

Embassy of India

Tehran

India-Iran Relations

India-Iran relations span millennia marked by meaningful interactions. The two countries shared a border till 1947 and share several common features in their language, culture and traditions. Both South Asia and the Persian Gulf have strong commercial, energy, cultural and people-to-people links.

Political relations

2. India and Iran signed a friendship treaty on March 15, 1950. Before the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Shah of Iran visited India twice (March 1956 and February 1978) and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Iran in 1963. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Prime Minister Morarji Desai visited Iran in April 1974 and June 1977 respectively. After the Iranian Revolution, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993 and President Rafsanjani paid a visit to India in 1995. Indian Vice President Shri K. R. Narayanan visited Iran in October 1996.

3. The trend was enhanced at the turn of the millennium with the visit of Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Tehran in April 2001 wherein the two countries signed the “**Tehran Declaration**” which set forth the areas of possible cooperation between the two countries. President Mohammad Khatami visited India from January 24-28, 2003 as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade. Both sides signed “**The New Delhi Declaration**” which set forth the vision of strategic partnership between India and Iran. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Iran to attend the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Tehran from August 28-31, 2012. Prime Minister met Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad.

4. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a bilateral visit to Iran from May 22-23, 2016. Prime Minister called on the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and held delegation level talks with President Rouhani. A Joint Statement titled “Civilizational Connect, Contemporary context” was released. 12 MoUs/Agreements were signed between India and Iran. A Trilateral agreement on Transit and Transport was signed between India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, President Dr. Hassan Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Prime Minister also inaugurated the International Conference titled “India-Iran two great civilizations” in Vahdat Hall, Tehran and released a Persian Manuscript “Kalileh Wa Dimneh”.

5. Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of Iran, paid his first State Visit to India from February 15-17, 2018. President Rouhani was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Cabinet Ministers including Foreign Minister Javad Zarif and Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh, senior officials and business leaders. He started his visit in Hyderabad, where he offered Friday prayers at the Mecca Masjid mosque. Delegation level discussions were held between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Dr. Rouhani in New Delhi on 17 February. 13 MoUs/Agreements were signed during the visit, prominent among them being the contract for interim operations of Chabahar port and MoU on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine. A Joint Statement titled “Towards prosperity through greater connectivity” was signed during the visit.

6. There have been other regular high level exchanges. External Affairs Minister, Shri Subrahmanyam Jaishankar visited Iran on 22-23 December 2019 for the 19th Joint Commission Meeting. During the visit, he also called on President Rouhani and met the Secretary, Supreme National Security Council, Rear Admiral Ali Shamkhani, and Minister of Roads and Urban Development, Mohammad Eslami. Foreign Minister Dr. Javad Zarif participated in the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi from 14-17 January 2020, and had meetings with the External Affairs Minister, Shri. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, and with the National Security Advisor, Shri. Ajit Doval on the side-lines. He also called on the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi during the visit.

7. The two countries have in place several Bilateral Consultative Mechanisms at various levels which meet regularly. These include the Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) chaired at the Ministerial level, the Foreign Office Consultations chaired at the Foreign Secretary level, and the Joint Consular Committee Meeting at the level of Joint Secretary/DG. The 19th JCM was held on 22-23 December 2019 in Tehran. External Affairs Minister, Shri Subrahmanyam Jaishankar co-chaired the 19th JCM along with the Foreign Minister of Iran, Dr. Javad Zarif. The 16th FOC was held in Tehran on 16 September 2019, led by Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale on the Indian side and Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on the Iranian side.

8. Both India and Iran also consult each other on security matters. There are regular bilateral exchanges at the level of National Security Advisors and Deputy National Security Advisors. India has been participating in the 6 Nations' NSA talks that have been hosted by Iran in the past two years. National Security Advisor, Shri. Ajit Doval visited Iran on 26 September 2018 to participate in the 1st 6 Nations' NSA talks, and Deputy NSA, Shri. Rajinder Khanna represented India during the 2nd 6 Nations' NSA talks on 18 December 2019.

9. There have also been Parliamentary level exchanges between the two countries. The Speaker of Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar visited Iran in 2011 followed by a return visit of the Speaker of Majlis, Dr. Ali Larijani to India in 2013. The Chairman of the India-Iran Parliamentary friendship group, Nazar Afsali visited India in 2018.

10. A list of important high level visits are enclosed at the end of this brief.

Economic and Commercial Relations

11. India-Iran commercial ties were traditionally dominated by Indian import of Iranian crude oil. In 2018-19 India imported US\$ 12.11 bn worth of crude oil from Iran. However, following the end of the Significant Reduction Exemption (SRE) period on 2 May 2019, India has suspended importing crude from Iran. The bilateral trade during 2019-20 was \$4.77 billion, a decrease of 71.99% as compared to the trade of \$17.03 billion 2018-19. What is significant is that Indian exports to Iran between 2011-12 and 2019-20 have grown by 45.60%. India's major exports to Iran include rice, tea, sugar, soya, medicines/pharmaceuticals, man-made staple fibres, electrical machinery, etc. Major imports from Iran include inorganic/organic chemicals, fertilizers, cement clinkers, fruits and nuts, leather, etc. Both countries are negotiating a Preferential Trade Agreement, on which five rounds of talks on have been held so far.

12. The Embassy of India has been at the forefront of promoting economic and commercial relations between India and Iran. The Embassy of India organized three events titled 'Potential for expanding India-Iran trade' to promote bilateral trade. Two such events were organised in collaboration with the Tehran Chamber of Commerce Industries

Mines and Agriculture in December 2018, and in February 2020, and another event was organised in collaboration with the Iran Chamber of Commerce Industries Mines and Agriculture in March 2019. The Embassy has also facilitated visits of Indian business delegations, and participation of Indian companies in Iranian exhibitions.

13. Considering the importance of India-Iran economic and commercial relations, two Indian banks, State Bank of India and UCO Bank, have their representative offices in Iran.

Connectivity

14. India is developing the 1st Phase of Shahid Beheshti Port at Chabahar. The capacity of the port will reach 8.5 MT at the end of the first phase. During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tehran in May 2016, the contract on the Shahid Beheshti port of Chabahar was signed which, inter-alia, comprises investment of \$85 million for procuring equipment of the port. The contract also comprises of provision of a line of credit of approximately USD 150 million for the development of the port. After operations began at the Chabahar port in December 2018, the port has handled more than 8200 TEUs and 1.28 million tonnes of bulk cargo.

15. The Trilateral Transit Agreement (Chabahar Agreement) was signed by the three transport ministers of India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, President Dr. Rouhani and President Ashraf Ghani in May 2016. The 2nd Ministerial level trilateral meeting between Afghanistan, India and Iran to discuss the implementation of Trilateral Agreement on Establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor was held at Chabahar, Iran on December 3, 2017, in which the Indian delegation was led by Minister of State for Shipping Shri Pon Radhakrishnan. One Coordination Council meeting and two follow up committee meetings of the Chabahar Agreement have taken place till date. Based on this trilateral, around 110000 tonnes of wheat and 2000 tonnes of pulses was sent via the port in 2017-2018. India is now shipping 75000 MT tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan through the port.

16. During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Iran in May 2016, IRCON and Construction, Development of Transport Infrastructure Company (CDTIC) signed a MoU that will enable IRCON to provide requisite services for the construction of Chabahar-Zahedan railway line which forms part of the transit and transportation corridor in the Chabahar Agreement. Both sides have remained committed to the project.

Humanitarian Assistance

17. India has also helped Iran in times of natural disasters and health emergencies. India delivered aid that included PPE kits and PCR machines to Iran in April 2020 during the COVID-19 crisis. In 2019, India provided 103 tonnes of aid to Iran during the floods that ravaged the country. In June 2020, India supplied Malathion pesticide to Iran to fight the menace of desert locusts.

Cultural Relations

18. An Indian Cultural Centre in Tehran was inaugurated by Shri Salman Khurshid, then External Affairs Minister during his visit to Iran for the NAM summit in May 3, 2013. The Cultural Centre was renamed the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in 2018, and was provided a separate premises in 2019. The Centre organizes music/cultural/literary programmes/ seminars on cultural/literary issues related to India and Iran on a regular basis. The International Day of Yoga was organized in 2018, 2019 and 2020. To commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (from October 2018 to October 2019), a series of events were organized. The 550th Birth Centenary of Sri Guru Nanak was also observed. The center conducts regular Yoga and Hindi classes.

19. Cultural ties are given momentum via important visits. Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) visited Iran from November 30-December 2, 2018 to inaugurate the seminar on 'Linguistic Links between Persian and Sanskrit languages.' During his visit, he met Dr. Seyyed Abbas Salehi, Minister for Culture and Islamic Guidance.

Indian community

20. The Indian community in Iran comprises of around 5000 Indian nationals. This includes around 80-100 families in Tehran and 15 families in Zahedan. There are approx. 3000 Indian nationals in Qom, Mashhad and Esfahan consisting of Indian students undergoing theological studies and their family members. There are also substantial number of Indian fishermen, seafarers, workers, university students and professionals in Iran. There is an Indian school in Tehran run by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) under the aegis of Embassy of India and another Indian school in Zahedan.

People to people contacts

21. There is a high level commitment in both countries to promote and facilitate people to people contacts. Indian pilgrims visit the Sh'ia pilgrimage circuit in Iran (Qom, Mashhad, Hamedan) and Iraq (Najaf and Karbala) every year. In 2020, more than 1100 Indian pilgrims visited Iran. These included more than 900 pilgrims from Ladakh, more than 100 from J&K, around 50 from Maharashtra and the rest from UP, Delhi and other places. These pilgrimages are increasing progressively.

22. Annually, more than 20,000 Iranian tourists visit India, with Delhi-Agra-Jaipur, Mumbai-Pune-Goa and Hyderabad being the most preferred destinations. A large number of Iranian students pursue higher studies in medicine, pharma, engineering, humanities and other courses in India.

Iran's diplomatic presence in India

23. In addition to the Embassy in Tehran, India has two Consulates in Iran, one in Bandar Abbas and other in Zahedan. Iran has its Embassy in New Delhi. In addition, Iran has two Consulates (Consul General) in Mumbai and Hyderabad and two Cultural Centres in New Delhi and Mumbai.

August 2020

High level visits between India and Iran

Prime Ministerial level

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister	22-23 May 2016	Bilateral
2.	Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister	28-31 August 2012	To attend the 16 th Non-aligned Movement (NAM) summit
3.	Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister	10-13 April 2001	Bilateral
4.	Shri Narasimha Rao, Prime Minister	September 1993	Bilateral
5.	Shri Morarji Desai, Prime Minister	June 1977	Bilateral
6.	Smt. Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister	April 1974	Bilateral
7.	Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister	September 1959	Bilateral

Incoming visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President	15-17 February 2018	Bilateral
2.	Dr. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, President	April 29, 2008	Bilateral
3.	Mr. Mohammad Khatami, President	24-28 January, 2003	Chief Guest at the Republic Day function
4.	Mr. Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, President	April 1995	Bilateral
5.	Shah Mohammad Reza Pahalvi	February 1978	Bilateral
6.	Shah Mohammad Reza Pahalvi	February/March 1956	Bilateral

Vice Presidential level

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Shri M. Hamid Ansari, Vice President	04 August 2013	To attend swearing-in ceremony of President Dr. Hassan Rouhani
2.	Shri K. R. Narayanan, Vice President	October 1996	Bilateral

Incoming visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Dr. Mohammad Javad Mohammadzadeh, Vice president and Head of department of Environment	November 2012	11 th Conference of Parties (CoP) of UN Convention on Bio-diversity in Hyderabad

Parliamentary exchanges

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Smt. Meira Kumar, Speaker of Lok Sabha	November 2011	Bilateral

Incoming visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Dr. Ali Larijani, Speaker of Majlis	24-28 February 2013	Bilateral
2.	Nazar Afsali, Chairman of India-Iran Parliamentary friendship group	26-28 February 2018	Bilateral

Ministerial level

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister	22-23 December 2019	To attend 19 th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)
2.	Shri Pon Radhakrishnan, Minister of State for Shipping	2-4 December 2017	To represent India at the inauguration of the Chabahar Port
3.	Smt. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister	2 December 2017	Bilateral

4.	Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road, Transport, Highways and Shipping	5 August 2017	To attend swearing-in ceremony of Iranian President Dr. Hassan Rouhani
5.	Shri M J Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs	10-12 September 2016	Bilateral
6.	Smt. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister	16-17 April 2016	Bilateral
7.	Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas	8-10 April 2016	Bilateral
8.	Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Minister for Women and Child Development	19-21 January 2016	Special Guest in the 10 th International Energy Management Conference
9.	Shri. Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister	03-05 May 2013	17 th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)
10.	Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Minister of New and Renewable Energy	March 2012	Bilateral
11.	Shri S M Krishna, External Affairs Minister	May 15-17, 2010	14 th G-15 Summit
12.	Shri Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister	July 29-30, 2008	15 th NAM Ministerial Conference
13.	Shri Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister	February 6-7, 2007	Bilateral

Incoming visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	14-17 January 2020	To attend Raisina Dialogue 2020
2.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	13-14 May 2019	Bilateral
3.	Mr. Abbas Akhouni, Minister of Roads & Urban Development	9-12 January 2019	Bilateral
4.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	7-9 January 2019	To attend Raisina Dialogue 2019
5.	Dr. Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Minister of Health and Medical Education	12-14 December 2018	Bilateral
6.	Mr. Abbas Akhouni, Minister of Roads & Urban Development	6-7 September 2018	Bilateral
7.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign	28 May 2018	Bilateral

	Minister		
8.	Mr. Bijan Zangeneh, Minister of Petroleum	11 April 2018	To attend the 16th International Energy Forum in New Delhi
9.	Mr. Mohammad Jahromi, Minister for Communications and IT	23-24 November 2017	To attend the Global Cyber Conference
10.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	4 December 2016	To attend 6 th Heart of Asia-Istanbul process Ministerial Conference in Amritsar
11.	Dr. Abbas Akhondi, Minister of Transport and Urban Development	27-30 September 2016	Bilateral
12.	Dr. Ali Tayyebnia, Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance	26-28 December 2015	18 th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)
13.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	13-14 August 2015	Bilateral
14.	Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping	May 5-7 2015	MoU on Chabahar
15.	Mr. Akbar Torkan, Presidential advisor and Secretary of high Council of Free Zones	12 -15 January 2015	To attend the Vibrant Gujarat Summit
16.	Dr. Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister	28 February, 2014	Bilateral
17.	Eng. Majid Namjoo, Minister of Energy	October 2012	To attend the Global Ministerial level "International Seminar on Energy Access"
18.	Dr. Ali Akbar Velayati, Senior Advisor to Supreme Leader on International Affairs	December 2011	Bilateral

NSA/Dy NSA visits

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Shri Rajinder Khanna, Dy. NSA	18 December 2019	To attend 2 nd Six nation NSA talks
2.	Shri Ajit Doval, NSA	26 September 2018	To attend 1 st Six nation NSA talks

Secretary level

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Shri Vijay Gokhale, Foreign Secretary	16 September 2019	16 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)
2.	Shri Gopal Krishna, Secretary (Shipping)	26 February 2019	To attend Chabahar Day Event 2019
3.	Shri T.S. Tirumurti, Secretary (ER)	23-24 October 2018	1 st Coordination Council Meeting on Trilateral Transit Agreement between Afghanistan, India & Iran (Chabahar Agreement)
4.	Shri Alok Srivastava, Special Secretary (Shipping)	3-6 September 2017	6 th Joint Committee Meeting on Ports and Maritime Cooperation
5.	Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary	16-17 May 2017	14 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)
6.	Rajiv Kumar, Secretary (Shipping)	November 31- December 2, 2015	Regarding Chabahar Port project
7.	Shri Rajeev Mehrishi, Finance Secretary	25-26 July 2015	Bilateral
8.	Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary	June 13-14, 2015	Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)
9.	Smt. Nirupama Rao, Foreign Secretary	July 2011	9 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)

Incoming visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
1.	Mr. Abbas Araghchi, Deputy Foreign Minister	16 July 2018	15 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)
2.	Mr. Ebrahim Rahimpour, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific Affairs	25 November 2013	11 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)
3.	Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araqchi, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Oceania	October 2012	10 th Foreign Office Consultations (FoCs)

Think Tanks/Others

Outgoing visits

Sl. No.	Name of dignitary	Duration	Purpose of visit
3.	Dr. T.C.A. Raghavan, Director General (ICWA)	12-13 October 2019	ICWA-IPIS Dialogue
4.	Shri Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President ,ICCR	3 December 2018	Bilateral
5.	Shri Jayant Prasad, Director General, IDSA	23-26July 2016	Bilateral
6.	Shri Vinod Rai, Comptroller and Auditor General of India	June 2012	Bilateral, at the invitation of Supreme Audit Court of Iran (SAC)