

## India - Kazakhstan Relations

Relations between India and Kazakhstan are ancient and historical going back to more than 2500 years ago. There has been a constant and regular flow of trade in goods and, more importantly, exchange of ideas and cultural influences. The flow of Buddhism from India to Central Asia and Sufi ideas from Central Asia to India are two such examples. These deep rooted linkages are evident even today in similarities in food, language, dress and culture.

### Political relations

India was one of the first countries to recognize the independence of Kazakhstan. Diplomatic relations were established in February 1992. The Embassy of India was opened in Almaty in May 1992 and the Embassy of Kazakhstan in New Delhi in 1993. The capital of Kazakhstan was shifted from Almaty to Astana in 1997. Subsequently, the Embassy of India opened its Representative Office in Astana on September 15, 2003. The Embassy moved to Astana in November 2007 and Representative Office moved to Almaty.

The first PM of India Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru accompanied by daughter Indira Gandhi visited Almaty in 1955. Dr. Radhakrishnan visited Kazakhstan in 1956 in his capacity as Vice President.

President Nursultan Nazarbayev visited India in February 1992. Thereafter, he has visited India in 1993 (transit visit), 1996, 2002 and 2009. He was the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on January 26, 2009. A '*Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership*' was adopted during the visit. Prime Minister of India Shri Narsimha Rao visited Kazakhstan in 1993, Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in June 2002, Dr. Manmohan Singh in April 2011 and Shri Narendra Modi in July 2015 and June 2017. Vice-Presidents of India Shri K.R. Narayanan and Shri Hamid Ansari visited Kazakhstan in 1996 and 2008 respectively. These high level visits **have** laid a strong foundation for close and friendly relations between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi participated in the 17<sup>th</sup> SCO Summit in Astana on June 8-9, 2017. India was admitted as a full member of the SCO during the Summit.

The India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) established in 1993 is the **apex bilateral** institutional mechanism for developing trade, economic, scientific, technological, industrial and cultural cooperation between the two countries. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on the Indian side and Ministry of Energy on the Kazakh side are the nodal **ministries** with respective Ministers as the Co-Chair of the Commission. The 12th IGC meeting was held in New Delhi in June 2015. The next meeting of the IGC is scheduled on Sep 19-20, 2017 in Astana. Eight Joint Working Groups have been established in the areas of Counter Terrorism, Trade & Economic Cooperation, Defence & Military Technical Cooperation, Information Technology, Hydrocarbons, Textiles, Tea Debt and Space Cooperation. It has been decided to set up **two** new Joint Working Groups on Transport & Connectivity and Health to take forward bilateral relations in the respective spheres.

Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers are held to discuss the entire range of bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual interest. The last (6<sup>th</sup> FOC) was held in Astana in March 2015. The last security consultations

between the National Security Council Secretariats of the two countries were held in Astana on February 27-28, 2017.

India and Kazakhstan actively cooperate under the aegis of Multilateral Fora including CICA, SCO and the UN organizations. India has been a consistent supporter of Kazakhstan's initiative on Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and is actively participating in the process. Kazakhstan supports India's permanent membership in an expanded UNSC and has extended its support for India's non-permanent membership in 2021-22. India supported Kazakhstan's successful candidature for non-permanent membership of UNSC in 2017-18. Kazakhstan strongly condemns terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and supports comprehensive convention on countering international terrorism.

### **Commercial relations**

Kazakhstan is India's largest trade and investment partner in Central Asia. Bilateral trade (in mln US\$) between India and Kazakhstan during the past five years is as under:

<b>Year</b>	<b>2012-13</b>	<b>2013-14</b>	<b>2014-15</b>	<b>2015-16</b>	<b>2016-17</b>
India's Exports (goods)	286.23	261.51	250.59	151.91	121.12
India's Imports (goods)	139.99	656.33	701.67	352.93	521.29
Total Merchandise Trade	426.22	917.84	952.26	504.84	642.42

**Source:** Department of Commerce, Government of India

<b>Year</b>		<b>2012</b>	<b>2013</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
India's Exports	Goods	334.45	345.16	260.56	241.72	203.80
	Services	18.10	21.10	21.40	25.70	11.30
India's Imports	Goods	173.96	331.75	1083.00	220.08	414.60
	Services	36.50	19.00	21.70	34.70	29.40
Trade (Goods)		507.35	676.91	1343.56	461.80	618.40
Trade (Services)		54.60	40.10	43.10	60.40	40.70
<b>Total Trade</b>		<b>561.95</b>	<b>717.01</b>	<b>1386.66</b>	<b>522.20</b>	<b>659.10</b>

**Source:** Agency of Statistics of Kazakhstan

The major products imported by India during 2016-17 were petroleum oils & oils obtained from bituminous minerals (64.5%); radio active isotopes (18.5%); asbestos (6.0%), ferro alloys (3.9%) and zinc (3.0%). Major products exported to Kazakhstan were Pharmaceuticals and medical products (39.33%), coffee & tea (28.5%), machinery (7.6%), apparel (6.6%) and chemical products (5.2%).

Cumulative investments from India into Kazakhstan and from Kazakhstan into India from 2005 -2016 amount to US\$ 244 mln and US\$ 83.09 mln respectively. As on March 1, 2017, there were 520 Indian companies registered in Kazakhstan, out of which 259 are

operational. Indian investments are in sectors such as oil & gas, banking, engineering, restaurants, tea packaging, pharmaceutical trading, mining, steel, software industry, tourism etc. Arcelor Mittal (iron & steel, coal), Kazstroyservice (EPC), SUN Group (Gold mining), KEC Ltd. (power transmission), Punjab National Bank (Banking), ONGC Videsh Limited (Oil & Gas) and Gateway Ventures (EPC) are among the major Indian owned companies/PSUs operating in Kazakhstan. KazStroyService India Pvt. Ltd, a venture of KazStroyService in India was one of the main EPC contactors for the construction of Indian Oil's Paradip Refinery.

FICCI and Chamber of International Commerce of Kazakhstan have set up a Joint Business Council to promote trade, economic and investment cooperation between the two countries. The first institutional meeting of the JBC was held in Astana on May 19, 2016.

The two countries closely collaborate in framework of INSTC as well as through bilateral initiatives to improve surface connectivity.

An Agreement between ONGC Videsh Limited and KazMunaiGaz on the purchase of 25% stake in the Satpayev Oil Block in the Caspian Sea marked a new beginning in cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector. The two countries also signed a fresh contract for supply of natural uranium during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Kazakhstan in July 2015.

### **Cultural relations**

India and Kazakhstan are both multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious secular states. They enjoy close cultural relations that manifest in popularity of yoga, Indian films, dance and music in Kazakhstan. Likewise the Kazakh folk music and dance are received with interest in India. Kazakh violinist Mr. Marat Bisengaliev contributed to the foundation of Symphony Orchestra of India in Mumbai in 2006.

Indian Cultural Centre in Astana is engaged in various cultural activities, including conducting of yoga, dance and music classes; celebration of Indian festivals (last such festival was held in Kazakhstan from Oct 06-12, 2016); organizing of cultural performances; screening of Indian films and documentaries; organizing performances by visiting Indian cultural troupes in Kazakhstan and Kazakh cultural troupes in India; disbursement of ICCR scholarships; and organizing visits under Academic Visitors Programme.

India provides scholarships in various disciplines under the ICCR Scholarship programmes for students from Kazakhstan. Since 1992, more than 200 students have availed ICCR scholarships. In December 2015, an ICCR alumna Ms Akmaral Kainazarova, Director, Centre for Indian Classical Dances in Almaty was awarded the title of "Honoured Worker (Artist) of the Republic of Kazakhstan". Another ICCR alumna, Dr. Laura Yerekshava was awarded ICCR Distinguished Alumni Award in March 2017.

### **ITEC/Development Assistance**

India provides capacity building assistance to Kazakhstan in various specialized fields under ITEC program sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs. Since 1992, more than 1000 specialists have undergone training under ITEC programme. A total of 31 ITEC slots were utilized in 2016-17.

India established a Centre of Excellence in the field of Information and Communication Technology at Eurasia National University in July 2015. About 1500 students and professionals have benefitted from the Centre since its establishment.

### **Visa**

India and Kazakhstan have an agreement on visa free entry for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders. Ordinary passport holders require visa. In case of Kazakhstan citizens, visas are issued at the Embassy of India in Astana and Representative Office of India in Almaty, usually within 72 hours of submission of application.

In the case of Indian citizens, visa has to be applied for in advance by the local sponsors for obtaining visa clearance from Ministry of Internal Affairs. The visa is issued at Embassy of Kazakhstan in New Delhi. The entire process takes about 2 weeks. Indian citizens visiting Kazakhstan and intending to stay for more than five days are required to get themselves registered with local migration police within five calendar days of their arrival in the country, every time they visit Kazakhstan. A failure to do so may attract penalty/detention.

### **Indian community**

There are about 7000 NRIs/PIOs in Kazakhstan. This includes about 2400 Indian students studying in medical universities in Astana, Aktobe, Almaty, Karaganda and Semey and about 3200 construction workers working at Abu Dhabi plaza, Astana, which is under construction. The rest are advisers, entrepreneurs, executives, teachers and professionals working in Indian companies, multinationals, government organizations, private sector, trading establishments, schools and universities and their families.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Astana website: <http://indembastana.in/>

Embassy of India, Astana Facebook: [www.facebook.com/EmbassyOfIndiaKazakhstan](http://www.facebook.com/EmbassyOfIndiaKazakhstan)

Embassy of India, Astana Twitter account: @indembastana

Embassy of India Newsletter: [http://indembastana.in/news\\_letter\\_detail.php?year=2015](http://indembastana.in/news_letter_detail.php?year=2015)

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