

India-DPR Korea Relations

Political Relations:

Relations between India and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) have been characterized by friendship, cooperation, and understanding and diplomatic ties, established in 1973. As members of the Non-Aligned Movement, both countries share common views on various international issues, such as disarmament and South-South Cooperation. They continue to collaborate closely in international forums and support each other on bilateral and international issues.

India welcomed the North-South Joint Declaration of June 15, 2000, and favors reducing tension on the Korean Peninsula and reunifying the two Koreas through peaceful means and direct dialogue. India and the DPRK cooperate in the United Nations and other international organizations. Regular exchanges of views on bilateral issues occur through Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).

The first Joint Secretary-Director General level talks took place in Pyongyang from April 2-4, 2013. After a five-year gap, the FOC resumed in New Delhi on April 26, 2016. The Indian Embassy in Pyongyang reopened on October 2021 and started functioning after its temporary closure in June 2021. India aims to further strengthen relations and is looking forward to the next FOC.

However, India strongly condemned the DPRK's nuclear tests and frequent ballistic missile tests, urging restraint 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) An Agreement on Scientific Cooperation was signed between the State Academy of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the Indian National Science Academy on June 14, 1994. The agreement is valid for an initial period of two years.

(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.

Bilateral Visits – Brief details of important two-way visits (from India to DPRK)

- Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma, Vice President (April 1992) at the invitation of DPRK Vice President who visited India in May 1991.
- Shri H.S. Surjeet, General Secretary of CPI (M) – (April 1993) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
- Shri Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal (May 1994) at the invitation of Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea.
- Shri P. Shiv Shanker, Governor of Sikkim (August 1995) to participate on the Liberation Day of Korea.
- Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, MOS for I&B (September 1998) to attend 6th Pyongyang Film Festival.
- Shri Rajiv Sikri, Secretary (East) and Shri Ashok K. Kantha, Joint Secretary (EA) (June 2005) in connection with the Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).
- Shri N. Ravi, Secretary (East) visited in May 2008.
- Shri Jawhar Sircar, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, visited in March 2010.
- Shri Sanjay Singh, Secretary (East) and Shri Sandeep Chakravorty Director (EA) visited Pyongyang in September 2011 for Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).

- 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.
- Shri Gautam H. Bambawale, JS (EA) and Shri Vijai Kumar, DS(EA), Ministry of External Affairs visited Pyongyang for 1st JS-DG level talks during 3-6 April 2013.
- A three-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:

- Mr. Li Gun Mo, Prime Minister (February 1988) on a goodwill visit.
- Mr. Li Jong Ok, Vice President of DPRK (May 1991 and March 1993).
- Mr. Yang Hyong Sop, Chairman, Supreme People's Assembly (April, 1998).
- Mr. Choe Thae Bok, Chairman of SPA as Secretary of Central Committee of the Workers' Party of Korea (October 1998).
- Mr. Pak Gil Yon, Vice Foreign Minister (April 2000).
- Mr. Jang Chol, Vice-Chairman of Supreme People's Assembly (January 2003).
- Mr. Choe Chang Sik, Vice Minister of Public Health in November 2005 to attend the 3rd GAVI Partners' Meeting held in New Delhi.
- Mr. Ma Chol Su, Director of 4th Department in the DPRK Ministry of Foreign Affairs (March 2006) to discuss bilateral matters with JS (EA).
- Mr. Ri Ju Kwan, Vice-Chairman of the DPRK Information Committee (April 2006) to sign the Agreement on Cooperation in the field on Information.
- Mr Kim Yong Il, Vice Foreign Minister, visited Delhi in May 2007 and August 2009.
- 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.
- Mr. Ri. Gil Song, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of DPR Korea for Foreign Office Consultation in April 2016.
- 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:

India has been offering training slots to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program since 2002-2003. This program enables DPRK officials and professionals to participate in short-term training courses in various fields,

including:

Government Functions: Training covers public administration, good governance, and government accounting.

Environment and Climate Change: Programs address environmental management, climate change mitigation, and sustainable development.

Agriculture: Courses focus on agricultural research, extension management, and rural development.

Despite the opportunities offered, the utilization of allocated slots has been relatively low compared to other partner countries. Both India and DPRK are keen to explore possibilities to fully utilize the slots allocated by the Government of India in the future

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. Adhering to UNSC sanctions resolutions, India has banned all trade, except food and medicine, with DPRK with effect from April 2017. Recently however there was a controversy regarding DPRK's Trade with India on reported violation of the UN Security Council sanctions on North Korea during 2017, by importing metals worth US\$ 2.2 million and exporting jewellery valued at more than \$ 5,78,000.

India- DPRK Bilateral Trade figures (in US\$ Millions)

S.No.	Year	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018 Apr-Feb
1.	EXPORT	202.78	186.80	76.52	110.88	44.84	55.39
2.	%Growth		-7.88	-59.03	44.90	-59.56	
3	IMPORT	259.39	12.48	131.93	87.90	88.59	25.46
4	%Growth		-95.19	956.75	-33.37	0.79	
5	TOTAL TRADE	462.16	199.29	208.45	198.78	133.43	80.85

(Source . Ministry of Commerce)

No Data is available after 2018.

Due to extensive UN sanctions, Indian exports to DPRK have been negligible since 2019. However, some Indian herbal and cosmetic products are still available in the local market, albeit in very limited quantities.

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 for the last several years.

After re-opening of the Embassy, Govt of DPRK is keen to send cultural delegation to India and also desired to receive cultural delegation from India.

Pyongyang International Film Festivals:

India's Participation in Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF)

India has been a regular participant in the biennial Pyongyang International Film Festival (PIFF). Indian feature films are highly admired by the Korean public and authorities.

Notable Achievements:

- The Bengali film "Ek Nadir Galpo" (Tale of a River) won the music award at the 11th PIFF.
- The Indian feature film "For Real" received a special prize at the 12th PIFF in 2010.
- In 2012, India participated in the 13th PIFF with ten films, including "Urumi" (Malayalam) and "Balgandharva" (Marathi).
- At the 14th PIFF in 2014, Indian films "Ram Leela" and "Singh Sahab the Great" won awards for best technology and special awards, respectively.
- In 2016, "Masaan" won the best music award, and "Ram Singh Charlie" won the best screenplay award at the 15th PIFF.

Indian films are extremely popular in DPRK, with no restrictions on their screening. They are a staple in every household, showcasing the strong cultural bond between India and DPRK.

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 till 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. For the years 2016-2017 and 2017-18, 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.

According to new regulations, no associations are allowed to establish connections or collaborations with any foreign country.

Indian Community:

No Indian living in DPRK.

Air links with India/Convenient Travel Routes:

There is no direct air connection between India and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Travelers must transit through Beijing or Vladivostok. Air Koryo operates flights:

Three times a week: Pyongyang-Beijing-Pyongyang

Twice a week: Pyongyang-Vladivostok-Pyongyang (subject to passenger demand)

No train services or other travel options are available to reach DPRK.

Pyongyang: 12th February 2025