

India-Iran Relations

Political

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. Indian subcontinent and the Persian Gulf have strong commercial, energy, cultural and people-to-people links.

India and Iran established diplomatic links on March 15, 1950. In addition to the Embassy in Tehran, India has two Consulates in Iran, one in Bandar Abbas and other in Zahedan. 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.

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.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a bilateral visit to Iran from May 22-23, 2016. 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 Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi also inaugurated the International Conference titled “India-Iran two great civilizations” in Vahdat Hall, Tehran and released a Persian Manuscript “Kalileh Wa Dimneh”. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani. A Joint Statement titled “Civilizational Connect, Contemporary context” was released.

Dr. Hassan Rouhani, President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, paid his first State Visit to India at the invitation of Prime Minister of the Republic of India, Shri Narendra Modi, from February 15-17, 2018. During the visit, Dr. Rouhani was accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising Cabinet Ministers, senior officials and business leaders. Delegation level discussions were held between Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Dr. Rouhani. President Rouhani visited Hyderabad on February 15-16, 2018. Wide-ranging and

constructive discussions on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues were held in a cordial atmosphere. 13 MoUs/Agreements were signed between India and Iran. President Dr. Rouhani and Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi agreed to further intensify and diversify the existing high-level engagement through frequent and wider range of bilateral exchanges at all levels. A Joint Statement titled “Towards prosperity through greater connectivity” was signed during the visit.

Foreign Minister Dr. Javad Zarif visited India on May 28, 2018 and held discussions with then External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj. Dr. Zarif also visited India in January 2019 and attended the Raisina Dialogue – 2019. During the visit, Dr. Zarif met then External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj wherein, both sides discussed issues of mutual interest. Dr. Zarif also met Shri Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Roads, Transport and Highways. Dr. Zarif again visited India in May 2019 and held discussions with the then External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj.

Dr. Hassan Ghazizadeh Hashemi, Minister of Health and Medical Education of Iran visited India in December 2018 and held discussions on bilateral cooperation with Shri J. P Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Shri Shripad Yesso Naik, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for AYUSH.

The two countries have in place several Bilateral Consultative Mechanisms at various levels which meet regularly. The 18th India-Iran JCM was held in New Delhi on December 28, 2015. It was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Dr. Ali Tayyebnia, Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of Iran. MoU on cooperation in trade, finance, energy, infrastructure and cultural issues was signed during the JCM. The 19th JCM is scheduled to be held in Iran.

Foreign Offices of both countries also hold regular consultations on bilateral and regional issues. Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi visited India on July 16, 2018 for the 15th Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and held discussions with Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale. Foreign Secretary Shri Vijay Gokhale visited Iran on September 15-16, 2019 for 16th Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) and held discussions with counterpart Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Seyyed Abbas Araghchi.

The first tripartite meeting of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of India was held on September 11, 2018 at the Deputy Foreign Minister level in Kabul, Afghanistan. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan Hekmat Khalil Karzai represented Afghanistan, whereas, the Indian and Iranian delegations were led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and Deputy Foreign Minister Dr. Abbas Araghchi, respectively. The meeting focused on consolidating economic cooperation, including Chabahar, as well as enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and continuing support to the peace and reconciliation process that is led and owned by Afghanistan.

Commercial Relations

The India-Iran bilateral trade during the fiscal year 2018-19 rose to USD 17.03 billion as compared to USD 13.76 billion in 2017-18. This represents an increase of 23.8%. The value of India's exports stood at USD 3.5 billion and imports from Iran were USD 13.5 billion. Major Indian exports to Iran include rice, tea, iron and steel, organic chemicals, metals, electrical machinery, drugs/pharmaceuticals, etc. Major Indian imports from Iran include petroleum and its products, inorganic/organic chemicals, fertilizers, plastic and articles, edible fruit and nuts, glass and glassware, natural or cultured pearls, precious or semiprecious stones, etc.

Connectivity

During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tehran in May 2016, the contract on Chabahar was signed which, inter-alia, comprises investment of \$85 million for equipping the port. The contract also comprises of provision of credit of approximately USD 150 million for the development of the 1st Phase of Shahid Beheshti port at Chabahar.

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. Minister of Roads and Urban Development of the Islamic Republic of Iran Dr. Abbas Ahmed Akhouni, Minister of Commerce and Industries of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Humayoon Rasaw and the Minister of State for Shipping P Radhakrishnan led the respective delegations. The three Ministers welcomed the inauguration of Phase-1 of the Chabahar Port by the President of Iran.

The 1st Coordination Council meeting of the Chabahar Agreement took place in Tehran on October 23, 2018. After detailed discussions on the full operationalization of the trilateral agreement for international transit and transport through Chabahar Port, all sides shared the view that full operationalization of the trilateral Chabahar initiative will promote connectivity and economic development of Afghanistan and the region.

The 1st meeting of the Follow-up Committee for implementation of the trilateral Chabahar Agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran at the level of Joint Secretary/ Director General was held on December 24, 2018 in the port city of Chabahar in Iran. On the occasion, India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) Company opened its office and took over operations at the Shahid Beheshti port at Chabahar.

Cultural Relations

An Indian Cultural Centre is currently functioning within the Embassy premise which was inaugurated by Shri Salman Khurshid, the then External Affairs Minister during his visit to Iran for the NAM summit in May, 2013. During the visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Tehran in May 2016, MoUs on India-Iran Cultural Exchange Programme, ICCR and ICRO, Iran, National Archives of India and the National Library and Archives Organisation of Iran were signed.

The Indian Cultural Centre was established in 2013 and renamed the Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in 2018. The Embassy 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 and 2019. A week-long Yoga events were held for IDY-2019. In the run up to the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi (from October 2018 to October 2019), two special events were organized on October 02, 2018. Tree Plantation in setting up of Gandhi Vatika near iconic Tehran Milad Tower (world's 6th highest tower) was done in June 2019, led by Ambassador and Iranian officers.

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 – with special reference to Sanskrit Grammarian Panini'.

Indian community

The Indian community in Iran comprises of around 4000 Indian nationals. (This includes 80-100 families in Tehran and 13-15 families in Zahedan. There are approx. 2800 Indian nationals in Qom, Esfahan and Mashhad consisting of Indian students undergoing theological studies and their family members. There are also around 200 Indian nationals working in private companies in Iran). There is an Indian school in Tehran run by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) under the aegis of Embassy of India.

Iran's diplomatic presence in India

Iran has its Embassy in New Delhi. In addition, Iran has two Consulates General in Mumbai and Hyderabad and two Cultural Centres in New Delhi and Mumbai.

September 2019