

India-Iran Relations

Political

India-Iran relations span millennia marked by meaningful interactions. The two countries shared a border till 1947 and share several common features in their language, culture and traditions. India and Iran established diplomatic links on March 15, 1950. In addition to the Embassy in Tehran, India has two Consulates in Iran, one in Bandar Abbas and other in Zahedan. Before the Iranian Revolution of 1979, the Shah of Iran visited India twice (March 1956 and February 1978) and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru visited Iran in 1959. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Prime Minister Morarji Desai visited Iran in April 1974 and June 1977 respectively. After the Iranian Revolution, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visited Iran in 1993 and President Rafsanjani paid a visit to India in 1995. Indian Vice President K. R. Narayanan visited Iran in October 1996.

The trend was enhanced at the turn of the millennium with the visit of Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Tehran in April 2001 wherein the two countries signed the “**Tehran Declaration**” which set forth the areas of possible cooperation between the two countries. President Mohammad Khatami visited India from January 24-28, 2003 as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day parade. Both sides signed “**The New Delhi Declaration**” which set forth the vision of strategic partnership between India and Iran. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh visited Iran to attend the 16th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit held in Tehran from August 28-31, 2012. Prime Minister met Supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and President Ahmadinejad. External Affairs Minister Salman Khurshid visited Tehran for the 17th India-Iran Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in May 2013. Vice President Hamid Ansari graced the swearing-in ceremony of the newly elected Iranian President Dr. Hassan Rouhani in August 2013. Foreign Minister Zarif visited India on February 28, 2014. He called on the Prime Minister and also met Indian Vice President and External Affairs Minister. Iranian Roads and Urban Development Minister Abbas Akhoundi visited India on November 26, 2014 and had meetings with Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari and Railways minister Suresh Prabhu. Foreign Minister Zarif visited India again on August 13-14, 2015 and called on Prime Minister Modi and held discussions with External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi visited Iran in January, 2016 as a special guest in the 10th International Energy Management Conference. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Iran from April 16-17, 2016. During the visit External Affairs Minister called on President Rouhani and held delegation level talks with her counterpart Foreign Minister Dr Zarif. Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar visited Tehran from September 10-12, 2016 as a Special Envoy of the Government and met Foreign Minister Dr Zarif. Foreign Minister Zarif accompanied by a large business delegation visited India from December 3-4, 2016 for the 6th Heart of Asia Ministerial Conference in Amritsar.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi paid a bilateral visit to Iran from May 22-23, 2016. 12 MoUs/Agreements were signed between India and Iran. A Trilateral agreement on Transit and Transport was signed between India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Modi, President Rouhani and Afghan President Ashraf Ghani. Prime Minister Modi also inaugurated the International Conference titled "India-Iran two great civilizations" in Vahdat Hall, Tehran and Prime released a Persian Manuscript "Kalileh Wa Dimneh". Prime Minister Modi met the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and President Rouhani. Joint Statement titled "Civilizational Connect, Contemporary context" was released.

Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari represented India at the inauguration ceremony of President Rouhani on August 5, 2017. During the visit, Shri Gadkari interacted with President Rouhani, called on First Vice President Eshaq Jahangiri and met his counterpart Dr Abbas Akhondi.

The two countries have in place Bilateral Consultative Mechanisms at various levels which meet regularly. The 18th India-Iran JCM was held in New Delhi on December 28, 2015. It was co-chaired by External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Dr. Ali Tayyebnia, Minister of Economy and Finance of Iran. A MoU on cooperation in trade, finance, energy, infrastructure and cultural issues was signed during the JCM. Foreign Offices of both countries also hold regular consultations on bilateral and regional issues. Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Ebrahim Rahimpour visited India on February 4, 2016. Dr. S. Jaishankar, Foreign Secretary visited Iran from May 16-17, 2017 for Foreign Office Consultations with his counterpart Mr. Ebrahim Rahimpour, Deputy Foreign Minister for Asia and Pacific. During the visit Dr. Jaishankar also called on Foreign Minister Javad Zarif, Petroleum Minister Bijan Namdar Zanegeh and met Deputy Foreign Minister Jaber Ansari.

Commercial Relations

India-Iran enjoys economic and commercial ties covering many sectors though it has traditionally been dominated by Indian import of Iranian crude oil. India continued to engage with Iran at the time of sanctions. The India-Iran bilateral trade during the fiscal year 2016-17 was USD 12.89 billion. India imported USD 10.5 billion worth of goods mainly crude oil and exported commodities worth USD 2.4 billion. Major Indian exports to Iran include rice, tea, iron and steel, organic chemicals, metals, electrical machinery, drugs/pharmaceuticals, etc. Major Indian imports from Iran include petroleum and its products, inorganic/organic chemicals, fertilizers, plastic and articles, edible fruit and nuts, glass and glassware, natural or cultured pearls, precious or semiprecious stones, etc. Minister of State for Petroleum and Natural Gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan accompanied by representatives of ONGC, IOCL, GAIL and MRPL visited Iran from April 8-10, 2016. He held discussions with his counterpart Oil Minister Zanganeh on Farzad B and other related matters.

During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Tehran in May 2016, the contract on Chabahar was signed which inter-alia commits to Indian investment of \$85 million for equipping the Chabahar port. The Trilateral Transit Agreement (Chabahar Agreement) was signed by the three transport ministers of India, Iran and Afghanistan in the presence of Prime Minister Modi, President Rouhani and President Ashraf Ghani. The agreement has since been ratified by India and Afghanistan and is awaiting ratification by Iran.

The Chambers of Commerce of both countries have regular interactions including visits of commercial delegations. Some of the significant commercial delegations which have visited Iran include the 18-member Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), CEO's delegation of multi-sectoral businesses led by Dr. Naushad Forbes, President of CII from April 24-26, 2016. A 17-member FICCI delegation led by Mr. Yogendra Kumar Modi, former President, FICCI and Executive Chairman, GEECL visited Iran in April, 2016. A 25-member Tea delegation led by Shri Santosh Sarangi, Chairman, Tea Board of India visited Iran from February 14-16, 2016 to discuss matters pertaining to Tea quality/standards. A 3-member delegation from the State Trading Corporation of India Ltd. (STC), visited Iran from May 1-4, 2016 to discuss steel rail contract and other issues. A 32-member delegation of Federation of Indian Exporters Organization (FIEO) visited Iran from May 21-20, 2016 to explore mutual business cooperation in various sectors. A fertilizer delegation comprising of representatives from Rashtriya Chemical Fertilizers (RCF) and Gujarat State Fertilizers Chemicals Ltd (GSFC) visited Iran from November 6-9, 2016. A 4-member delegation comprising of Mr. Arvind Chaudhary, Director (Ports) Ministry of Shipping and Mr. A K Gupta, MD of IPGL visited Iran from November 5-9, 2016 to continue discussions on the implementation of the contract on Chabahar Port. A team of OVL visited Iran from December 5-6, 2016 to continue discussions on the Farzad B gas field. An OVL delegation visited Tehran on August 22-24, 2017 at the invitation of NIOC to attend briefing on Azadegan oil field tendering process.

Cultural Relations

An Indian Cultural Centre is currently functioning within the Embassy premises which was inaugurated by Shri. Salman Khurshid, then EAM during his visit to Iran for the NAM summit in May 3, 2013. Iran has Cultural Centres in Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai. During the visit of Prime Minister Modi to Tehran in May 2016, MoUs on India-Iran Cultural Exchange Programme, ICCR and ICRO, Iran, National Archives of India and the National Library and Archives Organisation of Iran were signed. It was also agreed for establishing a chair for Hindi language in Tehran University and India-Iran Eminent Persons Group.

Mission undertakes various cultural activities including Indian Cultural week, celebration of important days and events among others. The 3rd International Day of Yoga was celebrated at the premises of Kendriya Vidyalaya school premises on June 21, 2017. More than 500 Iranians participated. Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia

had a musical concert in Vahdat Hall, Tehran on April 23, 2016. Among the guests included DFM Rahimpour and Deputy Minister for Culture Mohammadzadeh as well as Ambassadors of other countries. Vishwa Hindi Diwas was celebrated by Embassy on January 10, 2016 at Kendriya Vidyalaya school premises. Embassy has been bringing out a bi-monthly magazine named "Ain-e-Hind" (Mirror of India) taking India to the drawing rooms of the general Iranian public. Indian Instrumental Concert (Violin) in collaboration with Infosys was held on January 25, 2017 in Andisheh Cultural Organization hall. An Indian classical music concert was held on August 15-16, 2017 in Tehran to mark India @70 celebrations.

Indian community

While there was a large Indian community in Iran during the Shah's time, post Revolution this has dwindled and there is now a small Indian community in Iran consisting of 80-100 families in Tehran and some 13-15 families in Zahedan. The Indian Community in Iran comprises of around 4000 Indian nationals. There are, approximately 2800 Indian nationals undergoing theological studies in Qom, Mashhad and Esfahan. There is an Indian school run by the Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) in Tehran and another Indian school in Zahedan. The KVS Tehran has staff strength of 8 including the Principal. It has classes from LKG to class 12. The Vidyalaya Management Committee Chairman is the Ambassador of India to Iran. The Indian Secondary School in Zahedan is the only existing English medium school in Zahedan which is following NCERT Syllabus.

Useful Resources

www.indianembassy-tehran.ir

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