

India - Georgia Relations

India recognized Georgia's independence on 26th December 1991 and established formal diplomatic relations on 28th September 1992. Presently, there is no Indian Resident Mission in Georgia. Ambassador to Armenia with residence in Yerevan (Armenia) is concurrently accredited to Georgia. The Georgian side had first set up its Honorary Consulate in Delhi in 2005 which was upgraded to a fully fledged Embassy subsequently. The first Resident Ambassador of Georgia to India arrived in New Delhi on 25th February 2010. Mr. Girogi Margvelashvili was sworn-in as the new President of Georgia on 17 November 2013 in Tbilisi.

Political Relations

There is enough literary and folklore-based evidence to suggest that links between India and Georgia and awareness of India in Georgia have existed from very early times of human civilization. Fables from India's Panchtantra are believed to have influenced the Georgian folk legends. Those links were further strengthened in medieval ages by missionaries, travellers, and traders. Georgians are said to have served at the Mughal Courts and some of them are believed to have risen to the positions of Governors. The Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb's wife Udaipuri Begum was of Georgian origin. Archeological investigations are at hand in pursuance of the Georgian conviction that the body of their Queen St. Ketevan (who attained martyrdom in 1624 in Shiraz, and has since been elevated to Sainthood) is buried in St. Augustine Tower in Goa (where the Portuguese had managed to transfer her body).

During the Soviet era, Prime Minister Pt. Nehru visited Tbilisi in 1955; Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi visited Tbilisi (1976). Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Georgia (June 1978) as EAM.

The Georgian Foreign Minister Irakli Menagarishvili and EAM Shri Jaswant Singh met in New Delhi on 11 May 2000. During that visit, a Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations was concluded. This was the only high level political exchange at the bilateral level. Shri Parvez Dewan, Secretary, Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs, visited Tbilisi during 26-28 May 2012 to represent India at Georgia's first 'Day of Diaspora'. Mr. David Jalagania, the Deputy Foreign Minister of Georgia, led the Georgian delegation to the first Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was held (29-30 April 2014) in Delhi. Hon'ble Central Election Commissioner Dr. Nasim Zaidi had visited Batumi in February 2015 to participate in an International Conference of Election Commissioners. Shri Dinesh Sharma, AS, DEA and Director (ITP), MEA visited Tbilisi to participate in the AIIB Founding Member countries Expert Meeting in July 2015. Ms. Tamar Zhvania, Chairperson of the Election Commission of Georgia visited New Delhi on 13 July 2015 and an MoU for cooperation in the field of election management and administration was signed. A three member delegation from the Election Commission of India led by Shri O.P.Rawat, Election Commissioner, visited Georgia (Kakheti province) from 15-18 February to participate in a multilateral event on electoral practices and related aspects. Georgia's Deputy Economy

Minister Ketevan Bochorishvili visited India to present the 'Film in Georgia' project to leading local directors, producers and film-produced companies in April 2016. Five-member delegation from India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) visited Tbilisi (Georgia) to conduct training in Election Commission of Georgia in June, 2016.

Cooperation at the International Fora: Georgia supported Indian candidatures at various international fora including International Civil Aviation Organization (ICA), Executive Board in the UNESCO and Membership of the Council of International Maritime Organization (IMO) in the year 2013, UNHRC in 2014 and World Customs Organization in 2015. India supported Georgia's candidature in the International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) in 2013.

Institutional mechanisms: The first Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was held (29-30 April 2014) in Delhi. The Second Session of India-Georgia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific & Technological, Cultural and Educational Cooperation (IGC) between India and Georgia was held in Tbilisi on 25 July 2016. The Indian delegation was led by H.E. Ms. Sujata Mehta, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, India. The Georgian delegation was led by H.E. Mr. David Jalagania, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Georgia. At the IGC meeting, the current state of ongoing cooperation in diverse fields was reviewed. Special emphasis was made on further augmentation of bilateral trade and Investment, expansion of cooperation in the fields of Information and Communication Technology, Science and Technology, Culture, Agriculture, Transport Tourism, Education and Energy Sector. The Fourth Session of FOCs was held during 15-16 July 2013 in Tbilisi. JS [ERS] led the Indian delegation. He met the Deputy Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Economy and Agriculture. Fourth India-Georgia Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held on July 26, 2016. The consultations were focused on bilateral cooperation in all sectors of mutual interest and regional and international issues. During the visit, the leader of delegation H.E. Ms. Sujata Mehta met Minister of Foreign Affairs of Georgia H.E. Mr. Mikheil Janelidze and discussed bilateral issues. She addressed the Ambassadors of Georgia to various countries at their annual Ambassadorial meeting held in Tbilisi

Commercial Relations

According to Indian statistics, the bilateral trade between the two countries is relatively modest and trade balance has always been in favour of India. According to GeoStat's statistics for 2015, total exports to India from Georgia stood at USD 14.32 mn and total imports from India to Georgia stood at USD 50.6 mn. Steel, infrastructure, agriculture farming and service sectors are among few sectors of large Indian investment in Georgia. Individual investors from India, mostly from Punjab (around 150) have acquired agricultural land for cultivation in Georgia at an average of 10 hectares per investor. However, only 5-10 have actually started active farming activity. TATA Power is the new Indian company to enter into Georgia with its investment (approx US\$ 280 mn) jointly with other European investment majors in a power project worth US\$700 mn.

The first ever visit by an Indian pharma delegation comprising 24 Indian pharmaceuticals companies to Georgia took place in February 2014, under the aegis of Pharmexcil. The delegation had useful B2B session and visited various pharmaceutical plants and laboratories in Georgia.

Cultural Relations

A 15-member ICCR sponsored Bollywood Dance & Music group 'Sugar N' Spice' gave a performance in Tbilisi on 18 September 2013. The event was organized by the Mission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia. Around 500 people consisting of Georgian Deputy Minister of Culture, dignitaries and senior officials from various Ministries/Departments, Georgian nationals and friends of India, Indian community living in Georgia attended and enjoyed the dance performance by the Bollywood Group.

An "Indian Film Week" (21-24 March) commemorating 100 years of Indian Cinema was organized in Tbilisi's most centrally located cinema theatres. The event was organized by the Indian Embassy in partnership (partial financing) with the Georgian Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection and was staged in active coordination with the Indian Cultural Association 'Bharat'. The event was addressed by the Acting Minister of Culture and the Deputy Foreign Minister.

A 'Gandhi Foundation Georgia' was launched in Tbilisi on 30th June, 2014 at the Institute of Multi Task Diplomacy in Tbilisi with the co-operation by Gandhi Foundation, India. A seminar dedicated to 'non-violence' and 'Jan Satyagraha' was organized by this institute in which representatives of Canadian and Indian Gandhi Foundation had given lectures. The Foundation has also opened its branch in the second important city Batumi and has been actively involved in organizing various programmes propagating Gandhi's philosophy of 'Truth and Non-Violence' in Georgia. Mahatma Gandhi Foundation of Georgia organized "Mahatma Gandhi Peace and Nonviolence International Conference" on July 25-26, 2016 with the support of ICCR.

A group of Georgian artists comprising dancers and singers performed at the 'annual Surajkund Mela' [1-15 Feb. 2015] in Haryana.

The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Tbilisi on 21 June 2015 in which over 200 people participated. The Georgian side was represented by the Deputy Mayor of Tbilisi. "Days of Indian Culture" were organized by the Embassy in Tbilisi (20-22 November 2015) which included a live concert by 'Bharat Folk Dance Academy' sponsored by ICCR, screening of 3 Indian films and a Photo Exhibition on the State of Jammu & Kashmir.

Incredible India - Tourism Seminar: The first ever India Tourism Seminar "Incredible India" was organized on 26 September 2014 in Tbilisi (Georgia) by the Embassy

together with the Regional Office of M/o Tourism of India in Frankfurt. A total of 62 Georgian tour operators participated in the seminar. Power Point presentations on Incredible India and Visa Policy of the Government of India were made during the Seminar.

Mr. Taher, Superintending Archaeologist of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), visited Georgia to attend the International Council of Museums' Conference held during 22-24 September 2014.

India's Development/Capacity Building Assistance: 10 ITEC slots have been allotted to Georgia in 2016-17. ICCR Scholarships are offered to Georgian nationals to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Indian Universities and Kendriya Hindi Sansthan scholarships to study Hindi in India.

Indian Community

The Indian community in Georgia consists of students, businessmen, agricultural farmers and workers. Since 2012, their number has been considerably increasing and at present there are over 2000 Indians living in Georgia. This figure also includes around 1000 students at the Tbilisi State Medical University and about 200 Indian nationals working for Indian companies which are engaged in the infrastructure sector in Georgia. No incident of ethnic violence against the Indian community has come to Mission's notice. Indian films and food are popular in Georgia; there are four Indian Restaurants in Tbilisi. Interest in learning Hindi is palpable.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Armenia website:

<https://www.indianembassy.am>

Embassy of India, Armenia youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoUZFd9fS_fmudfkzpjYJ5A

Embassy of India, Armenia Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/IndiainArmenia>

Embassy of India, Armenia facebook:

<https://web.facebook.com/indiainyerevan/>

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