

India-Kazakhstan Relations

Relations between India and Kazakhstan are ancient and historical and have always been warm and friendly. In modern times, Pandit Nehru along with Indira Gandhi visited Almaty in 1955. Diplomatic relations were established in February 1992. India was the first country outside CIS region visited by President Nazarbayev after independence of Kazakhstan. This visit in 1992 was followed by the visit of Prime Minister of India Shri Narsimha Rao in 1993 which gave impetus to India-Kazakhstan relations. President Nazarbayev also visited India in December, 1996, February, 2002 and January 2009. In Jan 2009 he was the Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations. Vice President of India Sh. KR Narayanan visited Kazakhstan in September, 1996 and Indian Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Kazakhstan in June, 2002 for 1st CICA Summit and bilateral discussions. Vice President of India Shri Hamid Ansari visited Kazakhstan on 6-10th April, 2008. He held bilateral meetings with President Nazarbayev, Prime Minister and other important Ministers. A number of high level visits since then have laid a solid foundation for a friendly and warm relationship between both countries.

During the visit of President Nazarbayev in January 2009 a Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was adopted which foresees comprehensive cooperation in all spheres. President Nazarbayev met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh along the sidelines of the SCO summit in Yekaterinburg on June 16, 2009 and again on April 11, 2010 on the sidelines of Nuclear Security Summit in Washington and held fruitful discussions on promoting bilateral relations. As a follow up to the discussions, EAM Shri S.M. Krishna visited Kazakhstan on 11th-13th May, 2010. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Astana on 15-16 April 2011. During the visit, several Agreements were signed. *Important among them were (i) Agreement between ONGC Videsh Limited and Kazmunaigas on Satpayev Exploration Block, (ii) Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, and (iii) Joint Action Plan for furthering Strategic Partnership between India and Kazakhstan.* Later, EAM Shri S M Krishna visited Astana on 14-15 June 2011 to attend the 10th Summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. H.E Mr Yerlan Idrissov, Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan led a high level official delegation to India on invitation of External Affairs Minister of India from 3-5 March 2013. This visit by Kazakh Foreign Minister to India was after 13 years since the last one in 1999. This was followed by visit of Shri Salman Khurshid, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister to Almaty to attend 3rd "Heart of Asia" Istanbul Ministerial Conference from 25-26 April 2013. Shri E. Ahamed, Hon'ble MoS Ministry of External Affairs visited Almaty to chair the 2nd India-Central Asia Dialogue Forum from 17-18 June 2013. Gen. (Retd.) Dr V.K. Singh, Honourable Minister of State for External Affairs visited Astana on December 14-15, 2014 to participate in the 13th Session of SCO Heads of Government Meeting. He called on Prime Minister Karim Massimov.

Foreign Office Consultations at the level of Deputy Foreign Ministers are held annually to discuss the entire range of bilateral relations and exchange views on international issues. Last Consultations were held in New Delhi in March 2012. The India-Kazakhstan Inter-Governmental Commission established in 1992 has been instrumental in developing bilateral trade, economic, scientific, technological, industrial and cultural cooperation. The Commission co-chaired by Minister P&NG held its 10th Session in 8-9 January 2013 in New Delhi. The 11th IGC meeting between India and Kazakhstan was held in Astana from 24-25 April, 2014. Joint Working Groups and Sub-Committees within the Commission or otherwise, in the

areas of Counter Terrorism, Trade & Economic Cooperation, Information Technology, Hydrocarbons and Textiles have been actively contributing to development of bilateral cooperation. Both the sides have agreed to constitute two more JVGs, one on Transport and the other on Pharmaceuticals. The 3rd meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in New Delhi from 20-21 February, 2014.

Chief of Army Staff, Gen. V K Singh, visited Kazakhstan from 19-21 November, 2011. He had meeting with Mr Adilbek Dzhaksybekov, Defence Minister of Kazakhstan and Maj Gen Talgat Zhanzhumanov, Deputy Minister of Defence, in addition to delegations level talks with Lt. Gen. Murat Maikayev, Chief of Land Forces of Kazakhstan. Colonel-General Saken Zhasuzakov, First Deputy Defence Minister and Chief of Staff visited India on December 8-11, 2014. He called on Shri Manohar Parrikar, Defence Minister and Shri Ajit Doval, National Security Advisor. He also met Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to the Chairman Chief of Staff Committee.

India and Kazakhstan actively cooperate under the aegis of Multilateral Fora including CICA, SCO and the UN organizations. India has been a consistent supporter of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) and is actively participating in the process. CICA is the only Central Asian forum of which India is a member. India was admitted as Observer in the SCO Summit held in July 2005 in Astana. Kazakhstan is supportive of India's permanent membership to UNSC. Kazakhstan also cooperates with India in the field of counter terrorism and had condemned the Mumbai attacks in 2008.

Bilateral trade during January-September 2014 touched US\$ 941.94 million, which represents an increase of 84% compared to US\$ 510.06 for the corresponding period in 2013. Major products imported by India during January-September 2014, are petroleum oils and oils from bituminous minerals (US\$ 691.40 million), radioactive chemical elements and isotopes (US\$ 34.01 million), asbestos (US\$ 19.18 million) and titanium (US\$ 4.55 million). Major products exported to Kazakhstan are pharmaceuticals and medical products (US\$ 54.39 millions), Tea (US\$ 36 million), telephone apparatus (US\$ 4.62), raw tobacco (US\$ 4.5 million) and construction machinery. Prospects for cooperation in spheres of Oil and Gas, Civil Nuclear Energy, Uranium, agriculture, public health, information technology, education, culture and defence are promising. Mr Rajeev Kher, Commerce Secretary led an official-cum-business delegation comprising of officials from department of Commerce, CII representatives and executives of select 12 companies to Kazakhstan for Ministry of Commerce flag-ship trade exhibition "INDIA SHOW-2014". The India Show was held in Almaty from 27-30 March 2014, where over 140 Indian companies and PSU's representing diverse sectors such as manufacturing, engineering products, mechanical equipments, chemicals, pharmaceutical products, oil sector, food processing industry, textiles, garments, handicrafts and mining participated.

A fresh impetus to bilateral trade and commercial relations was given as a result of the visit of President Nazarbayev to India in January 2009. An agreement between ONGC Videsh Ltd. and KazMunaiGaz on Satpayev oil block and MoU between NPCIL and Kazatomprom envisaging cooperation including supply of uranium to India among others was signed during the visit. A memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the field of Space; extradition treaty between both countries and the protocol on the accession of Kazakhstan to WTO was also signed during the visit. An Agreement between ONGC Videsh Limited and Kazmunaigas on

the purchase of 25% stake in the Satpayev Oil Block in the Caspian Sea was signed in Astana on 16th April 2011 during the visit of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Kazakhstan and India cooperate with each other under International North South Transport Corridor Project. Tourism Ministry has been participating regularly in Kazakhstan International Tourism and Travel Fair. India Central Asia Foundation (ICAF) with the support of Ministry of External Affairs conducted Central Asia Expedition beginning from Astana, Kazakhstan through Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan, from 18 September- 5 October 2013. The delegation consisted of representatives from academia, scientific community, journalists and ex-defence personnel.

Current Indian Participation in Kazakhstan

- Arcelor Mittal Temirtau
- SUN Group represented as the “Yubellinoe” company in Kazakhstan
- KazStroyService with 33% share of Arvind Tiku
- KEC (laying Transmission Lines)
- Punjab National Bank (4 operational branches, first PSU bank having wholly owned operations in the region)
- ONGC Videsh Limited (25% stake in Satpayev Block of Caspian Sea)
- 3i-infotech Limited (offering business solutions)

Indian Cultural Centre conducts classes in Yoga, Hindi and Kathak dances. India trains specialists and scholars from Kazakhstan in various fields under ITEC program sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs, and under the ICCR Scholarship programmes for international students. Since 1992 more than 750 specialists have undergone training under ITEC and more than 160 students have studied in India under ICCR programme.

India and Kazakhstan have an agreement on visa free entry for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders. The first Bilateral Consular Consultations between India and Kazakhstan was held in Astana on 5-6 November 2009. There are about 2000 NRIs in the whole of Kazakhstan. Most of the NRIs are in the private sector (oil exploration, downstream industries, steel and IT) and business (tea, pharmaceuticals etc). An Indian Association is in place with headquarters in Almaty with branches in major cities of Kazakhstan.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Astana website:

<http://indembastana.in/>

Embassy of India, Astana Facebook:

www.facebook.com/EmbassyOfIndiaKazakhstan?ref=hl

Embassy of India, Astana Twitter account: @indembastana

December 2014