India-Kyrgyzstan 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 Kyrgyzia 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 in 1992; the resident Mission of India was set up in 1994.

Political relations

Political ties with the Kyrgyz Republic have been traditionally warm and friendly. The Kyrgyz leaderships have been largely supportive of our stand on Kashmir and have welcomed the ongoing peace process. Kyrgyzstan also supports India’s bid for permanent seat at UNSC and India’s role 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, Foreign Office Consultations have provided a useful forum for exchange of views on bilateral and international issues, thereby facilitating greater understanding. Mr. Nurlan Aitmurzaev, the Kyrgyz Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs led a delegation to attend the 6th Foreign Office Consultation meeting held at New Delhi on 4 August 2011. The Indian side was headed by Secretary (East). An Indo-Kyrgyz Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was set up in 1992. The 6th Session of India-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation was held in Bishkek during 18-19 July 2013. A protocol was signed between the two countries for co-operation and investments in mineral exploration & development, food processing sector, chemical & petrochemical sector, Information Technology, healthcare sector, science & technology, tourism, education, sports & culture.

The Indo-Kyrgyz diplomatic relations reached its 20th year in 2012. India announced its Connect Central Asia Policy during the visit of Minister of State for External Affairs, Mr. 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, Mr. Ahamed declared India's intention to establish an e-Network in Central Asia to promote tele-medicine and tele-education, to open an Indian-Central Asian University and set up a super-specialty hospital and diagnostic center in Kyrgyzstan. During the visit, he met Kyrgyz Prime Minister and held bilateral cooperation discussions with the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister. The Kyrgyz Prime Minister talked about “Open sky” project that provides free movement of aircrafts of various airlines in the airspace of Kyrgyzstan.
Bilateral visits

During the almost one-and-a-half decades of former President Akaev’s regime, close bilateral ties were reinforced by several high-level visits; President Akaev visited India four times (March 1992, April 1999, August 2002, and November 2003); other important visits from the Kyrgyz Republic to India included those of Mr. Apas Jumagulov, Prime Minister (May, 1997), Ms. Mira Jangavacheva, Vice-Prime Minister (March, 1997), Mr. I. A. Abdurazakov, State Secretary (April, 1997) etc. From the Indian side, the late K.R. Narayanan and the late Krishna Kant, former Vice-Presidents, visited Kyrgyzstan in September 1996 and August 1999 respectively. Former PM, the late Narasimha Rao visited Kyrgyz Republic in September 1995. In 2003, two Indian cabinet Ministers, EAM Shri Yashwant Sinha and Raksha Mantri Shri George Fernandes, visited Bishkek in January and November respectively. Shri Murli S. Deora, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas led a delegation to Kyrgyzstan during SCO Summit on 15-16 August, 2007. Raksha Mantri Shri A.K. Antony visited Kyrgyzstan on 4-6 July 2011 to inaugurate Kyrgyz-India Mountain Bio-Medical Research Centre. Shri E. Ahmed, MoS, MEA visited in June, 2012. Minister of State for Commerce Dr. (Ms) D. Purandeswari visited Bishkek to attend 6th session of the India-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission from 17-19 July 2013.

Lt. General I. Isakov, Kyrgyz Defence Minister, visited India in November, 2005. On invitation from India, Mr. Turatobek Djunushaliev, Minister of Emergency Situation of the Kyrgyz Republic visited India to attend the 2nd Asian Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi from 7 to 8 November, 2007. Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Mr. Ednan Karabaev Oskonovich visited India from 3 to 6 February, 2008. Secretary (East) visited Kyrgyzstan in June 2009 to participate in the Indo-Kyrgyz FOC. Mr. Kapar Kurmanaliev, Minister of Natural Resources visited India in March, 2010 to attend the 5th Session of India-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation. Kyrgyz Defence Minister Kudaiberdiev Abibilla Alymovich visited India on 7-10 September, 2011.

Parliamentary exchanges

A Parliamentary delegation led by Mr. Usup Mukambaev, the then Chairman of the Legislative Assembly of the Kyrgyz Parliament visited India from 25th July to 1st August, 1997. The 4-member group of the Kyrgyz Parliamentarians visited India in February, 1999 to study the Indian experiences in infrastructure and agricultural sectors.

Indo-Kyrgyz Trade

Indo-Kyrgyz trade rose 19% to US$ 37.12 million in 2012-13. India’s exports to Kyrgyzstan grew over 15% to US$ 34.99 million whereas Kyrgyz exports to India grew from US$ 0.67 million to US$ 2.13 million. Apparel and clothing (both knitted and crocheted as well as not-knitted and crocheted), 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, metalizers ores & metal scrap etc.
Line of Credit/ Official Assistance

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 side repaid US$ 1.66 million and the balance amount was converted to grant.

India Assisted Projects

During the visit of President to India Akaev 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 800 professionals from Kyrgyzstan so far.

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 is being undertaken under India’s Aid to Central Asia at a total cost of Rs. 10,80,44,000. 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 at a cost of INR 6.5 crores. The Centre was inaugurated on 5th July, 2011 by Rakhsa Mantri Shri A. K. Antony.

Technical Cooperation

Technical assistance under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme, particularly in terms of human resources development, is the cornerstone of India’s economic involvement in Kyrgyzstan. Every year Kyrgyzstan is allotted slots for civilian training under ITEC programme. For the year 2013-14, Kyrgyzstan has been allotted 85 slots. More than 800 professionals from Kyrgyzstan have received training in India since 1992.

Education and Culture

An Agreement on Cooperation in the spheres of Culture, Arts, Education, Science, Mass-media and Sports was signed between the two countries on 18th March 1992. In October 1992, a Cultural Exchange Program, (CEP) valid for 1992-94 was signed by the two countries. This was subsequently extended up to the year 2000.

A draft agreement for cooperation in area of culture for the period from 2012-2014 is under consideration of Ministries of Culture of both sides.

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. Prof. Badruddin, deputed by the ICCR, has left for India following large scale ethnic violence and worsening law and order situation in Osh.

Indians in Kyrgyzstan

About 800 Indian students are studying medicine in various medical institutions in Kyrgyzstan. A few businessmen are engaged in trade and services in Kyrgyzstan.

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July 2013