

India-Hungary Relations

India and Hungary have enjoyed close and friendly relations since establishment of diplomatic relations in 1948. The relationship has been substantive and multifaceted. Hungarians are extremely grateful to India for India's role in 1956 Uprising in Hungary. India's intervention with Soviet Union saved the life of Dr. Arpad Goncz who subsequently served as President of Hungary from 1990 to 2000.

Since 1990, India and Hungary have signed several Agreements that have contributed to further intensification of bilateral relationship. These include: Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, Bilateral Investment Protection and Promotion Agreement, Social Security Agreement, Agreements on Cooperation in Health, Agriculture, IT, Science and Technology and Defence. Both countries commemorated the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in 1998.

The visit of Prime Minister Gyurcsany took place during the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2008. Senior dignitaries from Hungary who visited India include Foreign Minister Kinga Goncz (Nov 2006), Finance Minister Janos Veres (January 2007), former Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy (January 2007), Culture and Education Minister Istvan Hiller (October 2007), Agriculture Minister Jozsef Graf (January 08), Defence Minister Imre Szekeres (February 08), Foreign Minister Janos Martonyi (October 1999), Foreign Minister Peter Balazs (January 2010) and Speaker of Hungarian National Assembly, Dr. Laszlo Kover visited India (November, 2012). Prime Minister Viktor Orban visited India (16-18 October 2013), he was accompanied by large business and official delegation. Foreign Minister Dr. Janos Martonyi visited India (11-12 November 2013) to attend ASEM Foreign Ministers' meeting (ASEM FMM11).

From India we have had visits by Dr. Ashvini Kumar, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs (May 2011), Shri S.M. Krishna, External Affairs Minister (June 2011 for ASEM) and Shri Vilasrao Deshmukh, Minister of Science & Technology (November 2011 for World Science Forum Meeting). Shri Sachin Pilot, Minister of State for Communications and Information Technology visited Budapest to participate in the Budapest Conference on Cyberspace (October 4-5, 2012). Shri Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister visited Budapest to address the Annual Conference of Hungarian Ambassadors (14-16 July, 2013) and Shri Harish Rawat, Minister of Water Resources visited Budapest to attend Budapest Water Summit (7-10 October 2013).

Meetings of Joint Working Group held recently:

- (i) Meeting of Joint Science & Technology Committee was held on 14 October 2013 in New Delhi.
- (ii) Meeting of Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation was held on 15-16 October 2013 in New Delhi and
- (iii) Meeting of Indo-Hungarian Joint Defence Committee was held on 30 September to 1st October 2013 in New Delhi.

Following MOUs and Letter of Intent were signed during the State visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Mr. Viktor Orban to India from 16-18 October 2013:

1. Letter of Intent on Revision of Air Services Agreement
2. Letter of Intent for Indo-Hungarian Strategic Research Fund (enhanced contribution of Euro 2 million each for 2014-17).
3. Cultural Exchange Programme for 2013-2015
4. MOU on Cooperation in the areas of Defensive Aspects of Microbiological and Radiological Detection and Protection.
5. MOU on Cooperation in the field of Sports
6. MOU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.

Commercial and Economic Relations:

Before changes in Hungary in 1990, India was major partner of Hungary in Asia in trade as well as economic fields, though it covered only a small proportion of international trade of Hungary. Over 25 joint ventures were established by Hungarian companies in India. Following the sweeping changes of 1990's, rapid privatization of the economy, disappearance of traditional markets and influx of 'Western' investments resulted in dissolution of old commercial links, including with India. Bilateral trade which ranged between US\$ 100-200 million in the 1980s could not be sustained in the mid 1990s. India-Hungary economic relations have again revived during the last few years, as both Hungary and India have both become globally integrated, our trade and investment cooperation has picked up and bilateral trade in 2011 was US \$ 840 million. During 2012, the momentum could not be sustained owing to 42.7% decrease in Hungarian exports to India, though Indian exports increased by modest 2.7%. The value of bilateral trade during January- December 2013 was US\$ 582 million. In the first 9 months of 2014, bilateral trade has increased 3.4% compared to the same period of 2013, with Indian exports to Hungary rising by 6.9% while Imports from Hungary dropped by 1.4%

Joint Economic Committee (JEC) provides the institutional framework for intergovernmental discussions on economic cooperation. Department of Industry is nodal agency from Indian side. Joint Business Council of Indian and Hungarian companies, set up in 1979 under an agreement between FICCI and Hungarian Chamber of Commerce, undertakes promotion of direct contact between private business parties.

Indian investments in Hungary are witnessing an upswing in recent years. Investment flows are spread over several sectors such as IT, pharmaceuticals, power equipment, auto-components and food processing. TCS, Genpact, Sun Pharma, Crompton Greaves, SMR, Bakony Wipers, Orion, and COSMOS are the major investors in Hungary. Indian investments in Hungary are in the range of US \$ 1.5 billion employing more than 8,000 people in Hungary. Graymatter Software Services Pvt. Ltd, formed a small office in Budapest in 2014 employing 4 and aims to create an R&D center in Debrecen employing 200 in the next 3 years with 2-3 mln EUR worth of investment in the next 3 years. Apollo Tyres is again planning to build a factory in Hungary in the near future. It has set up a small office in Budapest as a first phase of the investment. They have plans to recruit local employees in a phased manner and are likely to provide employment to about 975 persons, with a total investment of about 475 million EUR.

Education

On 19 Nov, Ambassador Malay Mishra and Deputy Minister Bence Retvari signed the Education Exchange Programme (EEP) on behalf of the Ministry of Higher Education of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Human Capacities of Hungary.

The EEP for the period 2014-17 encourages cooperation between higher education institutions and the exchange of publications, educational materials and curricula. It supports joint researches and conferences and sharing of experiences.

Under the EEP, the Hungarian side shall provide 200 scholarships for Indian students and research fellows to study the natural and life sciences, information technology, economics, business and management and engineering in Hungarian universities. In return, the Indian side shall offer 35 scholarships for Hungarian students and research fellows to pursue studies in English and Hindi languages and other fields at the post-graduation and doctoral levels.

Within the framework of EEP, the Hungarian side shall also send a Lecturer to Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi in the field of Hungarian language and literature.

Science and Technology:

Cooperation in S&T is a focus area in India-Hungary relations. Hungary recognises India as a country with a well-developed R&D and 'knowledge' infrastructure. Hungary in turn, has established an excellent network of R&D institutions under the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS). Under a framework agreement signed during the visit of PM of Hungary to India in 2008, an India-Hungary S&T Fund for Euro 2 million to promote joint research was established. The agreement envisages creation of a fund with a contribution of Euro 1 million by each side per annum.

Suggested areas include green chemistry, bio-medicine and space (opto-electronics). During the visit of Minister of Science & Technology to Hungary in November 2011, the S&T Fund was operationalised. During the visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Mr. Victor Orban to India in October 2013, Letter of Intent to enhance contribution to Euro 2 million each to the Indo-Hungarian Strategic Research Fund was signed.

Agriculture:

An Agreement on Agriculture, Plant Quarantine and Protection and Animal Husbandry covering agricultural research and technology, agriculture production, horticulture and post harvest management, including cold chain, agro processing and agricultural marketing, was signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Hungary to India in 2008. Joint Working Group established under the Agreement met in New Delhi in February 2012.

Water Management:

The Honourable Minister of Water resources, Shri Harish Rawat attended Budapest Water Summit in October 2013 and on the sidelines of the Summit met Mr. Sandor Fazekas, Minister of Rural Development of Hungary. Extensive discussions were held to initiate mutual cooperation in the field of Water Resources Management. To move forward, expert groups have been constituted on both sides and first meeting in the field is likely to take place later this year.

Defence:

An MOU on Joint Science & Technology sub-group with Hungarian Ministry of Defence is expected to be finalized shortly. A 3-member Defence delegation visited Hungary from 28-30 April, 2014 to see NBC establishments for finalizing cooperation in the field of CBRN equipment and training, aerial CBRN and laboratory testing facilities.

Health:

With its long tradition of spa therapies and interest in Indian culture, there is considerable potential for promotion of Ayurveda in Hungary. The AYUSH Information Centre is functioning in the Embassy since January 2014. An international Ayurveda Conference was organised in September 2014 in Budapest. MOU on Cooperation in Health Sector, signed during the visit of the Hungarian PM to India in 2008, provides the necessary legal and political framework for cooperation in this sector, including Ayurveda. In October 2013, during the visit of Hungarian Prime Minister Mr. Victor Orban to India, an MOU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine was signed. An AYUSH Professor has taken over the AYUSH Chair in the University of Debrecen since December 2014.

Cultural Relations:

Generations of eminent Hungarian Indologists have laid the foundation of great respect and admiration that Hungarians have for Indian culture, philosophy, art and spiritual thought. These include Csoma de Korosi, Aurel Stein, Elizabeth Sass Brunner and Elizabeth Brunner. From Indian side, Rabindra Nath Tagore and Amrita Shergil have made significant contributions. Indology has always formed a major part of the work of the Department of Indo-European Studies at ELTE University. Sanskrit was formally included as a regular subject of study in the university in 1873. Under the bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Hungary, ICCR has been deputing a Visiting Professor of Hindi to the Department since 1992. There is considerable interest among Hungarians in Indian dances, music, yoga and meditations. There are more than 200 yoga centres and about 8 schools of Indian dances and music in Hungary. Indian cultural troupes visit Hungary from time to time.

Amrita Shergill Cultural Centre:

On 15th August 2014 the India Cultural Centre in Budapest was officially renamed as Amrita Shergill Cultural Centre(ASCC). The ASCC was formally opened during the in November 2010. The Centre consists of an auditorium, a library and an exhibition hall. Regular cultural and other events are being organised at the ASCC. A bi-monthly publication 'Amrit' is brought out by ASCC. Collaboration with various Universities in Hungary is increasing. Besides classes of Indian classical dances, music and yoga, the Centre organizes exhibitions, film festivals, India Days and lectures at ICC and in different parts of Hungary from time to time.

Fellowships/Scholarships:

In order to strengthen the Indo-European Studies, India has established a Tagore Research Fellowship on Indology and Indian Studies at Department of Indo-European Studies, ELTE University. Similarly, under the scheme of "Propagation of Hindi Abroad", Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India awards two scholarship slots every year to Hungarian nationals to learn Hindi at the Central Institute of Hindi, Agra. Under the ITEC programme, ten scholarships are allotted to Hungary every year.

Indian community:

There is a small resident Indian community of 500 in Hungary, mostly professionals in IT, those working in Indo-Hungarian joint ventures and a transient community of about 40 students, besides nearly 150 overseas Indian students, who are studying in various universities in Budapest, Pecs, Szeged and Debrecen. From time to time, there is an exchange of research scholars and scientists for a period ranging from three weeks to six months under our exchange programmes. In addition there are a few Indians who are married to local Hungarians and permanently settled in Hungary.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Budapest brings out a bi-monthly publication 'Amrit' which can be perused at it's website :

www.indianembassy.hu

Website of Hungarian Government and Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

: www.kormany.hu

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