

India – Cyprus Relations

Relations between India and Cyprus have been traditionally very close and friendly. Archbishop Makarios had the highest respect for Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and was deeply appreciative of the support rendered by India to the independence struggle of Cyprus against the British colonial rule. After the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974, India gave unstinted support to Cyprus' successful efforts to gain international recognition for the Government of Nicosia, as the sole legal representative of the whole of Cyprus. India supports the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus. India has consistently and unwaveringly supported a peaceful resolution of the Cyprus problem in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. India supports the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Cyprus.

Cyprus too has staunchly supported India on all issues of importance and has been one of India's closest and most dependable friends in Europe. There have been several gestures marking their special regard for and gratitude to India. In 1970, Cyprus issued a stamp in honour of Mahatma Gandhi. A bust of Mahatma Gandhi was installed near the Parliament House in July 1972 on the occasion of the visit of President V.V. Giri. The avenue on which the House of Representatives is located was named after Jawaharlal Nehru during the visit of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983. The road on which the High Commission premises are located is named after Indira Gandhi. Following the death of Maj. General Thimayya in 1965 serving as UNFICYP Force Commander, a road in Larnaca was named after him. The Government of Cyprus also issued in 1966, a commemorative stamp in his memory. Former President Clarides' wife Lila hailed from India (born in Ahmedabad).

India has also named an avenue in New Delhi after Archbishop Makarios.

Consequent upon coming to power of the new Government in India in May 2014, felicitation messages were sent by the following:

- (i) By the President of Cyprus to the Prime Minister of India;
- (ii) By the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cyprus to the Minister of External Affairs and Minister of State for External Affairs;
- (iii) By the President of the House of Representatives to the Speaker of the Lok Sabha; and
- (iv) By the President of the ruling Democratic Rally Party (DISY) to the President of the Bharatiya Janata Party.

High Level Visits:

Over the years, Indo-Cypriot political relations have been maintained and strengthened through exchange of high level visits. Almost all the Presidents of Cyprus have paid State visits to India. The last Presidential state visit to India was of Tassos Papadopoulos in April 2006.

From the Indian side, President Giri (July 1972), and President R. Venkataraman (September 1988) visited Cyprus. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's historic visit in September 1983 is still recalled as a significant milestone in India's relations with Cyprus. Prime Minister Vajpayee visited Cyprus in October 2002. During the visit, Cyprus publicly endorsed India's candidature for a Permanent Seat in the expanded Security Council of the United Nations.

The last high-level visit from India was that of President, Smt. Patil who paid a State visit to Cyprus in October 2009.

The President of the House of Representatives, Mr. A. Ghalanos visited India in 1995. There was a return visit by an Indian Parliamentary delegation in 1996. Two members of the House of Representatives attended the International Parliamentary Conference to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Parliament of India, held in New Delhi in January 2003. From India, the then Speaker, Shri Shivraj V. Patil led a Parliamentary delegation to Cyprus in September 1992. In 1996, Dr. Najma Heptullah, Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and Shri S. Malikarjunaiah, Deputy Speaker, Lok Sabha visited Cyprus. An Indian parliamentary delegation led by Hon'ble Speaker (Lok Sabha), Shri Somnath Chatterjee, visited Cyprus to participate in the mid-Year Executive Committee Meeting of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Meeting held in Limassol in April 2007. Shri Prahlad Singh Patel, MP attended the 45th Regional Conference of British Islands and Mediterranean Region held in Limassol in May 2015.

Recent Ministerial Visits:

From India –

- Smt. Preneet Kaur, MOS (EA) in April 2013. Prior to this visit, the last visit of EAM from India was that of EAM Shri Pranab Mukherjee, in May (24-26), 2007 to attend the first Meeting of the India-Cyprus High Level Joint Committee which was established during the visit of President Papadopoulos to India in April 2006.

From Cyprus –

- Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, Mr. Antonis Paschalides visited India in October 2010. He met CIM and the Minister of Tourism, Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation and also inaugurated a seminar at FICCI and participated in an International Conference on Renewable Energy (DIREC).
- The Foreign Minister of Cyprus, Mr. Markos Kyprianou paid an official visit to India from April 17-19, 2011 at the invitation of EAM.
- Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources & Environment (Sofoclis Albert Aletraris) visited India to attend the COP-11 to CBD (October 8-19, 2012) in Hyderabad.
- The current Foreign Minister Ioannis Kasoulides visited India in November 2013 for the ASEM FFM 11 and met with EAM.

Bilateral Institutional Arrangements:

Foreign Office Consultations: In March 2001, the two sides signed a protocol institutionalizing Foreign Office consultations (FOC) on an annual basis, [at the level of Secretary (MEA) and Permanent Secretary in the Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs], alternately in Nicosia and New Delhi. The first round of FOC was held in Nicosia in March, 2001, the second round in New Delhi in November, 2004 and the third round again in New Delhi in July 2009. Interim FOC at the level of Joint Secretary (Central Europe) from the Ministry of External Affairs and Political Director in the Cypriot Ministry of Foreign Affairs were held on November 11, 2014 in Nicosia.

Joint Economic Committee: India and Cyprus signed an Agreement on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Industrial Co-operation in April 1989, following which the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) was established. The first meeting of the JEC was held in Nicosia in May 1992. So far seven rounds of JEC have been held. The last session was held in Nicosia in 2012. Bilateral cooperation in the fields of trade, industry, economy, investments, technology, tourism, energy, transportation, health, culture, etc. was reviewed and a Protocol signed. The next round of JEC is due to be held in India.

Joint Working Group (JWG) on Science & Technology (S&T): In order to facilitate cooperation in Science & Technology, with the possibility of commercial application in this field, a MoU providing for joint research and development projects and joint ventures in S&T was signed during former Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Cyprus in October 2002. The first meeting of the JWG was held in New Delhi in November 2005. Since then no meeting has been held.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on co-operation in the field of Information Technology (IT): The MoU on IT and Services was signed during former Prime Minister Vajpayee's visit to Cyprus in October 2002. During a visit to India in November 2005, the first meeting of the JWG on S&T was held.

Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA): In September 2005, Cyprus-India Business Association (CIBA), was established under the auspices of the Cyprus Chamber of Commerce.

Agreements signed between India and Cyprus:

- (i) **Economic, Trade, Scientific, Technical and Industrial Cooperation:** (April 1989)
- (ii) **Double Taxation Avoidance:** (June 1994)
- (iii) **Merchant Shipping:** (1997)
- (iv) **MoU on Information Technology and Services:**(October 2002)
- (v) **Cooperation in the field of Posts and Telecommunications:**(October 2002).
- (vi) **Public Health and Medical Sciences:** (October 2002).
- (vii) **Agreement for the Mutual Promotion & Protection of Investments:**(April, 2002).
- (viii) **Abolition of Visa Requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official/Service Passports:** (May 2007)
- (ix) **Programme on Cultural, Educational and Scientific Cooperation:**(May 2007).
- (x) **Combating International Terrorism, Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking:** (May, 2007 and registered with the UNSG Secretariat in 2008).
- (xi) **Cooperation between JNU and the University of Cyprus:** Signed between the Faculty of Humanities and Faculty of Letters of the University of Cyprus and the School of Languages, Literatures and Culture Studies of JNU.(June, 2010).
- (xii) **Agreement on Merchant Shipping: (1997)**
- (xiii) **Air Services Agreement: (December 2000)**
- (xiv) **Social Security Agreement:** The proposal for such a treaty was made to the Cypriot side in 2008. A visit of an Indian delegation to hold the first round of negotiations took place in June 2015 in Nicosia.

II. Economic Relations:

Trade Relations: The figures for the last four years are given below:

(US \$ Million)

Year	Exports to Cyprus	Imports from Cyprus	Volume of trade	Balance of trade
2011-12	56.62	27.61	84.23	(+) 28.02
2012-13	54.99 (-2.8%)	21.27 (-22.9%)	76.27 (+9.4)	(+) 33.72
2013-14	61.57 (+11.9%)	20.31 (-4.5%)	81.88 (+6.8%)	(+) 41.26
2014-15	51.11 (-16.9%)	22.82 (+12.4%)	73.99 (-10.6%)	(+) 28.29

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India)

Major items of exports from India: Organic chemicals, oil seed, oleagi fruits, fish & other aquatic invertebrate, vehicles & accessories and Iron & steel..

Major imports from Cyprus: Aluminium & articles thereof, pulp of wood, iron & steel, machinery, boilers, engines, plastic and articles thereof.

FDI: Cyprus is the seventh largest FDI investor in India. From April 2000 to April 2015, the cumulative investment flows to India from Cyprus were US \$ 8.062 billion. The FDI is mainly in construction and real estate activity sectors.

III. Indian community:

The Indian community stands at around 2700. The major chunk of the community consists of cosmetic workers (over 50%) and the next professionals, computer engineers, software programmers and ship.

There were around 900 Indian students in different private colleges in 2010-11 which has drastically come down to less than 100 as they are unable to find part-time jobs due to the financial crisis in Cyprus.

International Day of Yoga: The first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was observed in Cyprus in a befitting manner. Two functions were held in Nicosia. The High Commission organized the main event at Pallouritissa Lyceum premises, a local school, near the buffer zone dividing Cyprus, at 10.15 a.m. The high Commissioner made a short introduction of the significance of the IDY and Yoga to the participants. The event was attended by over 80 participants, representing Cypriots from all walks of life, diplomats, yoga teachers, yoga students and practioners. The Cyprus branch of the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) participants also participated in the event. The Certificate of Participation was sent to all participants. Earlier in the day, the HSS organized a separate function.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Nicosia website:

<http://hci.gov.in/nicosia/>
