

India-Azerbaijan Relations

India-Azerbaijan relations are based on civilisational linkages, cultural affinities and shared values of understanding and respect for other cultures.

Highlights

- In 2024, Azerbaijan received 243,589 tourists from India, a 108% increase over the number of tourist arrivals in 2023 (117,302). During this period, India was the 3rd largest source of inbound tourists for Azerbaijan, after Russia and Türkiye.
- Delhi and Mumbai have direct flight connectivity with Baku. Of the 14 direct flights a week, 10 are between Delhi and Baku and 4 between Mumbai and Baku.
- ONGC Videsh Ltd has invested more than US\$ 1.2 billion in acquiring stakes in the Azeri – Chirag - Gunashli (ACG) oil and gas fields and the Baku – Tbilisi - Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipe line.
- Around 28-30 Indian movies and advertisements have been filmed at various locations in Azerbaijan in the last 4 years.
- The famous Azerbaijani singer and actor, Rashid Behbudov, was a close friend of Raj Kapoor.

Historical Relations

2. The 'Ateshgah' fire temple in the vicinity of Baku is a fine example of the age-old historical relations and cultural exchanges between India and Azerbaijan. This 18th century monument, with a much older history, has wall inscriptions in Devanagiri and Gurmukhi, and is a surviving proof of the trade links and hospitality that Indian merchants on the Silk Route to Europe enjoyed in Azerbaijani cities such as Baku and Ganja.

3. During the period when Azerbaijan was a part of the erstwhile Soviet Union, India's ties with the then Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic were primarily through Moscow. India's Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, former President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (as Vice President in 1956) and former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (in 1961) visited the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

4. India recognized Azerbaijan as an independent country in December 1991, soon after it proclaimed its independence from the USSR. Diplomatic relations with Azerbaijan were established on 28 February 1992. The

resident Indian Mission was opened in Baku in March 1999. Azerbaijan opened its resident Mission in New Delhi in October 2004.

Political Relations

5. Former Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, visited Baku for the NAM Summit from 24-26 October 2019, accompanied by EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar. EAM met Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, Jeyhun Bayramov on the sidelines of 19th NAM Summit in Kampala on 19 January 2024. Former EAM, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, visited Azerbaijan from 4-6 Apr 2018 for attending NAM Ministerial Conference and for a bilateral visit. Hon'ble PM participated in the online NAM Summit on the theme "United against COVID-19" held at the initiative of Azerbaijani President, on 04 May 2020. Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State from Commerce and Industry visited Baku for the 6th meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission, held on 25 Oct 2023. Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, Hon'ble MoS for Environment, Forests & Climate Change and External Affairs led the Indian delegation to COP29, held in Baku from 11-24 Nov 2024.

6. There have been several Ministerial level visits from Azerbaijan to India since 1991. Deputy Foreign Minister Mr. Elnur Mammadov visited India on 28-29 November 2022 for the Foreign Office Consultations, and again on 03-05 March 2023 to participate in Raisina Dialogue. Azerbaijan has participated in all three editions of VoGSS. VoGSS-1.0 and VoGSS-2.0 saw Azerbaijani participation in Energy Ministers' Sessions and in VoGSS-3.0, the participation was in the Environment Ministers' Session.

7. An Azerbaijani delegation, led by the Deputy Foreign Minister and Lead Negotiator for COP29, Mr. Yalchin Rafiyev visited New Delhi on 2-4 April 2024. On 03 April 2024, the visiting delegation held discussions with Secretary, Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Climate Change on a range of issues and topics under the UNFCCC. The Minister of Youth and Sports, Farid Gayibov visited India on 17-19 September 2024. The Deputy Minister of Digital Development and Transport, Shahin Babayev visited India for the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA-24) and the Global Standards Symposium (GSS-24) held in New Delhi from 13-19 Oct 2024.

Economic and Commercial Relations

8. Over the years, India's bilateral trade with Azerbaijan has increased substantially from around US\$ 50 million in 2005. In 2024, the bilateral trade was US\$ 958 million, with India's exports to Azerbaijan at US\$ 224 million and India's imports from Azerbaijan at US\$ 734 million (comprising mostly of crude-oil).

9. ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) has invested more than US\$ 1.2 billion in acquiring stakes in the Azeri-Chirag-Gunashli (ACG) oil and gas fields and the associated Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipe line. On 29 Nov 2024, OVL completed acquisition of additional 0.615 percent participating interest (PI) in ACG oil and gas field from Equinor at an investment of USD 60 million. The deal also included acquisition of 0.737 percent shares of Equinor in BTC pipeline. The buyout from Equinor raised OVL's stake in ACG oil and gas field to 2.925 percent and in BTC pipeline to 3.097 percent.

10. There is a direct flight connectivity between Delhi and Baku, with ten flights a week – 7 operated by Indigo and 3 by Azerbaijan Airlines. Azerbaijan Airlines also operates 4 direct flights a week between Mumbai and Baku. In 2024, Azerbaijan received 243,589 tourists from India, a 108% increase over the number of tourist arrivals in 2023 (117,302). India is now the 3rd largest source of inbound tourists for Azerbaijan, after Russia and Türkiye. Leaving aside its neighbours, India is the largest source of inbound tourists for Azerbaijan.

Cooperation in Capacity Building and Education

11. Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, the Government of India offers about 30 fully-paid training courses to Azerbaijani officials every year. More than 230 Azerbaijani scholars have availed ITEC courses till March 2025. During the period of pandemic, these training programmes were switched to online mode and more than 200 Azerbaijani scholars attended e-ITEC programmes. A Hindi teaching Center with the support of ICCR functioned at the Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL) between October 2010 and November 2019. An India Centre is also functioning in the Institute of Literature of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS).

Cultural Cooperation

12. The cultural exchanges between Azerbaijan and India have led to close cultural affinity and shared traditions. World renowned Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi had a profound influence on eminent Indian poets like Amir Khusrau. In recent past, the famous Azerbaijani artist, Rashid Behbudov, a noted tenor who switched to singing popular Azerbaijani songs in European classical tradition was a close friend of late Raj Kapoor. Indian intellectuals like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore are well known in Azerbaijan. Mr. Nagif Hamzayev, an Azerbaijani Member of Parliament, visited India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors' Programme in August 2019.

Indian Community

13. The Indian community in Azerbaijan comprises of around 1500 people, including professionals employed with international companies in the oil and gas sector, businessmen engaged in commodities trading, catering & restaurant business, construction workers on short-term contracts, and around 340 students studying in Azerbaijani colleges/universities. There are five Indian associations in Azerbaijan, viz., Indian Association Azerbaijan (IAA), Baku Malayalee Association (BMA), Baku Tamil Sangham (BTA), Azerbaijan Telugu Association (ATA), and Indian Student Association of Azerbaijan (ISAA), which work in close association with the Embassy. They regularly hold social events to celebrate major Indian festivals and events. The Indian community is very active, both professionally and socially.
