

## **INDIA - BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA RELATIONS**

India and Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) enjoy warm and friendly relations. BiH regards India as a great multi-cultural and multi-religious democracy; an objective that BiH aspires to become. BiH has shown keen interest to further develop and strengthen bilateral cooperation in all fields, including economic and cultural. Nostalgic references are still made to the days of former Yugoslavia when deep friendship between Nehru and Tito characterized relations between the two countries. Pt. Nehru and Indira Gandhi still remain household names in the country. India recognized BiH in May 1992 and initiated the process of establishment of diplomatic relations. Ambassador of India in Budapest is concurrently accredited to BiH and the first Ambassador presented his credentials in 1995. BiH opened its resident mission in Delhi in 1997.

The first ever visit by a Bosnian Foreign Minister to India took place in May 2003. FM Mladen Ivanic visited India and met with EAM, PM, Commerce Minister and Minister for Tourism & Culture. An interactive session with CII was also held. India and BiH also hold regular Foreign Office Consultations [FOCs].

The Third FOCs were held in Sarajevo on 21-22 April, 2014. Indian delegation was led by Secretary(West). Entire gamut of bilateral relations was discussed. Second round of FOCs was held in New Delhi in April 2011. Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of BiH visited India in October, 2012. Foreign Minister of BiH visited India in March 24-28, 2013. The first ever visit at Ministerial level from India was by Minister of State for External Affairs, accompanied by a high-level CII business delegation, from July 11-14, 2012.

In May 2014 BiH witnessed its worst floods in recorded history whereby 70% of the population were affected. An amount of USD 100,000 was given as financial assistance by GOI to be spent on relief and rehabilitation of the flood affected victims.

### **Commercial and Economic Relations:**

Bilateral trade is rather limited and in the range of US\$ 65 million. The main causes of this limited trade are lack of adequate finances, lack of awareness of business potential, weak banking network between the two countries and lack of reliable credit facilities. BiH is a land-locked country and the main sea-port is the Croatian Port of Ploce and till recently, the use of the port was limited.

Joint Committee on Trade provides the institutional framework for intergovernmental discussions on economic cooperation. The second Joint Trade Committee Meeting took place in Delhi in September 2006 when status of trade & economic cooperation was reviewed. The meeting also identified Agriculture, Energy, Construction (of Railway lines), Information Technology and Air Transport as the major areas where cooperation could be furthered. To facilitate business, the EXIM Bank and the Investment Guarantee Agency had entered into an MOU in June 2004 and a Protocol was signed at the conclusion of the JCM. Third Meeting of the Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Sarajevo on September 25, 2012. Areas identified include hydel power, agricultural processing, mining, timber & furniture and IT.

## **Investments:**

Some Indian companies have made investments. As the privatization process continues, opportunities for securing a manufacturing foothold exist in fields as diverse as textile, automobile components, metal processing, energy, wood processing, mining, food processing, tourism, pharmaceutical and infrastructure projects on BOT basis.

A leading Indian company - the Ispat Group has made a 51 % equity investment in November, 2003 in the only coke and fertilizer plant - Global Ispat Koksana Industrija with an investment of approximately US\$ 10 million. This is located at Lukavac, Tuzla Canton, and a team of 15 Indians from Ispat Group are located there. Arcelor Mittal has acquired a steel mill in Zenica and some mining sites in Republika Sprska (one of the two entities in BiH) with a total investment of approximately US\$ 200 million.

## **Agreements signed with BiH**

- Trade Agreement signed in 2001;
- Agreement on Establishment of Joint Business Council signed between the Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH & FICCI in 2003;
- Agreement between India and BiH for the Promotion & Protection of Investments signed in 2006;
- Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty signed in 2009.
- Air Services Agreement.
- Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons.
- Memorandum of Understanding between Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Foreign Trade Chamber (FTC BiH).
- Cooperation agreement signed in May 2015 by Shri Krishna Kumar, Chairman of Indo-Bosnian Chamber of Commerce with FTC BiH.

## **IT Centres of Excellence:**

India has proposed to establish two IT Centres of Excellence for training BiH students. The BiH side has identified the University of Sarajevo and the University of Banja Luka for establishing the IT Centres, which would be first such Centres to be established by India in Europe.

## **Cultural Relations:**

India participates regularly at the Annual Sarajevo Winter Festival held in Sarajevo in February-March. Indo-BiH Friendship Society was formally registered in July 2010. The Indo-BiH Friendship Society organizes regular programmes to disseminate information about India and Indian cultural heritage. In May 2014 a 10-day Indian Film Festival was held in Sarajevo. In June 2014 a photography exhibition on "Mahatma Gandhi, An Apostle of Peace and Non-Violence of the 20th Century" was

held in Sarajevo. The Festival of India was held in Sarajevo on 14-15 December 2014 and in Mostar on 16 December 2014. The Festival showcased Indian dance, art and current developments. India celebrated the International Day of Yoga in Sarajevo in June 2015. Performances of Bhangra, a folk dance from North India, were organized in Sarajevo and Mostar on 22-23 November 2015. All the cultural events attracted large crowds and created enthusiasm and interest for India among the citizens of BiH.

### **Scholarships:**

BiH has been allotted five slots under ITEC programme. Government of BiH takes advantage of this training by sending its employees to India under this programme. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH also sends its diplomats to attend the PCFD courses organized by the Foreign Service Institute of Ministry of External Affairs of India.

### **Indian Community:**

About 50 Indians primarily working for Ispat and Mittal Steel comprise the Indian community in BiH.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Budapest website:  
[www.indianembassy.hu](http://www.indianembassy.hu)

Embassy of India, Budapest Facebook:  
<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInHungary>

Facebook page of Cultural Centre:  
<https://www.facebook.com/ICCBudapestHungary>

Embassy of India, Budapest Twitter:  
<https://twitter.com/IndiaInHungary>

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