

## India - Armenia Relations

India recognized Armenia on December 26, 1991, and India's Ambassador in Moscow was concurrently accredited to Armenia. The Protocol on establishment of Diplomatic relations between India and Armenia was signed on 31 August 1992 in Moscow. From September 1992, India's Ambassador in Kiev (Ukraine) was given the concurrent charge of Armenia. India opened its Resident Mission in Yerevan at the level of Charge d' Affaires on 01 March 1999; the first Resident Ambassador (Shri Bal Anand) assumed charge in Yerevan in October 1999. Armenia, which had opened its Honorary Consulate in April 1994, established its Embassy in New Delhi in October 1999 at the level of Charge d' Affaires, followed by the arrival of the first Resident Ambassador (Armen Baibourtian) in May 2000.

### Political Relations

According to literary evidence, there were Indian settlements in Armenia established by two Indian Princes who along with their families and large retinue had arrived in Armenia as early as 149 BC and were allotted land in Taron region (now in Turkey) by the then rulers of Armenia. Thomas Cana is said to be the first Armenian to have landed on the Malabar Coast in 780 AD. A few Armenian traders had come to Agra during the Mughal Empire. Emperor Akbar, who was believed to have an Armenian wife Mariam Zamani Begum, highly appreciative of the commercial talents and integrity of the Armenians, granted them numerous privileges and considerable religious freedom as also an opportunity to serve in his empire in various capacities. Indian classical singer Gohar Jaan, the first to be recorded on gramophone in 1902 was of Armenian origin. The Armenian language journal "Azdarar" published in Madras (Chennai) in 1794 was the first ever Armenian journal published anywhere in the world. The vestigial Armenian community in India is now mainly settled in Kolkata. The Holy Church of Nazareth, erected in 1707, repaired and embellished in 1734 is the biggest and the oldest Armenian Church in Kolkata. During the Soviet era, President Dr. S Radhakrishnan (September 1964) and **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (June 1976)** visited the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

There have been two Presidential-level visits from Armenia (in 1995 and 2003) and three visits to India at the level of Foreign Minister (2000, 2006, and 2010). The Vice President and Chairman of Rajya Sabha led a Parliamentary delegation to Armenia in October 2005. A Goodwill Indian Parliamentary delegation comprising 8 MPs from different political parties, led by Shri Paban Singh Ghatowar, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Parliamentary Affairs & Development of North-Eastern Regions visited Armenia during 29 October – 1 November 2013. Mr. Hovik Abrahamyan, the then Chairman(Speaker) of the Armenian National Assembly [Parliament] led an 18-member delegation to India (4-8 December 2013) and called on Hon'ble President, met Lok Sabha Speaker, EAM, the then Leader of Opposition Mrs. Sushma Swaraj and other dignitaries. The Armenian Minister of Agriculture Mr. Sergo Karapetyan led a three-member delegation to India from 17-19 February 2016 at the invitation of our Minister of Agriculture Shri Radha Mohan Singh. During the visit, an inter-ministerial agreement on cooperation in the field of Agriculture was signed on 19 February 2016.

**Institutional Mechanisms:** Bilateral dialogue between India and Armenia is conducted through the mechanisms of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological, Cultural and Educational

Cooperation (IGC), and periodic high-level interactions. The 6<sup>th</sup> IGC and FOC were held in New Delhi on 25 September 2013 The Seventh Session of IGC and Eight round of FOC held in Yerevan on 1 April 2016. The leaders of two delegations have signed Agreed Minutes of the IGC session. On the sidelines, a Protocol on cooperation between the DST in our Ministry of Science and Technology and the State Committee of Science of Armenia's Ministry of Education and Science was signed on the same day.

**Bilateral Agreements:** 35 bilateral agreements have been signed with Armenia so far including Agreement in the field of Agriculture, Protocol on DTAA, Protocol on cooperation between the DST in our Ministry of Science and Technology and the State Committee of Science of Armenia's Ministry of Education and Science for cooperation in the fields of earthquake, seismology, astrophysics, nuclear medicine, disaster management etc. and Agreement between CCRH, Ministry of Ayruh and YSMU, Government of Armenia, for establishment of an academic chair on Homoeopathy.

Armenia supported India's candidature at the UNESCO, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and UN Board of Auditors, International Telecommunication Union Council.

### **Commercial Relations**

The bilateral trade and economic engagement with Armenia has not been on increase despite the availability of potential to tap. India is the major supplier of frozen bovine meat (it accounts for 90% of India's export). According to the preliminary data available from Statistical Service of Armenia, the bilateral trade stood at US\$32.3mn. India's imports from Armenia were at US\$0.4 mn and exports to Armenia stood at US\$31.9 mn again favouring India. Indian exports to Armenia consist of bovine meat, agricultural products, electrical equipment, cut and polished diamonds, optical equipment, plastics, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, garments and other chemical goods and cars, while Armenia's exports include non-ferrous metals and raw-rubber. One Indian Group "Kalpataru Power Transmission Limited," Gandhinagar (Gujarat) won the World Bank financed contract (approx. US\$ 22 million) in Nov. 2012 for designing, supplying and installation of high voltage transmission towers in Armenia. The work is being carried out by the company and the duration of the project is three years.

The "Make in India" Presentation was organized by the Embassy on 6 October 2014 in Yerevan. A video film [provided by the XP Division] with subtitles in Armenian language was screened. A presentation on 100 days of the new Government and its new initiatives to attract foreign investment into the Indian economy was made by Ambassador. The event was attended by the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Economy and Agriculture and other high level dignitaries and businessmen in Armenia.

Mr. Emil Tarasyan, Deputy Minister of Economy [IT] led a 5- Armenian IT companies delegation to New Delhi to participate in the India-Soft 2015 (12 -13 February 2015). A 15-member group of Armenian pharmaceutical importers and officials from the Ministry of Healthcare participated in "IPHEX-2015" held on 13-15 May 2015 in Mumbai. A 7-member Armenian delegation sponsored by the FICCI participated in the "Healthcare Summit" in Delhi (8-10 October 2015). A 15-member business delegation organized by FICCI Tamil Nadu Chapter jointly with Armenian Honorary Consulate visited Yerevan (28-30 Nov) to explore business opportunities. A B2B event was organized during the visit. A six member

delegation from Armenian pharmaceutical importers and officials from the Ministry of Healthcare participated in IPHEX 2016 held in Mumbai from April 27-29, 2016.

**Relief/Project Assistance:** India donated USD 2.2 mn in cash and USD 1.1 mn earthquake relief in 1988; gifted 750 MT of wheat and 250 MT of rice following 2000 drought; gifted 300 Indian tractors in 2006 worth US\$ 5 million; set up an IT Centre of Excellence equipped with PARAM super computer in Yerevan worth US \$ 1.67 mn; extended assistance of US\$ 215,000 for the restoration of a dilapidated school building in Lori region; provided computer labs to 72 schools in Tavush region in 2011-12 worth US\$ 0.5 mn. The Project will benefit over 14,000 students and around 500 teachers in the region. Two MoUs were signed with the Armenian Government in August 2014 to implement “Telemedicine” project in Armenia and “Establishment of Computer Labs” in 50 schools of Vayats Dzor region. C-DAC has implemented the first project and the second project is under process. Dr. Mariam Nalbandyan, an Ophthalmologist from Armenia attended one month training at Dr. Shroff’s Charity Hospital, New Delhi under the ‘Aid to Eurasia’ programme.

### **Cultural Relations**

The Indian Embassy organized activities including (i) Visit of five Armenian Painters to India (November 2012); Indian film week in Yerevan (January 2013); Painting Exhibition (April 2013); Book release of Indian Epic Ramayana in Armenian language (April 2013); Indian Photos Exhibition (June 2013).

A 15-member ICCCR sponsored cultural troupe ‘Sugar N’ Spice’ visited Armenia for a Bollywood dance performance on 16 September 2013. The first India Tourism Seminar “Incredible India” along with the Regional Office of M/o Tourism[Frankfurt] in Yerevan on 24 September 2014; A two-member Indian classical (mandolin) musicians led by Pandit Sugato Bhadhuri participated in the ‘Silk Road’ international festival on 8 October 2014 in Yerevan; Commemorating the 65<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Indian Republic Day in Armenia, an All-Armenia Essay and Painting competition among two age groups (12-14 and 15-17 years) was organized in partnership with the Armenian Ministry of Education & Science and the TUMO Centre for Technologies in December 2014. The four first prize winners have visited India (16-24 March 2015) at our M/o Tourism’s sponsorship; Magazine “India – New version, New Vigour” was also released on the occasion; Photo exhibition on Jammu & Kashmir “Paradise on Earth” was held for 10 days starting from 27 January 2014; 14 Armenian artists comprising dancers and singers performed at the annual Surajkund Mela [1-15 Feb] in Haryana. Dr. Sergey Minasyan, Deputy Director of the Caucasians Affairs Institute visited Mumbai (November 2014) to participate in an international seminar on ‘Caucasian Regional Affairs’ hosted by the University of Mumbai. Dr. Alexander Iskandaryan, Director of the Caucasians Affairs Institute visited India [Delhi, Kolkata and Hyderabad] from 8-16 February 2015 under IVP hosted by the ICCR. Three Hindi films and Indo-Armenian Friendship Chess Tournament by Indo-Armenian Friendship NGO supported by the Embassy were organized in March 2015. Vishwa Hindi Diwas was celebrated in the Yerevan State Linguistic University (YSLU) on 16 June 2015. Elocution and recital of poems’ competitions were held and winners were given cash awards. The first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated in Armenia on 21 June 2015 in which over 200 Armenians from different walks of life participated. The IDY event created awareness about yoga benefits among Armenians. “Days of India Culture” were celebrated from August 31 to September 2015 with the initiative by a couple of local friendship and

Indian cultural promotion groups and supported by the Embassy. The Embassy participated in a charity bazaar “Countries under on Roof” organized by a local media group on 21-22 September 2015 in Yerevan. The Mission also supported the IAF (friendship NGO) and Indian students in organizing ‘Indian Culture Flashmob’ in metro tube way (14 Dec) and a ‘Yoga Flashmob’ by young Armenian Yoga (21 Dec) in Yerevan. An art exhibition “Inspired by India” was organized by the Indo-Armenian Friendship NGO with the support of Embassy of India during 08-18 February 2016. The second International Day of Yoga (IDY) was celebrated in Armenia on 21 June 2016 in which over 200 Armenians from different walks of life participated

**Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation** Armenia has fully utilized 25 ITEC slots offered in 2016-17 for short and medium term courses. There is Hindi Language Chair at the Yerevan State Linguistic University (YSLU). Armenians visit India for attending various courses under ICCR, Kendriya Hindi Sansthan (KHS) and ITEC scholarships. There is an overwhelming response from Armenians to join various courses under ITEC programme.

**Gifting of Medicine:** On 11 September 2013, 324 boxes of ‘Kelfer Capsules’ [16200 capsules] were donated to the State owned hospital “Muratsan”, run by the Yerevan State Medical University [YSMU]. The medicines (US\$2500) were gifted by CIPLA, one of the leading Indian Pharmaceutical Companies, as a humanitarian assistance for treating 20-25 young children suffering from Thalassaemia in Armenia. The request for donation of this medicine came from the Minister of Health of RA. In March 2016, at the renewed request by the Armenian Minister of Health recently for donation of the medicine, 324 boxes containing 16200 capsules have been kindly delivered by CIPLA which were handed over to the Armenian side.

A two-member delegation comprising Shri R.S. Sinha, Director in the Ministry of AYUSH of India and Dr. M.M. Padhi, Deputy Director (Technical), Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences visited Armenia to participate in the first ever Scientific Seminar on India Traditional Methods of Medicine from 24-26 November 2014. The delegation called on the Minister of Health of RA. India’s eminent Homeopathy doctor Prof. Alok Pareek visited Armenia to participate in the 5<sup>th</sup> Homeopathy Congress organized by Association of Armenian Homeopathy.

### **Indian Community**

The Indian community in Armenia is very thin and consists largely of over 900 students pursuing medical education at Yerevan State Medical University and Yerevan Engineering & Polytechnic University. There are another 50-70 more Indians living and working/doing business and some of them are married to local Armenians.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Yerevan website:

[www.indianembassy.am](http://www.indianembassy.am)

Embassy of India, Yerevan Youtube -

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoUZFd9fS\\_fmudfkzpjYJ5A](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoUZFd9fS_fmudfkzpjYJ5A)

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