

India-Kyrgyz Republic bilateral relations

Historically, India has had close contacts with Central Asia, especially countries which were part of the Ancient Silk Route, including Kyrgyzstan. During the Soviet era, India and the then Kyrgyz Republic had limited political, economic and cultural contacts. Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi visited Bishkek and Issyk-Kul Lake in 1985. Since the independence of Kyrgyz Republic on 31st August, 1991, India was among the first to establish diplomatic relations on 18 March 1992; the resident Mission of India was set up on 23 May 1994.

Political relations

Political ties with the Kyrgyz Republic have been traditionally warm and friendly. Kyrgyzstan also supports India's bid for permanent seat at UNSC and India's full membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO). Both countries share common concerns on threat of terrorism, extremism and drug-trafficking. Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1992, the two countries have signed several framework agreements, including on Culture, Trade and Economic Cooperation, Civil Aviation, Investment Promotion and Protection, Avoidance of Double Taxation, Consular Convention etc.

At the institutional level, the 8th round of Foreign Office Consultation was held in Bishkek on 27 April 2016. The Indian delegation was led by Ms. Sujata Mehta, Secretary (West) and Kyrgyz side was headed by Mr. Azamat Usenov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The 7th Foreign Office Consultation was also held at Bishkek on 19 March 2015. The Indian side was headed by Secretary (West) and the Kyrgyz side by Mr. Erines Otorbaev, the Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. An Indo-Kyrgyz Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was set up in 1992. The 8th Session of India-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was held in Bishkek on 28 November 2016. The Indian side was led by Ms. Rita Teatia, Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Kyrgyz side was headed by Deputy Minister for Health Mr. Amangeldy Murzaliev.

India announced its Connect Central Asia Policy during the visit Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri E. Ahamed to Kyrgyzstan on 10-13 June 2012 with the first India-Central Asia Track-II Dialogue held in Bishkek. In his inaugural address, MoS EA declared India's intention to establish e-Network in Central Asia to promote tele-medicine and tele-education. During the visit, he met Kyrgyz Prime Minister Omurbek Babanov and held bilateral talks with the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Ruslan Kazakbaev.

EAM visited Kyrgyzstan on 12-13 September 2013. On 12th September EAM met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kyrgyzstan Erlan Abdyldaev and called on President

Atambaev as bilateral component of his visit and thereafter he participated in the SCO Summit. On the sidelines of the SCO Summit, EAM had bilateral meetings with the Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, Mongolian President Elbegdorg and SCO Secretary General Mazentsev.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Kyrgyzstan on 11-12 July 2015. The visit by an Indian Prime Minister took place after a gap of 20 years. PM held meetings with the Kyrgyz President Almazbek Atambayev, Speaker Asylbek Jeenbekov and Prime Minister Temir Sariyev. During his visit PM laid wreath at Victory Square; gifted medical equipment to Field Hospital; visited Kyrgyz India Mountain Bio Medical Research Center; inaugurated Tele-medicine links between hospitals in Kyrgyzstan with super specialty hospitals in India and unveiled Mahatma Gandhi statue. Four MOUs/Agreements in the field of Defence Cooperation, Culture, Election and Standardisation were signed. A joint statement by Prime Minister and President Atambayev was issued.

EAM Smt Sushma Swaraj and Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Erlan Abdyldaev met on the sidelines of Heart of Asia Conference held in Islamabad on 08-09 December 2015 and discussed bilateral relations.

MOS for External Affairs Sh. M.J Akbar visited Kyrgyzstan to participate in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Heads of Government (Prime Ministers) Meeting held in Bishkek on 2-3 November 2016. He called on the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic. He also held bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister of Tajikistan and the Deputy Foreign Minister of Iran on the sidelines of the SCO summit meeting.

Our close bilateral ties were reinforced by several high-level visits as under:

From India:

(a) VVIP visits:

- i) Prime Minister Narendra Modi (11-12 July 2015)
- ii) Vice President Krishan Kant (August 1999)
- iii) Vice President K.R. Narayanan (September 1996)
- iv) Prime Minister Narasimha Rao (September 1995)

(b) Other Visits

- i) A 4-member delegation headed by Ms. Rita Teatota, Secretary, Department of Commerce to participate in 8th session of Intergovernmental Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Bishkek (28 November 2016)
- ii) MOS for External Affairs Shri M.J. Akbar (2-3 November, 2016) to participate in SCO Heads of Government Meeting
- iii) A 17-member delegation from National Defence College led by Rear Admiral D.M. Sudan (21 to 24 August 2016)

- iv) A 5-member delegation headed by Shri Avinash Chander, Secretary (Defence R&D), DG(DRDO) and SA to RM (25 to 28 October 2014)
- v) EAM Shri Salman Khurshid (September 2013)
- vi) MoS, Minister for Commerce and Industry Smt. Daggubati Purandeswari (July 2013)
- vii) MoS, MEA Shri E. Ahmed, (June, 2012)
- viii) Raksha Mantri Shri A.K. Antony (July 2011)
- ix) Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Shri Murli S. Deora (August 2007)
- x) Raksha Mantri Shri George Fernandes (November 2003)
- xi) EAM Shri Yashwant Sinha (January 2003)

From Kyrgyzstan:

- (a) VVIP visits:
 - i) First Deputy Prime Minister, Djoomart Otorbaev (May 2013)
 - ii) President Akaev visited India four times (March 1992, April 1999, August 2002, and November 2003)
 - iii) Mr. Apas Jumagulov, Prime Minister (May, 1997)
- (b) Other visits:
 - i) Minister for Energy and Industry Mr Kubanychbek Turdubaev (March 2015)
 - ii) Central Election Commission Chairman Mr Tuigunaly Abdraimov (October 2014)
 - iii) Foreign Minister Mr Erlan Abdyldaev (February 2014)
 - iv) Defence Minister Maj. Gen. Taalaibek B. Omuraliev (September 2013)
 - v) Defence Minister Kudaiberdiev Abibilla Alymovich (September, 2011)
 - vi) Foreign Minister Mr. Ednan Karabaev Oskonovich (February, 2008)
 - vii) Defence Minister Lt. General I. Isakov (November 2005)
 - viii) Ms. Mira Jangavacheva, Vice-Prime Minister (March, 1997)

Commercial Relations:

India-Kyrgyz trade was US\$27.99 million in 2015-16. India's exports to Kyrgyzstan was US\$26.20 million whereas Kyrgyz exports to India was US\$1.79 million. Apparel and clothing, leather goods, drugs & pharmaceuticals, fine chemicals, and tea are some of the important items in our export basket to Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyz exports to India consist of raw hides, metaliferous ores & metal scrap etc.

The fifth and sixth session of India-Kyrgyz Joint Business Council meeting between Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Kyrgyz Chamber of Commerce and Industry took place in Bishkek on 19 March 2014 and in New Delhi on 02-03 December 2014 respectively.

In 1995, India had extended a US\$ 5 million line of credit to Kyrgyzstan; out of this, US\$ 2.78 million were disbursed for four projects – a plant for manufacturing toothbrushes, a polythene bag manufacturing plant, a toothpaste production plant and a pharmaceutical plant. Kyrgyz Republic repaid US\$ 1.66 million and the balance amount was converted to grant.

During the visit of President Akaev to India in August 2002, Government of India had offered setting up an IT development centre and a potato processing plant in Kyrgyzstan. An MoU for setting up of a IT Development Centre was signed in Bishkek on March 20, 2006. HMT (I), the Indian implementing agency, set up the Indo-Kyrgyz Centre for Information Technology in Bishkek and the Centre was formally inaugurated by Indian Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Murli S. Deora on 15th August, 2007. Presently, this Centre is imparting short duration IT courses and has trained over 1000 professionals from Kyrgyzstan by now.

An MoU was signed in May, 2009 for setting up a potato processing plant (for production of Potato chips and potato flakes) at Talas, Kyrgyzstan. The project was undertaken under India's Aid to Central Asia. The plant was inaugurated by Shri E. Ahmed, MoS for External Affairs on 12th June, 2012. GOI provided assistance for setting up a mountain bio-medical research centre in Kyrgyzstan at Too Ashu Pass. The Centre was inaugurated on 05 July, 2011 by Rakhsa Mantri Shri A. K. Antony.

A Pharmaceutical delegation of 50 companies from India under the aegis of Pharmexil visited Bishkek on March 12-13, 2015 to promote exports of pharmaceutical products. Six members of Agrarian Platform from Kyrgyzstan took part in the 30th Aahar International Fair 2015, an annual agricultural event organized by the Indian Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO) from 10 to 14 March 2015. 'Days of India' were celebrated from 19-21 June 2015 at the biggest mall 'Bishkek Park'. Indian companies representing textiles, handicrafts, artificial jewellery, footwear participated in it. A Round Table on agricultural cooperation was held in Bishkek on July 15, 2015. Around 110 Kyrgyz representatives of Agricultural Associations, media houses and individual farmers participated in the Round Table. A National Horticulture Board (NHB) delegation led by Dr. Anand Kumar Singh, MD visited Bishkek from 25-28 July 2016 in connection with setting up of Agriculture Technology Farm in Kyrgyzstan as a pilot Indian project for demonstrating drip-irrigation system, greenhouse technology for sub-zero temperatures, Indian hybrids, organic farming etc. Subsequently on an invitation from the Kyrgyz Republic, Sh. S.K. Pattanayak, Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & FW, Ministry of Agriculture, New Delhi and Dr. Anand Kumar Singh, MD, NHB visited Kyrgyzstan on 12-13 November 2016 to enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

Technical assistance under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program, particularly in terms of human resources development, is the cornerstone of India's economic involvement in Kyrgyzstan. Kyrgyzstan has utilized 85 slots for 2014-15.

More than 1040 professionals from Kyrgyzstan have received training in India since 1992. 90 ITEC slots have been sanctioned for 2015-16.

Cultural Relations:

In general, there is appreciation of Indian culture. The Centre for Indian Studies set up in Osh State University in 1997 has been useful in providing an exposure to Indian culture and civilization to academicians and intelligentsia in this country. The Chair has been discontinued since 2010 unrests in Osh. However, in Bishkek, the mission on its own established an India Study Centre in the prestigious National Library of Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek on 14 November 2014. The Center is running with help of volunteers and imparts training in English and Hindi languages, Yoga and Kathak dance. Another center has been opened in Kara Balta a city at the distance of 80 km from Bishkek.

In order to acquaint the new generation with the Indian culture, a number programmes have been conducted and initiatives have been taken:

- Two workshops of Kathak dance were conducted one each in Bishkek (January 2014) and Issyk-kul (July 2014).
- A 10-member Bhangra Dance group “Bhola Panchi”, sponsored by ICCR, performed in Bishkek on 18 October and in Kara-Balta on 19 October 2014.
- A seven member Sitar (Fusion) group led by Pandit Prateek Chaudhuri, sponsored by ICCR, performed in Bishkek and Osh on 28 & 29 March 2015 respectively.
- A renowned Indian musician Shri Dhruba Ghosh, Principal of Bhartiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, performed in Bishkek along with a Central Asian Orchestra on 05 August 2015.
- A troupe, Natya STEM Dance Kampani, sponsored by ICCR performed in the most prestigious Kyrgyz National Philharmony Hall on 20 October 2015.
- A musical named “IssyKulskie Bollywood” (Bollywood in Issykul) was organized by the Mission in collaboration with a number of local dance and choreography schools in the prestigious National Philharmonic Hall, Bishkek on 4th March, 24th March and 26th March 2016.
- The Mission along with Kyrgyz Drama Theatre organized staging of a play based on the Indian epic Mahabharat in Kyrgyz language. The play was staged on 3rd, 4th and 5th May 2016 in the National Drama Theatre, Bishkek.
- An OIMO Festival of Traditional Crafts and Culture was held in Bishkek from 30 July to 2 August, 2016 in which India exhibited its products at the fair.
- A 17-member team from Indian Ethnosport Confederation participated in the Second World Nomad Games held in Cholpon Ata, Issyk-Kul region of Kyrgyzstan in September 2016. A 10-member Cultural troupe sponsored by the ICCR, New Delhi also took part in a Cultural Part within the World Nomad Games.
- The Ministry of Culture of India, in collaboration with the Indian Embassy, held Festival of India in Bishkek in October 2016. The Festival was organized by India to

mark 25th year of Kyrgyzstan's independence, 25 years of their establishing diplomatic relations with the Kyrgyz Republic and 70 years of India's independence. The premium cultural event of Festival of India was also dedicated to the "Year of History and Culture" of Kyrgyzstan. The cultural festival started with the performance by a renowned Sitar Artist Ms. Smita Nagdev accompanied by other artists. The performance was held in the prestigious Kyrgyz National Academical Theatre of Opera and Ballet, Bishkek on 10 October, 2016. The second event under the Festival was the Contemporary Indian Art Exhibition featuring some of the finest Indian Artists viz. Jatin Das, Satish Gujral, Anjolie Ela Menon, Arpana Caur, Arzan Khambatta, and others. The exhibition showed original paintings and artifacts of eminent Indian artists. The exhibition took place in the National Museum of Fine Arts, Bishkek for 7 days from 18 to 25 October 2016. The festival will continue with more events/performances.

- Autobiography of Mahatma Gandhi has been translated into Kyrgyz language.
- The mission is in the process of producing Ramayan in Kyrgyz language (theatrical version) and an anthology of Indian poems in Kyrgyz language.
- International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Kyrgyzstan on 21 June 2015 with a number of events in Bishkek and other cities of Kyrgyzstan. A Yoga caravan was also mounted on the occasion which covered six out of seven regions of Kyrgyzstan.
- 2nd International Day of Yoga (IYD) was celebrated in Kyrgyzstan on 21 June 2016 with the main event at Bishkek. Two other events, one in Osh city and other in Issyk-Kul were also held to mark the Day. A Yoga caravan was also mounted on the occasion which covered six out of seven regions of Kyrgyzstan. In order not to lose the momentum gained by the celebration of IYD, the Embassy with the help of local trainers organized Yoga Shibir (Camp) in the Embassy which trained six trainers from different regions who would start modest Yoga training programme in their regions.

Indian Community

About 4500 Indian students are studying medicine in various medical institutions in Kyrgyzstan. A few businessmen are engaged in trade and services in Kyrgyzstan.

30 November 2016

Useful Resources:

Missions website: www.embassyofindia.kg

Facebook: www.facebook.com/IndiaInKyrgyzstan