

India-DPR Korea Relations

Relations between India and DPR Korea have been generally characterised by friendship, cooperation and understanding. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement, there is a commonality of views between the two on many international issues, e.g. Disarmament, South-South Cooperation, etc. Both sides continue to work closely in international fora and support each other on various issues of bilateral and international interests. India had welcomed the North-South Joint Declaration of 15 June 2000 and favours reduction of tension on the Korean peninsula and reunification of the two Koreas through peaceful means and direct dialogue between them. India and DPRK have been cooperating in the UN and other international organizations. Regular and meaningful exchange of views on bilateral issues of mutual interest and concern are conducted through mechanism of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). The first JS-DG level Talks were held in Pyongyang during 2-4 April 2013. After a gap of nearly 5 years, FOC was held in New Delhi on 26 April 2016. India, however, strongly condemned DPR Korea's nuclear tests and frequent ballistic missile tests and also urged DPR Korea to restrain from further nuclear and ballistic missile tests to ease tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements with brief notes

- i) Agreement between DPRK and India on Cooperation in the field of Science & Technology signed on 8 May 1991 (initially valid for 5 years unless decided for its termination by any of the parties). A Protocol was to be signed later for implementation of the Agreement, which has not been done so far.
- ii) Agreement on Scientific Cooperation between State Academy of DPRK and Indian National Science Academy signed on 14 June 1994 (initially valid for two years and then to be automatically extended for five years if not terminated by either of the parties).
- iii) Protocol on Cooperation between the Ministry of External Affairs of India and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of DPRK signed on 17 February 1998 (initially valid for five years and then to be automatically extended for a further period of five years unless decided for its termination by any of the parties).
- iv) First Cultural Agreement between India and DPRK was signed in 1976. The 11th Cultural Exchange Programme for 2010-12 was signed during the visit of Secretary, Ministry of Culture, from 23-25 March 2010.
- v) An Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Information between India and DPRK was signed in April 2006. Under Article IX of the Agreement, a Joint Committee was to be set up to review the progress of the Agreement. The Indian side formed a Committee in November 2006. The first meeting, which was supposed to be held in Pyongyang, has been postponed for one reason or the other. It would be held once a date is finalized by the both sides.
- vi) The 12th Cultural Exchange Programme for 2017-2020 between India and DPR Korea is in the final draft stage.

Bilateral Visits – Brief details of important two-way visits

(From India to DPRK)

1. Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, Vice President (April 1992) at the invitation of DPRK Vice President who visited India in May 1991.
2. Shri H.S. Surjeet, General Secretary of CPI (M) – (April 1993) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
3. Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal (May 1994) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
4. Shri P. Shiv Shanker, Governor of Sikkim (August 1995) to participate on the Liberation Day of Korea.
5. Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, MOS for I&B (September 1998) to attend 6th Pyongyang Film Festival.
6. Shri Rajiv Sikri, Secretary (East) and Shri Ashok K. Kantha, Joint Secretary (EA) (June 2005) in connection with the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).
7. Shri N. Ravi, Secretary(East) visited in May 2008.
8. Shri Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, visited in March 2010.
9. Shri Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East) and Shri Sandeep Chakravorty Director(EA) visited Pyongyang in September 2011 for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).
10. Prof. Sandip K. Mishra, Department of East Asian Studies, University of Delhi, visited Pyongyang during 3-13 March 2013, for research at various Universities and meeting with scholars from Pyongyang University.
11. Shri Gautam H. Bambawale, JS (EA). and Shri Vijai Kumar, DS(EA), Ministry of External Affairs visited Pyongyang for 1st JS-Director General level Talks during 3-6 April 2013.
12. A 3-member delegation of Hon'ble MPs - Sh. Sitaram V. Yechuri (RS); Sh. Tarun Vijay (RS); and Muhammed Hamdullah Sayeed (LS); and Sh. Vijai Kumar, DS(EA) - participated in the 60th Anniversary of the Victory in the Fatherland Liberation War during 26-29 July 2013.

(High Level visits from DPRK to India)

1. Mr. Li Gun Mo, Prime Minister (February 1988) on a goodwill visit.
2. Mr. Li Jong Ok, Vice President of DPRK (May 1991 and March 1993).
3. Mr. Yang Hyong Sop, Chairman, Supreme People's Assembly (April, 1998).
4. Mr. Choe Thae Bok, Chairman of SPA as Secretary of Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (October 1998).
5. Mr. Pak Gil Yon, Vice Foreign Minister (April 2000).
6. Mr. Jang Chol, Vice-Chairman of Supreme People's Assembly (January 2003).
7. Mr. Choe Chang Sik, Vice Minister of Public Health in November 2005 to attend the 3rd GAVI Partners' Meeting held in New Delhi.
8. Mr. Ma Chol Su, Director of 4th Department in the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (March 2006) to discuss bilateral matters with JS (EA).
9. Mr. Ri Ju Kwan, Vice-Chairman of the DPRK Information Committee (April 2006) to sign the Agreement on Cooperation in the field on Information.

10. Mr Kim Yong Il, Vice Foreign Minister, visited Delhi in May 2007 and August 2009.
11. Mr. Ri Su Yong, Foreign Minister of DPR Korea on a bilateral and stand-alone visit (12-14 April 2015) – the first ever Ministerial-level visit from DPR Korea in nearly three decades.
12. Mr. Ri. Gil Song, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of DPR Korea for Foreign Office Consultation in April 2016.
13. Mr. Kang Il Sop, Chairman of the State Commission for Emergency & Disaster Management of DPRK to attend the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction from 2-5 November 2016.

ITEC Assistance and programmes

Since 2002-2003, five ITEC slots were being offered to DPRK. For 2004, India agreed to increase the slots from five to 10. Accordingly, 10 DPRK nationals were sent to India to participate in “Programme on Development, Implementation and Management of Computer Software Applications”, “English for Professionals” and “International Diploma Programme in Education Planning & Administration-XXI” courses in 2004-05. The ITEC slots were increased to 18 in 2008-09. Gradually, the slots have remained under-utilized; the number of slots was reduced to 10 in 2011-12. In 2011-12, DPRK was offered 10 slots. In September 2001, DPRK requested for providing slots in Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) at the Foreign Service Institute. Accordingly, one slot was offered to DPRK. The DPRK side has, however, requested at least two slots as under their policy, DPRK does not depute single candidate to any foreign country. Their request was considered and two DPRK female diplomats were trained at the 40th PCFD held from 1 February 2006 to 10 March 2006. Despite our best efforts, it has not been possible since then to accommodate two DPRK diplomats for the PCFD course. Ministry offered a total of 15 ITEC slots during 2014-2015 and DPRK had utilized 14 slots. Ministry allotted 30 ITEC slots to DPR Korea for the Financial Year 2015-2016. For 2016-17, Ministry also allocated 25 ITEC slots, but none attended. Ministry has also allotted two slots for DPRK for PCFD Course recently. Unfortunately, DPRK could not avail itself of this opportunity.

Commercial and Economic Relations - with trade, and investment details

Bilateral trade between India and DPRK declined during the recent past mainly due to the latter’s inability to carry on foreign trade due to financial crunch. According to available data (source: DGFT, MoC), India’s export to DPRK was US\$ 44.99 million and import was US\$ 85.39 million during the Financial Year 2016-2017. For the current financial year (April-May 2017), India’s export to DPRK stands at US \$ 6.21 million whereas import stands at US \$ 4.74 million. Adhering to UNSC sanctions resolutions, India has banned all trade, except food and medicine, with DPRK with effect from April this year.

Humanitarian Assistance

India has been extending humanitarian assistance to DPRK, which has suffered food shortages during the last few years as a result of natural calamities. The DPRK authorities have expressed their gratitude for India's humanitarian assistance to them from time to time. The assistance provided from India consisted of consignment of blankets, rice, wheat, baby food, polythene sheets, etc. In the past, India donated 2,000 MT of white rice in September 2002 and 1000 MT of rice in July 2004. 200,000 Dexamethasone 4 mg. (1 ml injection) were also provided to the DPRK. India also donated medicines for the victims of the Ryongchon train blast. DPRK was also provided 2,000 MT of rice in January 2006 as gift of Government and people of India. India had also provided food assistance worth US\$ 1.00 million through WFP in 2011. Government of India once again provided food assistance in the form of soybeans to DPR Korea worth US \$ 1 million through WFP in 2016.

DPRK Government donated US\$ 30,000 to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund for the relief of the people affected by the Tsunami that hit India in December 2004.

Cultural Relations - Incoming and outgoing cultural troupes over last few years

Under the Cultural Agreement between India and DPRK signed in 1976, ICCR used to send cultural troupes to the April Spring Friendship Art Festival in Pyongyang every year. A *Bhangra/Giddha* dance troupe participated in 2004 Spring Festival to mark the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between Government of India and the Government of the DPR Korea for the year 2017-2020 is in the final draft stage. However, no cultural troupe from India visited DPR Korea since the last several years.

Pyongyang International Film Festivals

India has been participating in this biennial Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF) on a regular basis. Koreans are fond of Indian feature films and popular films are admired and fondly remembered by the Korean public and authorities. Bengali film "Ek Nadir Galpo" (Tale of a river) won the award for its music in the 11th PIFF, and the 12th Film Festival in 2010 saw the Indian feature film "For Real" winning a special prize. India participated in the 13th Pyongyang International Film Festival in September 2012 with ten Indian movies with two feature films i.e. *Urumi* (Malayalam) and *Balgandharva* (Marathi) as well as one documentary on 'Songs of Mashangva'. India participated in the 14th PIFF in September 2014, the organizers screened a total of 8 Indian feature films. Sanjay Bhansali's "Ram Leela" and Anil Sharma's "Singh Sahab the Great" won the best technology and special awards respectively. The 15th PIFF was held in September 2016 and Indian feature film "Masaan" won the best music award whereas "Ram Singh Charlie" won the best screenplay award. Shri P.C. Sharma, one Indian film director, was a member of jury for the 15th PIFF.

Korea-India Friendship Association

The Korea-India Friendship Association (KIFA) was established in February 1970 by the Committee for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries (CCRFC) to foster friendly relations and to project India's cultural image in DPRK. The Association is the nodal point for interaction between the Mission and the CCRFC, which is the counterpart of our ICCR. The Association has been organizing events from time to time for promoting relations between the two countries. The Association runs a Friendship School, a Farm and a Shoe Factory. India donated 100 Kg of wheat seed in March 2006. Computers and Audio Visual equipments were also donated to the India-DPRK Friendship School in August 2006. Department of Culture had been sanctioning Grant-in-Aid to the tune of Rs.50,000/- to the Association up to 2009-10. In 2010-11, a cheque of Euro 2000/- was given to the Association under the sanction of the Ministry of Culture. During the Financial Year 2013-14 also, Ministry of Culture sanctioned a Grant-in-Aid of Rs.5 lakh which was given to the Association in the form of computers, printers and fertilizer. For the Financial Year 2014-2015, GOI sanctioned a Grant-in-Aid of Rs.5 lakh and given to the units of DPR Korea-India Friendship Association in the form of Power-Tiller, computers, LED TVs. Ministry of Culture has sanctioned Grant-in-Aid of Rs.5 Lakh for 2015-16 also and distributed to the KIFA units. In 2016-2017, Ministry of Culture sanctioned Grant-in-Aid of Rs.5 lakh and the amount was distributed to KIFA units in the form of fertilizers, TV, Projectors etc. ICCR also donated musical instruments to the KIFA run school.

40th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and DPRK

To commemorate the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and the DPR Korea (10 December 2013), the Mission donated 300 Hindi Books and software (Hindi *Adhyapak*) to the Pyongyang University of Foreign Studies (PUFS) on 28 October 2013, screened Indian feature film '*Taare Zameen Par*' in association with Cultural Committee for Relations with Foreign Countries (CCRFC) and DPR Korea-India Friendship Society on 27 November 2013 which was attended by Diplomatic Missions and UN Agencies in Pyongyang, including 80 prominent DPRK citizens and members of Korea-India Friendship Association. To conclude the series of events, a reception was organized with DPRK Foreign Minister as the Chief Guest.

Indian Community

There are only 12 Indians presently living in DPR Korea working for UN Agencies viz. UNDP, UNICEF, WFP, WHO and UNFPA and International NGOs, including members of their families.

Air links with India/Convenient Travel Routes

There is no direct air connection between India and DPRK. One can travel via Hong Kong or by a direct flight to Beijing. Air Koryo operates flights from Beijing thrice a week on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Air China operates two flights in a week on Monday and Friday during summer between March and October. Train service between Beijing to Pyongyang is four times a week (Monday/Thursday Korean train and Wednesday/Saturday Chinese train).

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Pyongyang's website:

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

August 2017