

## **India-U.S. Bilateral Relations**

**Overview:** Shared democratic values and growing convergence on bilateral, regional, and global issues have provided a strong base for India-U.S. relations, which have now evolved into a strategic partnership of global significance. The relationship enjoys strong bipartisan and popular support in both countries.

2. **High-level Visits:** Mutual visits at the leadership-level have been an integral element of the engagement between India and the U.S.. The outcomes generated by these visits have been instrumental in further strengthening and developing the multifaceted ties between the two countries.

3. **Visits by PM:** Since assuming office in May 2014, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi (PM) has visited the U.S. on six occasions. Three such visits (in September 2014, September 2015, and September 2019) featured participation in the high-level segment of the UN General Assembly along with bilateral engagements in the U.S.. In March-April 2016, PM visited the U.S. for participation in the 4<sup>th</sup> Nuclear Security Summit and also had a bilateral meeting with President of the United States, Barack. H. Obama (President Obama). The two remaining visits by PM to the U.S. were exclusively bilateral in character (in June 2016 and June 2017). PM's visit to Washington, D.C. in June 2017 was the first opportunity for PM and President of the United States, Donald J. Trump (President Trump) to meet and exchange views. A number of important outcomes emerged from this visit in areas such as defence, security and strategic cooperation, energy, and countering terrorism.

4. **Visit by Vice President of India:** Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu visited the U.S. in September 2018.

5. **Visit by President Obama:** President Obama visited India in January 2015 and participated in the 66<sup>th</sup> Republic Day Celebrations as the Chief Guest.

6. **High-level Bilateral Meetings on Margins of Multilateral Events:** Apart from these visits, there have been a number of bilateral engagements at the leadership-level on the margins of multilateral events in other countries.

These include bilateral meetings between PM and President Trump at: Manila (13 November 2017), Osaka (28 June 2019), and Biarritz (26 August 2019). PM also met Vice President of the United States, Michael R. Pence on 14 November 2018 on the margins of the East Asia Summit in Singapore.

7. **Other Engagements between PM and President Trump:** In addition to the above, both leaders met during the 'Howdy, Modi!' event in Houston on 22 September 2019, and for the two leader level trilateral meetings (India-U.S.-Japan) that took place on the margins of the G20 Summits in Buenos Aires (November 2018) and Osaka (June 2019). In 2019-20, PM had a number of telephone conversations with President Trump, including - to exchange New Year Greetings in January 2019 and 2020, following PM's electoral victory in May 2019, and to discuss certain bilateral and regional issues in August 2019.

8. **High-Level Dialogue Mechanisms:** India and the U.S. have more than 50 bilateral inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms for exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. A number of such dialogue mechanisms are held at the Ministerial-level including:

- **India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:** India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue is led by the heads of foreign and defence ministries of India and the U.S.. Two rounds of this Dialogue have been held so far (in September 2018 and December 2019).
- **India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue:** The India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue is led by the Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. This was last held in Delhi in February 2019.
- **India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership:** The India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership is led by the Finance Minister (FM) and the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. This was last held in Delhi in November 2019.
- **India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum:** The India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum is led by CIM and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). This was last held in Washington, D.C. in October 2017
- **India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership:** The India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership is led by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas

and the U.S. Secretary of Energy. This was last held in Delhi in April 2018.

- **India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue (HSD):** The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue is led by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This was last held in Washington, D.C. in May 2013.

9. **Other Significant Engagements in 2019:** Apart from interaction through established dialogue mechanisms in various areas, certain other prominent engagements in 2019 included the following:

- **Visits from the U.S. side:** The U.S. Secretary of Commerce, **Wilbur Ross** visited India in May 2019 for participation in a business forum titled 'Trade Winds Indo-Pacific Forum and Mission'. Secretary Ross visited India again in October 2019 for World Economic Forum's India Economic Summit. He had bilateral engagements with Indian interlocutors during both these visits. Secretary of State, **Michael R. Pompeo** (Secretary Pompeo) was the first Cabinet-level official from the U.S. Government to visit India in June 2019 after the inauguration of our new Government. He met the External Affairs Minister (EAM), National Security Advisor (NSA), and called on PM, during this visit. EAM met Secretary Pompeo again, on the margins of ASEAN Regional Forum in Bangkok on 2 August 2019. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, **John Sullivan**, a five-member Congressional delegation, and other senior U.S. officials took part in the India-U.S. Forum held in New Delhi in August 2019. The **Governors of U.S. states of Indiana, New Jersey, Colorado, and Arkansas** led business delegations to India in 2019.
- **Visits from India:** **EAM** visited the U.S. in September and October 2019. Apart from meetings with Secretary Pompeo; U.S. Secretary of Defense, Dr. Mark Esper (Secretary Esper); U.S. National Security Advisor, Robert C. O'Brien (NSA O'Brien); and the Acting Secretary of Department of Homeland Security, EAM had a number of other engagements including interaction with prominent U.S. think-tanks during this visit. **CIM** visited the U.S. in September and November 2019 and met his U.S. counterpart.

- Apart from participation in the 2+2 Dialogue, Raksha Mantri's (**RM**) visit to the U.S. in December 2019 included other bilateral engagements such as a meeting with the Indian community in New York, a visit to a naval station in Norfolk, and a bilateral meeting with Secretary Esper. **RM** also held a bilateral meeting with Secretary Esper on the sidelines of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus in Bangkok in November 2019.
- **EAM** visited the U.S. for the 2+2 Dialogue in December 2019 and had separate bilateral meetings with Secretary Pompeo and NSA O'Brien. **EAM** also met the leadership of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.
- During the visit to the U.S. in December 2019 for the 2+2 Dialogue, **EAM** and **RM** had a joint call on **President Trump** on 18 December 2019.
- The **Chief Ministers** of **Andhra Pradesh**, **Meghalaya**, and **Tamil Nadu** visited the U.S. in 2019.

10. The highlights of the bilateral engagement between India and the U.S. have been summarised below:

- **Defence:** Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. strategic partnership with intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy. India conducts more bilateral exercises with the U.S. than with any other country. Some important bilateral exercises are: Yudh Abhyas, Vajra Prahar, Tarkash, Tiger Triumph, and Cope India. Aggregate worth of defence-related acquisitions from the U.S. is more than US\$ 15 billion. The India-U.S. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) is aimed at promoting co-development and co-production efforts. In June 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner", which commits the U.S. to facilitate technology sharing with India to a level commensurate with that of its closest allies and partners. The announcement of India's elevation to Tier I of the Strategic Trade Authorization (STA) license exception will further contribute towards facilitating interaction in advanced and sensitive technologies. A number of significant outcomes in the area of defence

cooperation were achieved during the India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogues held in September 2018 and December 2019.

- Apart from the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, some other important dialogue mechanisms on defence cooperation are: Defence Policy Group, Military Cooperation Group, Defense Technology and Trade Initiative and its Joint Working Groups, Executive Steering Groups for Army; Navy; and Airforce, Defence Procurement and Production Group, Senior Technology Security Group, and the Joint Technical Group.
- **Counter-terrorism and internal security:** Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with enhanced intelligence sharing, information exchange and operational cooperation. The bilateral Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism is an important mechanism in this regard. It last met in Washington in March 2019 (16<sup>th</sup> Meeting). Both sides have also been working together in law-enforcement and security cooperation through the six subgroups under the HSD. The Senior Officials Meeting of the HSD (between Ministry of Home Affairs and Department of Homeland Security) was held in July 2018. Both sides have also initiated a Designations Dialogue to discuss designations of terrorists and entities. Apart from the above, both sides also cooperate with each other on counter-terrorism and security issues in various multilateral bodies.
- Cyber security cooperation between India and the U.S. is carried out under the India-U.S. Cyber Framework signed in September 2016. The two important dialogue mechanisms in this domain are – India-U.S. Cyber Security Dialogue (last held in Delhi in September 2019) and the India-U.S. Joint Working Group on ICT (last held in Delhi in October 2019).
- **Trade and Economic:** The U.S. is India's largest trading partner, goods and services combined. Bilateral trade in goods and services grew by more than 10% per annum over the past two years to reach US\$ 142 billion in 2018 [Source: U.S. Department of Commerce]. Two-way merchandise trade stood at around US\$ 87 billion. Of this, India's goods exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 54 billion and India's goods imports from the U.S. were valued at US\$ 33 billion. The India-

U.S. trade in services stood at US\$ 54.5 billion. Of this, India's services exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 28.7 billion and India's imports of services from U.S. were valued at US \$ 25.8 billion. U.S. direct investments in India are estimated at about US\$ 44.5 billion [Source: U.S. Department of Commerce], whereas Indian FDI in U.S. is estimated at US\$ 18 billion (according to a CII Survey).

- **Energy:** The U.S. has emerged as a key partner for India in the field of energy. The bilateral Strategic Energy Partnership launched in April 2018 between the two countries is robust and witnessing increasing diversification across both conventional and renewable energy sources. An India-U.S. Natural Gas Task Force was also created in 2018. India has started importing crude and LNG from the U.S. from 2017 and 2018 respectively. The total value of crude and LNG imports from the U.S. is currently estimated at US\$ 6.7 billion. In February 2019, the Indian Oil Corporation finalised term contracts for import of crude oil of U.S. origin. These are the first term contracts finalised by any Indian PSU for import of U.S. origin crude oil grades.
- **Civil Nuclear Cooperation:** The bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in October 2008. India and the U.S. have a Civil Nuclear Energy Working group on R&D activities which has met ten times and has ongoing projects under R&D collaboration which are reviewed by the Working Group. A U.S. company - Westinghouse is in discussions with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for implementation of a project that envisages six AP 1000 reactors at Kovvada (A.P.). Once implemented, the project would be among the largest of its kind.
- **S&T/Space:** The multi-faceted cooperation between India and the U.S. in the field of Science and Technology has been growing steadily under the framework of the India-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005, which was renewed for a period of ten years in September 2019. The Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) which was established by India and the U.S. as an autonomous, bi-national organization in the year 2000 to promote cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation is playing an important role in strengthening cooperation in this field.

- Both countries also have a long history of cooperation in civil space arena that includes cooperation in earth observation, satellite navigation, and space science and exploration. The India-U.S Joint Working Group on Civil Space Cooperation regularly reviews the status of cooperation and identifies new areas for furthering space cooperation. The seventh meeting of this group was held in Bangalore in November 2019. ISRO and NASA are also working towards intensifying cooperation in Mars exploration, heliophysics, and human spaceflight through relevant working groups between both sides.
- **Indian Diaspora:** The number of Indians and Indian Americans in the U.S. is estimated at around 4 million, which accounts for almost 1% of the total U.S. population. It includes a large number of professionals, entrepreneurs and educationists with considerable and increasing influence in U.S. polity, economy and the society. They are a big stakeholder in India-U.S. relations having significantly contributed to the growth and development of the U.S. economy.
- **Education:** India and the U.S. have very strong linkages and collaboration in the field of higher education. U.S. is one of the most favoured destinations by Indian students for higher education. More than 200,000 Indian students are currently pursuing various courses in the U.S..
- **Regional and International Cooperation:** Both countries are collaborating and coordinating on a number of regional and global issues in both security as well as development spheres. We are also engaged in areas such as maritime and cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. The U.S. has expressed support for India's permanent membership on a reformed U.N. Security Council and for India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. India and the U.S. remain engaged to promote peace; prosperity; and security, in the Indo-Pacific as well as globally.

**February 2020**

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