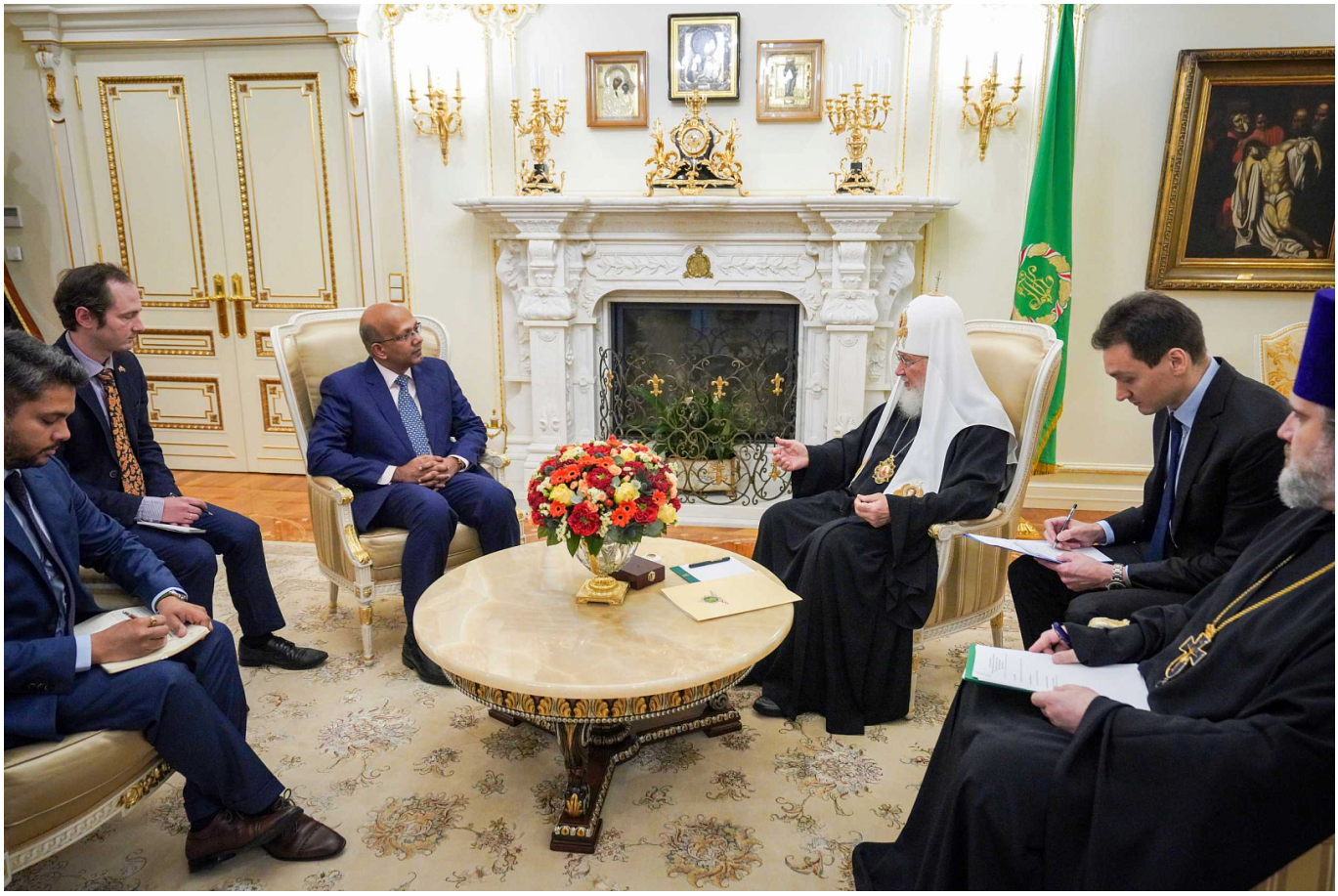
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His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus’ met with the Ambassador of India to Russia



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On 30 July 2024, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Rus’ met with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of India to the Russian Federation H.E. Vinay Kumar at the Patriarchal Residence in the Danilov Stavropegial Monastery in Moscow.
Archpriest Nikolai Lishchenyuk, Deputy Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations of the Moscow Patriarchate, took part in the meeting.

The Ambassador was accompanied by Vivek Singh, First Secretary, Embassy of India.

Welcoming the guest, His Holiness Patriarch Kirill noted that the Russian Orthodox Church has a long history of relations with the Christians of India and, in particular, mentioned the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in New Delhi in 1961, during which the delegation of the Moscow Patriarchate had contacts with

the religious leaders of India. His Holiness also mentioned his visit to India in 2006 as Chairman of the Department for External Church Relations.

“Many outstanding world-class Christian figures were children of your people,” continued the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, addressing Vinay Kumar. – I knew many of them, we worked together in international organisations such as the World Council of Churches. We have developed and continue to have good relations”. His Holiness emphasised that a number of representatives of Christianity from India have played an important role in the international arena, among them Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios (Verghese). He was well known on many international platforms, particularly at the United Nations, and in inter-Christian organisations. “He was an honorary doctor of one of our theological academies, often visited the Soviet Union and contributed greatly to the development of relations between the faithful people of India and the USSR and later Russia,” Patriarch Kirill noted.

His Holiness noted the good attitude of the Russians towards India: “There is something in common in our peoples. This sympathy was in many ways strengthened by the fact that Russia (then the Soviet Union) opposed colonialism and in every possible way contributed to the liberation of peoples who were in colonial dependence on the West. This created a very benevolent context for the development of bilateral relations, not only between states, but also between social organisations, including religious communities”.

According to the Primate of the Russian Orthodox Church, the good relations between the faithful people of India and Russia are based on a certain commonality of values: “Unlike the Western, pragmatic psychology, people living in our countries have somewhat different values. This has always united and, I hope, will unite our peoples. I would like to say once again that we have a very kind attitude towards the Indian people, towards the Christian communities of your country. I hope that in the course of your diplomatic service you will contribute to maintaining the existing ties”.

In his reply, the Ambassador of India sincerely thanked His Holiness Patriarch Kirill for the opportunity to meet and for his warm welcome. He spoke about significant recent events in Indian life and conveyed to His Holiness the gratitude of Indian Prime Minister N. Modi for his congratulations on his re-election.

“Your Holiness, as you have absolutely rightly said, there is something special not only at the level of relations between our countries, but also at the level of relations between the people of India and Russia. As you noted, there is indeed something

common between our peoples not only at the level of mind but also at the level of heart," the diplomat emphasised.

Mentioning that his country was home to more than 35 million Christians of various denominations, the Ambassador emphasised that Indian soil was home to one of the oldest communities of Christians, the Malankara Church of India, which traced its history back to St Thomas the Apostle. The Church's seminary, which bears his name, is one of the most authoritative religious educational institutions in India.

"Your Holiness, we are very happy with the fact that there is co-operation between the Russian Orthodox Church and the Malankara Church of India both at the level of academic exchanges and at the level of visits at various levels, including visits by the leadership of the Churches, as well as in the field of co-operation in the humanitarian sphere and in the field of medicine," Vinay Kumar emphasised.

According to him, he sees one of his most important tasks as India's ambassador to Russia as helping to further unite the two peoples through both cultural dialogue and intellectual exchange in the sphere of awareness and development of civilizational aspects. "In this sphere, I see it very important that contacts are taking place, including between representatives of the clergy," the diplomat noted.



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