cultural ties with Russia. The President expressed gratitude to those who view Russia as a reliable partner and noted their contribution to the development of dialogue. The festive ceremony underscored that unity continues to be formed through concrete initiatives and through the efforts of people committed to strengthening mutual respect and cooperation.

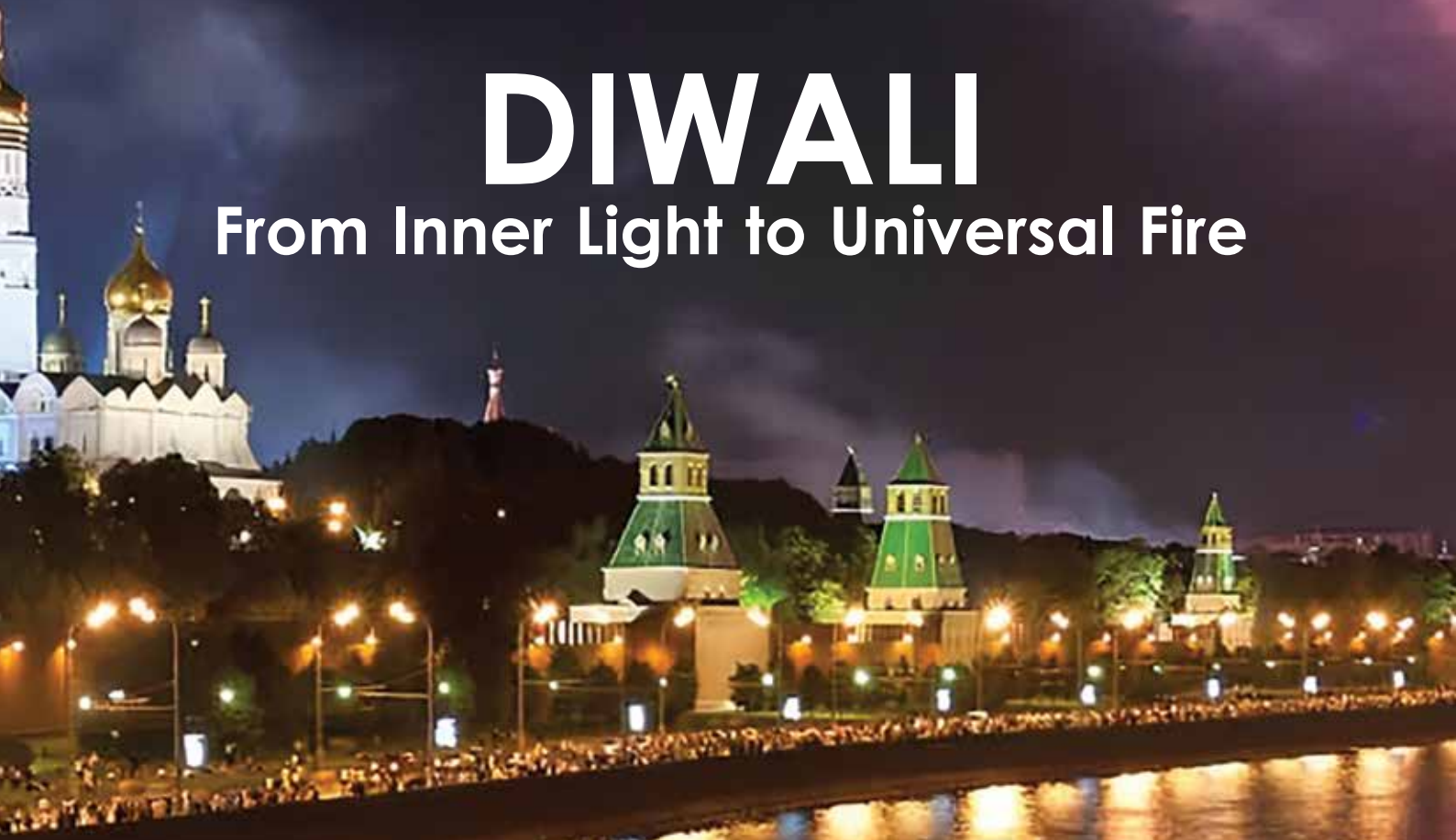
National Unity Day has become not just a formal date, but a reminder of the values that bind different nations together. The holiday creates a space where people feel part of a shared society.



ALESYA KHANEVSKAYA

# DIWALI

## From Inner Light to Universal Fire



Every October, Indians around the world take time to celebrate Diwali—the festival of lights, renewal, and homecoming. For Indians in Russia, this season also brings a wave of nostalgia as members of the Indian community gather in Moscow, Saint Petersburg, and other cities to share in the familiar aroma of ghee lamps, savor the taste of cardamom sweets, and enjoy the spirit of India far from home.

### The History of the Holiday

The history of Diwali begins in the heart of the Ramayana: Diwali marks the return of Lord Rama to Ayodhya after 14 years of exile. His return symbolized the triumph of good over evil and light over darkness. The lamps (diyas) that lit his path have since become symbols

of hope, virtue, and the belief that good will always return. For many, the holiday is also connected to Goddess Lakshmi—the bestower of prosperity and grace. As a sign of respect for Lakshmi, people decorate their homes on the day of celebration and leave their doors open to welcome her blessings.

### Three Days of Traditions

The festival of Diwali is traditionally observed over three days. It begins with Dhanteras—a day believed to bring wealth and prosperity, when families buy gold, silver, or utensils as a symbol of good fortune. This is followed by Choti Diwali—a quieter evening of lighting the first diyas and preparing festive sweets. The third day, Diwali, marks the main



celebration: prayers to Shri Lakshmi, fireworks, and the glow of lamps uniting homes and hearts across the world.

### **Traditions and Modernity**

Traditionally, celebrating Diwali was associated with handwritten invitations on gold paper, trays of homemade sweets exchanged between neighbors, and evenings of quiet prayer. Today, the festival still retains its emotional significance but has also evolved into a grand social event.

Markets seem to shine with gold, and the prices for gold goods rise sharply. During the Diwali period, purchasing gold represents not only tradition but also prestige. Some confectioners even decorate their sweets with edible gold leaf.

### **When Spiritual Practice Meets the Entertainment Industry**

In many ways, the celebration of Diwali reflects the realities of modern life. The modest lamp, which once symbolized inner clarity, now stands in contrast to laser shows and luxurious gift baskets. Invitations now arrive as WhatsApp messages or exclusive event cards, while festive fireworks outshine the stars. Many Indians believe that somewhere along the way, the quiet spirituality of Diwali—which for many still means an opportunity to pause for reflection, forgiveness, and a new beginning—has faded against the backdrop of increasingly grand celebrations.

### **A New Generation's Diwali**

Yet there is hope. Among the younger generation, especially Indians abroad, there is a growing desire to restore the holiday's meaning. Many Indians, including those in Russia, arrange small home gatherings for family and friends, organizing shared meals and traditional celebrations—fewer firecrackers and more soulful conversations. For them, Diwali is not about gold, but about light: the warmth of unity, the light of good intentions, and a reminder that faith does not have to be loud to shine.



**MIKHAIL K.**  
Student At MGIMO University,  
Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Russia



## Achala Moulik's Speech at MGIMO on the Eve of the Leo Tolstoy International Peace Prize Ceremony

On September 8, 2025, the renowned Indian writer Achala Moulik addressed the students of MGIMO. She arrived in Moscow as a jury member for the Leo Tolstoy International Peace Prize, the results of which were announced in Moscow on the eve of the great Russian writer's birthday.

The meeting between A. Moulik and the future specialists in international relations was moderated by M.A. Suchkov, Director of the MGIMO Institute for International Studies (IIS).

The event was organized with the support of the IIS Center for Scientific Diplomacy and Youth in Science.

The opening part of the expert's speech focused on the historical and modern development of the Russian-Indian partnership. A. Moulik highlighted that for several centuries, relations between Russia and India have grown in a spirit of mutual respect, supporting each other and allowing societies and civilizations to influence one another. According to



the Indian specialist, as a multipolar world order takes shape, major powers outside the Western sphere should expand not only political and diplomatic ties but also cultural and humanitarian connections.

Continuing the meeting, Achala Moulik shared her experience working in India's government structures, noting what allowed her to combine the roles of politician and writer throughout her career and life. She also presented several of her works, including her latest published book. Thanks to A. Moulik's extensive translation work, many classic works of Russian literature have become known to a wide Indian audience.

The writer also spoke about how she developed an interest in Russian literature and why the works of Russian and world classics, such as A.S. Pushkin, L.N. Tolstoy, F.M. Dostoevsky, and M.A. Bulgakov, evoke genuine interest among Indian readers. Additionally, she recommended Indian authors whose works offer a deeper insight into Indian culture and society.

In the final part of the conversation, A. Moulik answered questions from the audience regarding the role of literature in shaping a positive image of a country in the world, the characteristics of the Indian mentality and culture, and the influence of Indian political thinkers on the development of international relations theory and political science.

The engaging discussion with the distinguished Indian writer and scholar provided activists, young Indologists, and future diplomats with an excellent opportunity to hear firsthand about the nuances of the interaction between culture and politics, and the importance of humanitarian cooperation in the development of the Russian-Indian strategic partnership.



**MARIA SAVCHENKOVA**  
Master's Student At Mgimo University,  
Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Russia

# THE SUCCESSES OF MODERN INDIAN SCIENCE

## A NEW INTELLECTUAL POWERHOUSE



Modern India is a country rapidly transitioning from a developing nation into a global-level scientific and technological hub. Behind the familiar images of festivals, the aroma of spices, and ancient temples lies a powerful intellectual effort that is changing the country from within. Indian science is experiencing rapid growth and is shaping one of India's new faces today—dynamic, ambitious, and incredibly talented.

One of the most striking symbols of this new scientific era is the success of the Chandrayaan-3 mission, launched in 2023. India became the first country to soft-land a spacecraft on the Moon's south pole—a zone believed to contain ice reserves and new insights on the origin of the Solar System. Behind this success stands a new generation of ISRO engineers—people who grew up in the digital age and utilize principles of rapid prototyping and frugal engineering unavailable to many traditional space agencies. No less impressive is the 2024 launch of the Aditya-L1 mission, India's first spacecraft for studying the Sun, which was placed at a Lagrange point and began transmitting data on solar activity, crucial for protecting satellites and power grids.

However, the space industry is only one direction of the Indian scientific leap.

In the field of artificial intelligence, the country is forging its own path based on the principle of “scalable solutions.” Indian research centers are developing AI models tailored to a multilingual country where more than twenty official languages coexist. In 2024–2025, Indian Large Language Models emerged as part of the India AI Mission: the Sarvam, Krutrim, and Indus models represent the early attempts to create AI systems that understand the cultural and social nuances of India. They are used by schools, doctors, government agencies, and start-ups—for tasks ranging from disease diagnostics to supporting farmers in remote regions.

Pharmaceuticals and biotechnology remain one of modern India's greatest strengths. The country produces the most vaccines in the world and actively invests in research in gene therapy and bioengineering. A clear example was the rapid creation of its own vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the Serum Institute of India (SII) and Bharat Biotech became key players in the global market. Indian laboratories are currently working on next-generation vaccines and methods for early cancer diagnosis using AI. One notable researcher of the new wave is virologist Gauresh Madhi, whose developments in the field of universal vaccines are attracting the attention of the world's largest companies.

Equally impressive developments are taking place in quantum technologies. India has launched the National Quantum Mission, under which universities and private companies are developing Indian quantum processors and algorithms for quantum cryptography. Research groups at IISc Bangalore and IIT Madras are already testing experimental samples of quantum chips, and Indian scientists are publishing in leading international journals on materials physics and quantum optics.



Young physicist Arnab Mitra, working on photonic quantum computing, is considered one of the most promising scientists in the region.

Another rapidly growing area is climate and environmental research. India is creating satellites for climate monitoring, developing water purification technologies for densely populated regions, and experimenting with new sustainable materials based on biopolymers. A group led by researcher Sudha Srivastava is working on innovative methods for plastic recycling, turning waste into durable construction materials that are already being used in several states.

At the center of all these achievements are the people. Modern Indian scientists are a generation that came of age during the digital revolution, working both in India and abroad, and forming transnational research teams. Many of them are returning to India because it is here that new laboratories, funding, and the opportunity to work at the intersection of technology, social challenges, and a massive domestic market are now appearing. Today, Indian researchers are among the most cited in the world in the fields of computer science, medicine, materials science, and space technology.

Modern Indian science is the story of a country that is betting on intellect, innovation, and scale. This is India confidently shaping its own technological path and offering the world new ideas and models of development.





**KSENIA B.**

MGIMO University, Ministry Of Foreign Affairs Of Russia

# INDIA

## A COUNTRY THAT CEASES TO BE EXOTIC

Today, India is experiencing a tourist renaissance—quiet but confident. The country has long ceased to be just a collection of postcard images of Goa, elephants, and spices. Today, India is a place people visit for experiences that cannot be found anywhere else: for authenticity, for energy, and for a diversity that cannot be reduced to a glossy finish.

In recent years, India has been actively investing in its tourism infrastructure, making travel easier and more convenient. E-visas are processed quickly, the domestic airline

network is expanding, and the number of modern hotels and tourist services is growing. For Russians, this is especially important: the trip has become noticeably more accessible and reliable than it was ten years ago, and the language barrier is becoming less significant—English is understood almost everywhere in major cities and tourist centers, and many services already cater to Russian-speaking visitors.

But most importantly, India gives Russians what they seek in travel. For residents of northern latitudes, the long-awaited sun



and warm ocean are available here year-round: Goa and Kerala remain ideal winter destinations. For those tired of uniform beach resorts, India offers a unique cultural experience: one can spend an evening on the banks of the Ganges in Varanasi, climb to the Himalayan monasteries in Ladakh, or walk through the colonial streets of Pondicherry

as if transported into another world.

Russians traditionally take an interest in history and culture, and in India, this curiosity turns into a true journey through time. Here, every era has left its mark: the palaces of Maharajas in Rajasthan, the ancient temples of South India, the megaliths of Hampi, and the exquisite Mughal architecture. Even the shortest route inevitably turns into a series of discoveries, which is why Russian tourists often return.

Gastronomy deserves special attention, as it has become another draw. For Russians, Indian cuisine is not just curry and spices, but a variety of regional traditions, from Bengali fish to Punjabi paneer. In recent years, Indian restaurants have been actively adapting their menus for travellers: the level of spiciness is adjustable, and many recipes are made milder—this is especially appreciated by Russian visitors, for whom taste is just as important as the experience.

India is also becoming one of the most popular centers for wellness and spiritual tourism. Russian travellers are increasingly heading to Kerala for Ayurvedic programs and to Rishikesh for yoga and meditation. In a world of growing stress and digital overload, this combination of nature, practice, and tranquillity can feel truly life-saving.

All of this makes India one of the most promising destinations for Russian tourism. It is a country where a traveller never remains a mere observer—they become engaged, surprised, and inspired. India reveals itself to Russians not as a distant, exotic land, but as a living, hospitable, and infinitely diverse world that one wants to return to again and again.

OKSANA K.

# Highlights from India and Russia: Events and Holidays (July–October 2025)

## Bharat Utsav – Manezhnaya Square, Moscow (July 5–13, 2025)

An event held near the Kremlin, Bharat Utsav brought a vibrant showcase of Indian culture to Manezhnaya Square, attracting approximately 850,000 visitors over nine days. Organized by the Embassy of India in collaboration with the Government of Moscow and the Indian Women's Association, the square was transformed into a tropical courtyard featuring greenery, water features, and open areas for socializing. More than 150 Indian artists and 350 Russian performers presented classical dances, folk traditions, live music, and daily yoga and meditation sessions. Guests of the event explored a large exhibition of Indian handicrafts, interactive photo zones, and a



live sand installation. Thanks to its scale, color, and relaxed, welcoming atmosphere, Bharat Utsav became a significant cultural event that further solidified Russian–Indian friendship.

# India Day – Dream Island, Moscow

(August 14–17, 2025)



India Day, celebrated annually in Russia for the tenth year in a row, once again transformed the Dream Island theme park into a vibrant festival of Indian culture. Organized by the "SITA" Indian Cultural and National Center with the support of the Moscow Government, the festival attracted approximately 7,000 visitors over four days. Guests enjoyed a lively Bollywood stage, a colorful Holi zone, yoga

and Ayurveda corners, an Indian wedding pavilion, mehendi and astrology stalls, as well as an extensive bazaar selling Indian cuisine, spices, and folk handicrafts. India Day created an open, festive space where Russians, Indians, and guests from other countries could experience the colours, sounds, and traditions of India. This free citywide celebration turned a visit to Dream Island into one of the brightest cultural weekends in Moscow this year.



# Onam Celebration – “Vdokhnovenie” Cultural Center, Moscow (September 13, 2025)



The Moscow Malayalee Association (AMMA), with the support of the Embassy of India, organized the 27th Onam celebration, capturing the warmth and spirit of Kerala. His Excellency Vinay Kumar, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation, inaugurated the program alongside the leadership of AMMA, setting the tone for the traditional evening.



The festivities opened with a Kerala-themed dance performance organized by the AMMA cultural team, followed by the main event—a dynamic concert by the famous singer Vidhu Prathap and his band. More than 1,000 guests, including Malayalees, Indians from various states, and many friends from Russia, joined the celebration, which concluded with a traditional Onam Sadhya served on banana leaves. The warm, colourful, and hospitable event brought an authentic Kerala-style Onam to Moscow.



# Indian Film Festival

(October 4–15, 2025)



Organized by the Embassy of India in Moscow in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, the 2nd Indian Film Festival took place across five Russian cities: Saint Petersburg, Kazan, Moscow, Yakutsk, and Vladivostok. Over the course of eleven days, screenings, Q&A sessions, and meetings with filmmakers were organized. An Indian delegation of 16 filmmakers met with audiences across Russia, and Moscow also hosted the WAVES Bazaar, an Indo-Russian film festival.



The warm reception from the audience, packed theatres, and lively discussions during the festival gave a strong boost to Indo-Russian cultural and cinematic cooperation.

# Diwali Mela – “Hanoi” Center in Moscow

(October 24–27, 2024 and October 25–26, 2025)



The Hanoi-Moscow complex came alive with the warm glow of Diwali, as the festival brought together families, students, and curious visitors for days filled with joy. Everywhere guests looked, there was light and movement—Garba and Dandiya circles, Bollywood workshops, Rangoli tables covered with vibrant colored powders, Mehndi artists painting intricate designs, and stalls overflowing with festive

sweets and handmade crafts.

Organized with the support of the Atmanirbhar Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Diwali Mela festival created a warm and friendly atmosphere where Indians and Russians connected, shared experiences, and enjoyed the festivities—a simple yet vibrant celebration of Diwali in the heart of Moscow.

# Indian Culture Days in Tomsk

(November 5–6, 2025)

Tomsk hosted two eventful days of Indian art and traditions, organized by the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Center (JNCC) of the Embassy of India in Russia in collaboration with the administration of the Tomsk Region. The program for the Indian Culture Days in Tomsk included film screenings (including titles such as English Vinglish, Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara, and others), concerts featuring traditional Indian music and dance, wellness events, yoga classes, Ayurveda sessions, lectures on healthy nutrition, and masterclasses in Kathak, Tabla, and vocals.

The opening of the Indian Culture Days took place at the Tomsk State Regional Philharmonic. Following the official ceremony, performances were given by local Tomsk artists as well as musicians from the JNCC of the Embassy of India in Russia. While visiting various themed “Indian stations,” residents and guests of Tomsk enjoyed mehndi and sari workshops, a vibrant photo zone, and the exhibition “India – A Tapestry of Many Worlds,” which featured images from every Indian state and union territory. With the participation of numerous universities and cultural centers, local students, families, and admirers of Indian culture became part of the celebration, resulting in two warm and colorful days celebrating India in the Tomsk Region.





**BABY MATHEW**

CEO, Somatheeram Ayurveda



# Somatheeram Ayurveda

## A Pioneer in Ayurvedic Treatment and Yoga

Located in the pristine natural surroundings of Kerala, the Somatheeram Ayurveda Group resort complex is a symbol of authentic Ayurvedic treatment, yoga, and meditation. Founded in 1985 by the visionary entrepreneur Baby Matthew, it has grown into one of India's leading Ayurvedic clinics, harmoniously combining therapeutic excellence with the comfort and atmosphere of a resort. The group operates three Ayurvedic hospitals accredited by the National Accreditation Board for Hospitals & Healthcare Providers (NABH).

### Turning Ayurveda into a Global Brand

Mr. Baby Matthew foresaw that Ayurveda would transcend traditional medicine and become a globally recognized system of holistic healthcare. Thanks to his vision, Ayurveda has indeed become a globally recognized system of holistic healing. By combining it with modern tourism, he not only popularized this ancient

science but also helped position India as a leader in global wellness tourism.

### A Holistic Approach to Healing

At Somatheeram, an incredible journey toward better health awaits guests. Here, Ayurvedic practices, personalized diets, herbal medicine, yoga, and meditation are combined under the guidance of experienced doctors and therapists. Every detail—from individual nutrition tailored to a person's doshas (body constitution) to daily yoga classes—is designed to promote harmony of body, mind, and spirit. Therapies are supported by herbal preparations produced at Somatheeram's own GMP-certified facility, ensuring the highest quality standards. Accommodations range from traditional Kerala cottages to private pool villas, combining modern amenities with close proximity to nature.

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ИМЕЮТСЯ ПРОТИВОПОКАЗАНИЯ. ПЕРЕД ПРИМЕНЕНИЕМ  
НЕОБХОДИМО ПРОКОНСУЛЬТИРОВАТЬСЯ СО СПЕЦИАЛИСТОМ