

India-Uzbekistan Relations

Background

Relations between Uzbekistan and India have their roots deep in history. There are frequent references to Kamboja, which is stated to include parts of present day Uzbekistan, in Sanskrit and Pali literature. Sakas participated in Mahabharata on the side of Kauravas. Ancient trade route *uttarpath* passed through Uzbekistan. In later years, Fergana, Samarkand, Bukhara in Uzbekistan emerged as major towns on the trade routes linking India with Europe and China. At various times the Saka / Scythian, Macedonian, Greco-Bactrian, Kushan Kingdoms included parts of both India and present day Uzbekistan, and at other times they were part of neighbouring empires. Buddhism is said to have travelled to China through Uzbekistan and Central Asia. Amir Timur was born near Shahrisabz and Babur came from Fergana in Uzbekistan. Indian merchants based in Samarkand and Bukhara were an integral part of local economy. Interactions over thousands of years contributed to close cultural linkages in architecture, dance, music and cuisine. Mirza Ghalib and Amir Khusro are notable Indians of Uzbek parentage. Indian movies have traditionally been popular in Uzbekistan.

India had close interaction with the Uzbek SSR during the Soviet times. Indian leaders often visited Tashkent and other places. Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away in Tashkent on 11 July 1966 after signing the Tashkent declaration with Pakistan

In August 1991, as the events leading to the disintegration of the USSR unfolded, President Islam Karimov, in his then capacity as Chairman of Supreme Soviet of Uzbekistan, was visiting India. Uzbekistan declared its independence on 1st September 1991.

Political

Consulate General of India in Tashkent was formally inaugurated on 7th April 1987. Following Uzbekistan's independence, it was upgraded to the level of Embassy through the signing of a Protocol on Diplomatic and Consular matters on 18th March 1992.

The subsequent period has been characterized by frequent high-level exchanges. Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Uzbekistan in 1993 and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on 25-26 April, 2006. President Karimov paid State visits to India in 1991, 1994, 2000, 2005 and in May 2011.

On 06-07 July 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Tashkent.

Bilateral relations are managed through a robust mechanism including a Joint Commission, which oversees trade and economic relations. Uzbekistan and India have signed Agreements/MOUs/Protocols/Joint Statements in areas such as trade, investment, education, civil aviation, tourism, science & technology, telecommunications, agriculture and IT.

Economic Relations

Trade relations between India and Uzbekistan are governed by the Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation signed in May 1993. This agreement provides for such things as mutual MFN treatment, promotion of economic, industrial, scientific and technical cooperation, including in the field of training of personnel, active participation of small and medium sized enterprises in bilateral economic cooperation, and counter-trade, etc. India and Uzbekistan also signed an Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation in 1993 and for Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection in May 1999. The Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) has met nine times, and the last Session was held in Tashkent on 4 May 2011.

India- Uzbekistan bilateral Trade:

Year	Imports from India (in U.S.\$ million)	Exports to India (in U.S.\$ million)	Total Trade Turnover (in U.S.\$ Million)	Percentage Change over Previous Year
2008	79.9	11.1	91	23.80%
2009	101.6	23.1	124.7	37%
2010	123.8	27.2	151	21.10%
2011	137.6	22.2	159.8	5.83%
2012	163.4	37.82	201.2	16%
2014	249.0	67.0	316.0	21.73%
Upto Oct 2015	232.2	27.6	259.8 311.76	-1.34% (extrapolated)

(Source: Uzbekistan State Committee for Statistics)

India's main exports to Uzbekistan include drugs, other pharmaceutical products, paper, wood products, machinery, garments & fabrics, tea, plastic items, chemicals, surgical items and consumer goods. Beans, chemicals and non-ferrous metals constitute the largest item of Indian imports from Uzbekistan apart from machinery, silver, raw cotton & silk, pulses & services.

According to the State Statistics Committee of Uzbekistan, India occupied the 15th place among trading partners of Uzbekistan, covering 0.7% of the total trade turnover of the Uzbekistan.

An MoU on the establishment of India-Uzbek IT Centre in Tashkent (involving Indian assistance of Rs. 30 million) was signed in October 2004 during the visit of Uzbek Foreign Minister to India. The India-Uzbekistan Centre for Information Technology, named after Jawaharlal Nehru, was inaugurated by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his visit to Uzbekistan in April 2006 in the Tashkent University of Information Technology (TUIT). An MoU for upgradation of the IT Centre was signed during the visit of Vice President in May 2013 and the upgrade was completed in 2014.

Cultural Relations

Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture working under Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), was established in Tashkent in 1995 and has been a household name in Uzbekistan for its cultural activities. Besides organizing seminar events relating to Indian culture, the Centre also organizes regular classes for Kathak, Yoga, Tabla and Hindi language.

Three Uzbek educational institutions, nationwide, promote studies of Hindi language, from primary to post-graduate level.

Uzbek Radio completed 50 years of Hindi broadcasting in 2012. Uzbek TV channels regularly show Indian films and serials.

A Protocol on cooperation in the field of mass media was signed in October 1992. Subsequently, during the visit of President Islam Karimov to India in May 2000, another Protocol for cooperation in the field of information and mass media was signed. This Protocol envisaged cooperation involving exchange of TV programmes, visit of journalists, participation in international film festivals, cooperation among the filmmakers of both feature films and documentaries, visit of Radio and TV personnel etc.

Uzbekistan is a partner of India's ITEC Programme since 1993-1994. Currently 150 slots are being allotted annually. The ITEC Programme has been very well received in Uzbekistan. Areas of training include information technology, English language, management, journalism, diplomacy, small business planning, remote sensing, banking and hotel management etc. Twenty five Scholarships are being offered to Uzbekistan annually for various courses in Indian Universities under ICCR's Scholarship Programmes.

Indian Community:

A small but vibrant Indian community lives in Uzbekistan. Mission maintains regular links with the community through its website www.indembassy.uz and Facebook account indembtashkent@gmail.com. The members of Indian community participate in functions organised on the occasion of Independence Day and Republic Day. The community participates in celebration of the national days, International Yoga Day, Hindi Diva, Holi, Diwali and cultural programmes on various occasions.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Tashkent Website:

<http://eoi.gov.in/tashkent>

Embassy of India, Tashkent Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInUzbekistan>

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