India – Turkey Relations

There are historical connections between India and Turkey. The first exchange of diplomatic missions between the Ottoman Sultans and the Muslim rulers of the subcontinent dates back to the years 1481-82. India and Turkey also have a cultural overlap. The Sufi philosophy of Mevlana Jelaluddin Rumi found resonance in the Indian sub-continent with its own traditions of Sufism and the Bhakti movement. There are also many words in common in Hindustani and Turkish languages. More recent historical contacts between India and Turkey were reflected in the medical mission led by renowned Indian freedom fighter, Dr. M.A. Ansari, to Turkey in 1912 during the Balkan Wars and the Khilafat movement (1919-1924). India also extended support in the 1920s to Turkey's War of Independence and the formation of the Turkish republic. Mahatma Gandhi himself took a stand against the injustices inflicted on Turkey at the end of World War-I.

Bilateral relations have been strengthened by the exchange of visits of leaders of both countries in recent times. These include visits by the then Turkish PM Recep Tayyip Erdogan to India in 2008 and the then Turkish President Abdullah Gul to India in 2010. Hon'ble Vice President Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Turkey from October 10-15, 2011. Rashtrapatiji Shri Pranab Mukherjee visited Turkey during October 5-7, 2013 at the invitation of the President of Turkey. External Affairs Minister (EAM) Smt. Sushma Swaraj paid a working visit to Turkey during 15-16 January, 2015 and held discussions with her counterpart, Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu. Foreign Minister Cavusoglu made a brief transit halt in New Delhi on 19th March, 2015 during which he held talks with External Affairs Minister. Finance Minister of Turkey, Mr. Mehmet Simsek visited Mumbai and New Delhi on 22-24 February, 2015 and had meetings with Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley and MOS for Petroleum Shri Dharmendra Pradhan. Deputy Prime Minister Ali Babacan visited India on 3-7 April 2015 to attend the B20 Turkey Regional Consultation Forum meeting in New Delhi. DPM Ali Babacan had meetings with EAM and Finance Minister during his visit. Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen. (Retd) Vijay Kumar Singh, led a delegation to Turkey on 24-26 April, 2015, to participate in the 100th anniversary ceremonies of the Canakkale Land and Sea battles of 1915.

On the margins of the G20 Agriculture Ministers’ Meeting in Istanbul on 7-8 May 2015, Agriculture Minister Shri Radha Mohan Singh had bilateral talks with Mr. Mehmet Mehdi Eker, Minister of Food, Agriculture and Livestock of Turkey. Minister of State for Commerce & Industry (Independent Charge) Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman participated in the G20 Trade Ministers’ Meeting in Istanbul on 5-6 October 2015. CIM held bilateral talks with Mr. Nihat Zeybekci, Minister of Economy of Turkey, on the margins of the G20 meeting. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended the G20 Summit held in Antalya on 15-16 November, 2015. On the margins of the Summit, Prime Minister had bilateral talks with President Erdogan of Turkey.

Secretary (East) visited Ankara and called on Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey on 26 May 2016. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs paid an official visit to India on 18-19 August 2016. Foreign Minister Cavusoglu held talks with Minister of External Affairs and a Road Map between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was finalized during the
visit. FM Cavusoglu also called on the Vice President. In a telephone call with President Erdogan on 29 August 2016, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi expressed solidarity with Turkey and its leadership in the context of the failed coup attempt in Turkey. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan held talks in Hangzhou on 5 September 2016 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Shri Manoj Sinha, Minister of State for Communications called on Mr. Ahmet Arslan, Minister of Transport, Maritime Affairs and Communications on 4 October 2016 on the sidelines of the 26th Universal Postal Union Congress in Istanbul. Mr. Lutfi Elvan, Minister of Development led the Turkish delegation to the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction 2016 (AMCDRR 2016) held in New Delhi on 2-5 November 2016. Mr. Lutfi Elvan called on Minister of Home Affairs during the visit. Mr. Mevlut Cavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs attended the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the Heart of Asia Process on Afghanistan in Amritsar on 4 December 2016. Secretary (West) visited Ankara and had a bilateral meeting with Mr. Umit Yalcin, Undersecretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 10 February 2017.

Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) at Secretary-level were institutionalized through a Protocol signed in April, 2000. The last round of consultations was held on 17 April, 2015 in Ankara. Mid-sessional Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Joint Secretary/Director General were held in Ankara on 28 November, 2014. A Protocol on setting up a Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism was signed in September, 2003. The 3rd meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-terrorism was held in Ankara on 11 March, 2015. Earlier, working level consultations on Central Asia were held in July, 2012.

Retracing the voyage of the Ottoman frigate Ertugrul to Japan in the 19th century, Turkish Naval Ship TCG Gediz made a Port Call in Mumbai and Chennai on 20-23 April 2015 and 2-4 July 2015, respectively. A delegation from the National Defence College visited Turkey on 22-26 August 2015 as part of the Strategic Neighbourhood Study Tour. INS Trikand made a port call in Istanbul on 4-6 October 2015.

Messages of condolences were exchanged between India and Turkey on loss of lives due to terror attacks and accidents.

**Economic & Commercial Relations:**

India-Turkey economic and commercial cooperation constitutes an important dimension of the bilateral relationship. Several bilateral agreements and institutional mechanisms, at the governmental level as well as B2B, provide the framework for strengthening economic and commercial ties. The Bilateral Trade Agreement between India and Turkey was signed in 1973. This was followed by an Agreement on setting up an India–Turkey Joint Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC) in 1983. The 10th session of the JCETC was held in New Delhi in January, 2014. The Indian delegation was led by Shri Anand Sharma, the then Minister of Commerce and Industry of India and the Turkish Delegation by Mr. Nihat Zeybekci, Minister for Economy of the Republic of Turkey. The India-Turkey Joint Business Council (JBC) between Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEIK) was set up in 1996.
Mr. Adnan Yıldırım, Deputy Minister of Economy, led a delegation of the Turkey Exporters Council to Mumbai on 6-9 April, 2015 to participate in the Turkey-India Business Forum. On 6 April 2015, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) signed an MoU with the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) to promote bilateral trade and economic cooperation. TOBB also signed a cooperation agreement with FICCI for establishing India-Turkey Working Committee and Investment Forums. On 6 August 2015, State Bank of India and Turkey’s Akbank entered into a cooperation agreement to support bilateral trade and investments. During his visit to Ankara for the G20 Finance Ministers meeting, Finance Minister, Shri Arun Jaitley, attended a CII Business Roundtable with Turkish entrepreneurs on 3 September 2015. Embassy of India, Ankara and Consulate General of India, Istanbul organized a number of presentations on ‘Make-in-India’ in Turkey in 2015.

Bilateral investment and economic cooperation progressed and in 2013 ONGC Videsh Ltd acquired 2.72% in the Guneshli Fields ACG and 2.3% interest in the associated Baku-Tbils Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline. The BTC pipeline would provide OVL the opportunity to enhance its portfolio around the region and transport crude from the assets it may acquire in the Caspian Sea in future. Drug firm Sequent Scientific in December, 2015 with its subsidiary Alivira Animal Health acquired the Turkey based firm, Topkim for 20.7 million Turkish Lira (over Rs. 37 crore). India’s Punj Lloyds and Turkey’s Limak Holding are constructing a section of the Trans-Anatolian Pipeline (TANAP) project as announced on 25 January, 2016. The total length being constructed is approx. 459km, expected to be completed by 2018. Dr. Reddy’s Laboratories had entered into a collaboration with TR-Pharm to manufacture and commercialize a portfolio of biosimilar drugs in Turkey on 10 March, 2016. Essar Steel has won a contract for supplying its Rockstar steel plates for constructing the Istanbul New Airport. Medical technology firm Trivitron Healthcare has acquired 60 per cent stake in Turkish firm Bome Sanayi Urunleri Dis Tic Ltd Sti. In June 2016, Zydus Cadila signed a strategic collaboration agreement with Eczacibasi Ilac Pazarlama AS, a Turkish healthcare company, to market biotech products in Turkey. On 21 December 2016, the Reserve Bank of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on “Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information” with Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency of Republic of Turkey.

IOT Infrastructure & Energy Services, a joint venture between Indian Oil Corporation and Oiltanking GmbH, is collaborating with VITO Energy and Investment of Turkey for erection of joint tank farm at the Star Refinery (near Izmir). The USD 72.30 million project started in August 2015 and is expected to be completed in July 2017. About 485 Indian technical staff and workers are employed at the site. Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. announced on 20 January 2017 their foray into Turkey, through the acquisition of Hisarlar Makina Sanayi ve Ticaret Anonim Sirketi (Hisarlar), a farm equipment company in Turkey. Under the transaction, Mahindra acquired a 75.1% equity stake in the Turkish company Hisarlar.

Bilateral India-Turkey trade has increased significantly in the preceding decade and a half. The major Indian exports to Turkey include: medium oils and fuels, man-made filaments and staple fibres, automotive spare parts and accessories, organic
chemicals etc. Turkey’s exports to India include: broken/unbroken poppy seeds; machinery and mechanical appliances, iron and steel articles thereof, inorganic chemicals, pearls and precious/semi precious stones and metals (including imitation jewellery), marble, etc.

(Source : Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI) (fig in USD million)

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<tr>
<td>India’s Exports</td>
<td>3547.26</td>
<td>3963.66</td>
<td>4433.75</td>
<td>5358.90</td>
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<td>% growth</td>
<td>29.03</td>
<td>11.74</td>
<td>11.83</td>
<td>-1.29</td>
<td>-22.74</td>
<td>-18.94</td>
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<td>India’s Imports</td>
<td>1021.91</td>
<td>2034.18</td>
<td>760.74</td>
<td>1463.87</td>
<td>776.94</td>
<td>1000.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>% growth</td>
<td>1021.91</td>
<td>2034.18</td>
<td>760.74</td>
<td>1463.87</td>
<td>776.94</td>
<td>1000.27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Trade</td>
<td>4569.17</td>
<td>5997.84</td>
<td>5193.21</td>
<td>6822.77</td>
<td>4917.05</td>
<td>4480.85</td>
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According to the Turkish Statistical Institution, Turkey’s imports from India during 2016 amounted to USD 5.75 billion. Turkey’s exports to India during the same period were USD 651.7 million. As per the provisional data for the period January-February 2017, Turkey’s imports from India were USD 878.14 million and exports to India were USD 110.89 million.

**Cultural Relations:**

India and Turkey share traditional cultural overlap and bilateral cooperation has enhanced over the years. The Turkish edition of Ambassador Pascal Alan Nazareth’s book on Gandhi’s Outstanding Leadership was released at the prestigious Koç University in 2015. Prof. Kaya, Head of Indology Department, Ankara University attended the International Conference on Indology in November, 2015 at New Delhi. Indian theatre group Qadir Ali Baig Foundation showcased a retrospective of their plays in Istanbul from 21-23 May, 2015. The Taj Express Bollywood musical group from India was invited by the local authorities of Antalya to the International Theatre Festival in Antalya in 2015 and again in May, 2016. A photo exhibition on ‘Temples, Forts and Palaces - 2000 years of Indian Architecture’ was organized in 2016 at Ankara University, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Erciyes University, Kayseri and Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University, Istanbul. Bollywood cinema was chosen as the theme for the 4th International Kayseri Golden Sycamore Film Festival. Eleven Indian films were screened during the film festival held at Kayseri in May 2016.

ICCR has a Hindi Chair at the Indology Department of Ankara University and presently a Professor from India is in position, teaching more than 50 local students. Turkish students studied Hindi in Central Institute of Hindi and one Turkish diplomat participated in Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) in India. World Hindi Day was celebrated at the Embassy in collaboration with the Indology Department, Ankara University on 09 January, 2016. Hindi books have been presented to the Indology Department of Erciyes University and Ankara University. The Mission celebrated ITEC Day on 29 September, 2016. 16 students from Turkey studied in India on ITEC scholarship in 2016-17. The Embassy organized several
events to mark the 2nd International Day of Yoga (IDY) in 2016. Demonstrations of yoga were held at the Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara; India Garden in Antalya Expo-2016; and Spice Hotel in Antalya was encouraged and assisted to organize a yoga week. The Expo 2016 Antalya (April-October 2016) featured an India Garden under the aegis of the National Horticulture Board.

The Sixth India-Turkey Forum (Track II) was held in New Delhi on 4 April 2016. President of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Mr. Serdar Cam participated in the Gateway India Dialogue in Mumbai on 13 June 2016. Mr. Erdal Tanas Karagol, an academic from Yildirim Beyazit University, Ankara participated in the international Seminar on ‘Heart of Asia’ hosted by ICWA in New Delhi on 10-11 November 2016. Ms. Feride Gulsan Inan, a policy analyst at the Economic Policy Research Foundation attended the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi in January 2017. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was celebrated in the Embassy on 9 January 2017. Prime Minister’s speech at the PBD and a short film on ‘PBD 2017’ were screened for the Indian community in Ankara. An ‘Indian Culinary Week’ held in Hotel Hilton in Ankara from 27 January to 3 February, 2017 was supported by the Embassy.

Indian Community in Turkey:

The Indian Community in Turkey is small, mostly working in business establishments and universities in Istanbul and Ankara. State Bank of India has a representative office in Istanbul. Turkish Airlines (in a code sharing arrangement with Air India) operates daily flights from Istanbul to Mumbai and Delhi.

Useful resources:
Website: www.indembassy.org.tr
Facebook: India in Turkey (Embassy of India, Ankara)

11 April 2017