

India-DPR Korea Relations

Political Relations

Relations between India and DPR Korea have been generally characterised by friendship, cooperation and understanding. The consular relations with DPRK were set up on **1 March 1962**. The Consulate General of India in DPRK was established on Oct /Nov 1968. The diplomatic relations between the two countries at Embassy level were established on **10 December 1973**.

2. According to 'Samguk Yusa ' (The Heritage of the Three Kingdoms) written in the 13th Century, a princess from Ayodhya (Suri Ratna) came to Korea and married King Kim Suro in the year 48 AD and was known as Queen Hur Hwang Ok. Korean Buddhist Monk Hyecho (Hui Chao) (704-787 CE) from Silla, one of the Three Kingdoms of Korea visited India from 723 to 729 AD and wrote travelogue in Chinese 'Pilgrimage to the Five Kingdoms of India' which gave insights into Indian culture, politics and society of that time. The travelogue was rediscovered in China in 1908 and was subsequently translated into different languages including Hindi under the aegis of UNESCO. The original fragment is owned by the National Library of France. Buddhism was introduced in Korea in the early centuries of AD to become the state religion of the Paekji Kingdom. There are several ancient Buddhist temple sites in DPRK.

3. Rabindranath Tagore's poem 'Lamp of the East 'composed in 1929 speaks about the glorious past and bright future of Korea. This poem is popular even today.

*" In the golden age of Asia,
Korea was one of its lamp bearers and
That lamp is waiting to be lighted once again for the illumination in the East"*

4. After the 1950-1953 Korean War, UN formed a 9 member Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission under the Chairmanship of India. The Commission's role in exchange of POWs under the Chairmanship Major General K S Thimayya was highly appreciated.

5. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement, there is a commonality of views between the two on many international issues. Both sides continue to work closely in international fora and support each other on various issues of bilateral and international interests.

6. Regular and meaningful exchange of views on bilateral issues of mutual interest and concern are conducted through mechanism of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). The first JS-DG level Talks were held in Pyongyang during 2-4 April 2013. After a gap of nearly 3 years, FOC was held in New Delhi on 26 April 2016. India, however, strongly condemned DPR Korea's nuclear tests and frequent ballistic missile tests and also urged DPR Korea to restrain from further nuclear and ballistic missile tests to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

7. India welcomed the inter-Korean Summit meeting held at Panmunjom on 27 April 2018 and in Pyongyang in September 2018 .India also welcomed the historic summit held on 12 June 2018 in Singapore and on 27-28 February in Hanoi between US President Donald Trump and DPRK's leader Kim Jong-un and hoped that such engagement will help in reducing tensions and pave the way for lasting peace and reconciliation in the Korean Peninsula. India supports all efforts to bring about peace and stability in the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy.

8. Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements with brief notes

- i) Cultural Agreement between India and DPRK was signed in 1976. The 11th Cultural Exchange Programme for 2010-12 was signed during the visit of Secretary, Ministry of Culture, from 23-25 March 2010. The 12th Cultural Exchange Programme between India and DPR Korea is in the final draft stage.
- ii) Trade Agreement Between the Government of India and the Government of DPRK – Feb 1978
- iii) Agreement between DPRK and India on Cooperation in the field of Science & Technology signed on 8 May 1991 (initially valid for 5 years unless decided for its termination by any of the parties).
- iv) Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between State Academy of DPRK and Indian National Science Academy signed on 14 June 1994 (initially valid for two years and then to be automatically extended for five years if not terminated by either of the parties).
- v) Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK signed on 17 February 1998 (initially valid for five years and then to be automatically extended for a further period of five years unless decided for its termination by any of the parties).
- vi) An Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Information between India and DPRK was signed in April 2006. Under Article IX of the Agreement, a Joint Committee was to be set up to review the progress of the Agreement. The Indian side formed a Committee in November 2006.

9. Bilateral Visits – Brief details of important two-way visits

(From India to DPRK)

1. Dr G S Dhillon, Speaker Lok Sabha led IPD , 18-23 Oct 1974
2. Shri V P Singh, Deputy Minister of Commerce , 31 Oct- 5 Nov 1974
3. Shri E Gonsalves, Secretary (East) , June 1980
4. Smt Ram Dulari Sinha, MOS (Steel & Mines) , 15 April 1982, 70th Birthday celebrations of President Kim Il Sung
5. Shri Shyamlal Yadav, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha , 9 Sept 1983, fo celebrating 25th Anniversary of Founding of DPRK
6. Shri Kalp Nath Rai, MOS(Parliamentary Affairs) , 7-11 Sept 1984
7. Shri Shivraj Patil, MOS led IPD, June 1986
8. Smt Margaret Alva, MOS HRD, July 1986 , for 2nd Conference of Physical Education and Sports of NAM Countries

For MEA Website / January 2020

9. Shri K. C. Pant, the then Minister for Steel and Mines, led a delegation to the DPRK, as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to attend the Seventy-fifth Birthday celebrations of President Kim Il Sung. This delegation included Shri Eduardo Faleiro, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, and Members of Parliament. (April 1987)
10. Shri Narayan Dutt Tiwari, EAM, June 1987 for NAM Ministerial Conference
11. Miss Saroj Khaparde, MOS Health, 25 July 1988
12. Shri Balram Jakhar, Speaker Lok Sabha ,1988-89
13. Smt Mohsina Kidwai, MOUD, 7 Sept 1988
14. Shri Giani Zail Singh, Former President of India , Oct 1991, on the invitation of WPK for the celebrations of the 45th Anniversary of Founding of WPK.
15. Shri L L Mehrotra , Secretary (East) 19-23 July 1991
16. Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, Vice President (April 1992) at the invitation of DPRK Vice President who visited India in May 1991.
17. Smt Girija Vyas , Deputy Minister of I & B (September 1992) to attend the 3rd Pyongyang Film festival
18. Shri H.S. Surjeet, General Secretary of CPI (M) – (April 1993) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
19. Shri K P Singh Deo, MOS for I&B (June 1993) to attend NAM Conference.
20. Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal (May 1994) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
21. Shri P. Shiv Shanker, Governor of Sikkim (August 1995) to participate on the Liberation Day of Korea.
22. Shri P A Sangma , Speaker of Lok Sabha (September 1996)
23. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, MOS for I&B (September 1998) to attend 6th Pyongyang Film Festival.
24. Shri Rajiv Sikri, Secretary (East) and Shri Ashok K. Kantha, Joint Secretary (EA) (June 2005) in connection with the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).
25. Shri N. Ravi, Secretary(East) visited in May 2008 for FOC.
26. Shri Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, visited in March 2010.
27. Shri Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East) and Shri Sandeep Chakravorty Director(EA) visited Pyongyang in September 2011 for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).
28. Shri Gautam H. Bambawale, JS (EA) and Shri Vijai Kumar, DS(EA), Ministry of External Affairs visited Pyongyang for 1st JS-DG level talks during 3-6 April 2013.
29. A three-member delegation of Hon'ble MPs - Sh. Sitaram V. Yechuri (RS); Sh. Tarun Vijay (RS); and Muhammed Hamdullah Sayeed (LS) - and Sh. Vijai Kumar, DS(EA) - participated in the 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Fatherland Liberation War during 26-29 July 2013.
30. Minister of State for External Affairs General Dr. V.K. Singh (Retd) visited DPRK from 15 to 17 May 2018 and held discussions with the H.E. Mr. Kim Yong Dae, Vice President of the Presidium of the Supreme People's Assembly, H.E. Mr. Ri Yong Ho, Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Pak Chun Nam, Minister of Culture and Mr. Choe Hui Chol, Vice Foreign Minister of DPRK on a range of issues covering political, regional, economic, educational and cultural cooperation between the two countries

10. High Level visits from DPRK to India

1. Mr Kim Gyan Ryan, Finance Minister, 26-30 April 1974
2. Mr Ho Dam, Vice Premier and Foreign Minister, 30 July- 2 August 1975
3. Mr Kang Ryang UK, Vice President (March 1978)
4. Mr Jo Gwan Hi, Vice Premier, Jan- Feb 1981
5. Mr Pak Song Chop, Vice President, 1983 NAM Summit
6. MR Kim Yong Chai, Minister of Communication, Mr Choi Jong Gun, Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr Choi Tok Bok, Chairman of Education Committee, 1984-85
7. Mr Pak Sung Chol, Vice President, 1984 to attend the state funeral of Smt Indira Gandhi
8. Mr Kim Yong Nam, Vice Premier, April 1985
9. Minister of Foreign Trade, July 1985
10. Mr. Kim Yong Nam as Vice Premier and foreign Minister for NAM Ministers Meet (March 1987)
11. Mr. Li Gun Mo, Prime Minister (February 1988) on a goodwill visit.
12. Mr. Yong Hong Sop, Chairman, Supreme People's Assembly (April 1989)
13. Mr Cho Gu, Vice Foreign Minister 1990-91.
14. Mr. Li Jong Ok, Vice President of DPRK (May 1991 and March 1993).
15. Mr. Yang Hyong Sop, Chairman, Supreme People's Assembly (April, 1998).
16. Mr. Choe Thae Bok, Chairman of SPA as Secretary of Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (October 1998).
17. Mr. Pak Gil Yon, Vice Foreign Minister (April 2000).
18. Mr. Jang Chol, Vice-Chairman of Supreme People's Assembly (January 2003).
19. Mr. Choe Chang Sik, Vice Minister of Public Health in November 2005 to attend the 3rd GAVI Partners' Meeting held in New Delhi.
20. Mr. Ma Chol Su, Director of 4th Department in the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (March 2006) to discuss bilateral matters with JS (EA).
21. Mr. Ri Ju Kwan, Vice-Chairman of the DPRK Information Committee (April 2006) to sign the Agreement on Cooperation in the field on Information.
22. Mr Kim Yong Il, Vice Foreign Minister, visited Delhi in May 2007 and August 2009.
23. Mr. Ri Su Yong, Foreign Minister of DPR Korea on a bilateral and stand-alone visit (12-14 April 2015) – the first ever Ministerial-level visit from DPR Korea in nearly three decades.
24. Mr. Ri. Gil Song, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of DPR Korea for Foreign Office Consultation in April 2016.
25. Mr. Kang Il Sop, Chairman of the State Commission for Emergency & Disaster Management of DPRK to attend the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction from 2-5 November 2016.

11. Meetings on the Margins of Multilateral Fora

Minister of State for External Affairs General Dr. V.K. Singh (Retd) met with DPRK Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Ri Yong Ho on 3 August 2018 in Singapore on the margins of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Singapore and discussed issues of mutual interest.

12. ITEC Assistance and programmes

DPRK has been using the scholarship under the ITEC programme. Ministry offered a total of 15 ITEC slots during 2014-2015 and DPRK had utilized 14 slots. Ministry allotted 30 ITEC slots to DPR Korea for the Financial Year 2015-2016. For 2016-17, 2017-18, 2018-19 Ministry allocated 25 , 20 and 4 ITEC slots respectively but the slots could not be utilised.

In September 2001, DPRK Diplomat attended the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) at the Foreign Service Institute. Two female diplomats of DPRK were trained in 2006.

13. Commercial and Economic Relations

Due to UNSC sanctions resolutions, trade except food and medicine, with DPRK with effect from April 2017 is restricted. The bilateral trade has declined considerably due to the UN Sanctions.

14. Humanitarian Assistance

India has been extending humanitarian assistance to DPRK, which has suffered food shortages during the last few years as a result of natural calamities. The DPRK authorities have expressed their gratitude for India's humanitarian assistance to them from time to time. The assistance provided from India consisted of consignment of blankets, rice, wheat, baby food, polythene sheets, etc. In the past, India donated 2,000 MT of white rice in September 2002 and 1000 MT of rice in July 2004. 200,000 Dexamethasone 4 mg. (1 ml injection) were also provided to the DPRK. India also donated medicines for the victims of the Ryongchon train blast. DPRK was also provided 2,000 MT of rice in January 2006 as gift of Government and people of India. India had also provided food assistance worth US\$ 1.00 million through WFP in 2011. Government of India once again provided food assistance in the form of soybeans to DPR Korea worth US \$ 1 million through WFP in 2016. DPRK Government donated US\$ 30,000 to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the relief of the people affected by the Tsunami that hit India in December 2004.

15. Cultural Relations - Incoming and outgoing cultural troupes

Under the Cultural Agreement between India and DPRK signed in 1976, ICCR used to send cultural troupes to the April Spring Friendship Art Festival in Pyongyang every year. The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between Government of India and the Government of the DPR Korea for the next three years is in the final stage of signing.

16. Pyongyang International Film Festivals

India has been participating in the Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF) on a regular basis. Koreans are fond of Indian feature films and popular films are admired and fondly remembered by the Korean public and authorities.

India participated in the 14th, 15th, 16th PIFF in September 2014, 2016 and 2018 . Ambassador co-inaugurated the India Day of the 17th PIFF on 23 September 2019 with Mr Pyo Gyong Ho, Deputy Director of the State Film General Bureau of DPRK.

17. Korea-India Friendship Association

The Korea-India Friendship Association (KIFA) was established in February 1970 by the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (CCRFC) to foster friendly relations and to project India's cultural image in DPRK. The Association is the nodal point for interaction between the Mission and the CCRFC, which is the counterpart of our ICCR. The Association has been organizing events from time to time for promoting relations between the two countries. India annually gifts fertilizers, sports goods, education aids, PVC pipes etc to several Korean Institutes through KIFA. There is an India –Korea Friendship School, Factory Unit and a farm.

18. 45th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and DPRK

In 2018 the 45th Anniversary of establishment of bilateral relations was celebrated with several activities.

19. Indian Community

There are very few Indians presently living in DPR Korea .Most of them are working for UN Agencies viz. UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and UNFPA and International NGOs, including members of their families.

20. Air links with India/Convenient Travel Routes

There is no direct air connection between India and DPRK. One can travel via Shanghai , Shenyang, Beijing or Vladivostok. Air Koryo operates flights five days in a week from Beijing (except on Sunday and Wednesday). Air Koryo also operates flights to Shanghai, Shenyang and Vladivostok to and fro Pyongyang on few days of the week. Train service between Beijing to Pyongyang is four times a week (Monday/Thursday Korean train and Wednesday/Saturday Chinese train). Air China has flights to Pyongyang from Beijing on few days of the week.

Train: There are train services from Pyongyang to Beijing four days a week i.e. Monday, Wednesday, Friday & Saturday, and Moscow once a week.

Due to Corona Virus outbreak all flights and trains have been suspended.

21. Useful Resources:

Embassy Website: <https://eoi.gov.in/pyongyang/>

Embassy Twitter Handle: @indembpyongyang

State Media of DPRK: <http://www.kcna.kp/>