

India – Korea (ROK) Relations

India Republic of Korea (RoK) relations have made great strides in recent years and have become truly multidimensional, spurred by a significant convergence of interests, mutual goodwill and high level exchanges. Bilateral consular relations were established in 1962. In 1973, relations were upgraded to Ambassador-level (also with Pyongyang). In the post-cold war era, South Korean popular quest for democracy, which was introduced in 1987, created a natural affinity between the countries. In course of time, RoK's open market policies found resonance with India's economic liberalization and 'Look East Policy'. Consistent Indian support for peaceful reunification of the two Koreas has been well received in this country.

Historical and cultural contacts between the two peoples date back to ancient times. According to "SamgukYusa" or "The Heritage History of the Three Kingdoms" written in the 13th century, a Princess from Ayodhya (Suriratna) came to Korea, married King Kim-Suro, and became Queen Hur Hwang-ok in the year 48 AD [wife of former President Lee Myung-bak (Mrs. Kim Yoon-ok), former President Kim Dae-jung, former President Kim Young-sam and former PM Kim Jong-pil, inter alia, trace their ancestry to the royal couple].

Korean Buddhist Monk Hyecho (혜초, 704–787 CE) or Hong Jiao visited India from 723 to 729 AD. His travelogue "Pilgrimage to the five kingdoms of India" gives a vivid account of Indian culture, politics & society, including food habits, languages & climate. The travelogue was lost for many years until a fragment of it was rediscovered by Paul Pelliot in China in 1908 and was subsequently translated into different languages, including Hindi, under the aegis of UNESCO. The original fragment is now owned by the National Library of France. The enduring philosophy of the Buddha, which has influenced the lives and thoughts of the people of the two countries, also provides a strong link.

The rationale for a close relationship between India and RoK has been reinforced in modern times by political and economic imperatives. The experience of colonial rule and the anti-colonial movements in both countries revived interest in each other. Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore composed a short but evocative poem – 'Lamp of the East' - in 1929 about Korea's glorious past and its promising bright future. He wrote:

*"In the golden age of Asia
Korea was one of its lamp bearers,
And that lamp is waiting to be lit once again
For the illumination of the East."*

India played an important and positive role in Korean affairs after Korea's independence in 1945. Mr K P S Menon of India was the Chairman of the 9-member UN Commission set up in 1947 to hold elections in Korea. The successful general elections held for the first time in the South in 1948, led to the establishment of the Republic of Korea on 15th August 1948. During the Korean War (1950-53), both the warring sides accepted a resolution sponsored by India, and the ceasefire was declared on 27 July 1953. The 60th Indian Parachute Field Ambulance Unit (medical mission) led by Lt. Col. A G Rangaraj gave a good account of itself during the Korean conflict. Lt. General K.S. Thimayya of India, served as the chairman of the Neutral Nations Repatriation Commission [NNRC], after the armistice and contributed to resolving the humanitarian issues arising out of the War, which won appreciation from all quarters. A delegation of Indian Parliamentarians visited ROK on 26-27 July 2013 to participate in the events to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the Armistice Agreement.

The State Visit to RoK by President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, in February 2006 heralded a new vibrant phase in India-RoK relations. It inter alia led to the launch of a Joint Task Force to conclude a **bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)**, which was signed by Minister for Commerce and Industry Shri Anand Sharma at Seoul on August 7, 2009.

President Lee paid a landmark visit to India, as Chief Guest at India's Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2010, when bilateral ties were raised to the level of Strategic Partnership. India ROK CEPA was operational zed on 1st January 2010. A slew of important agreements were concluded during the visit. It was followed by President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil's State Visit to RoK from 24-27 July 2011 when the Civil Nuclear Energy Cooperation Agreement was signed.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh paid an official visit to Seoul from 24-27 March 2012 for both bilateral and Nuclear Security Summits, which led to the deepening of the bilateral Strategic Partnership. An agreement on visa simplification was signed on 25 March 2012 in the presence of the two leaders at the Blue House. A Joint Statement was also issued during PM's visit. PM had earlier visited Seoul from November 10-12, 2010 for the G20 Summit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier led a delegation to ROK as Chief Minister of Gujarat from 15-19 May 2007.

Traditionally close bilateral relations have been elevated to a qualitative higher level, with the state visit to India of President Park Geun-hye from 15 to 18 January 2014. In the '**Joint Statement for Expansion of Strategic Partnership**' she and the Prime Minister of India, have unveiled a blue print for further expanding the political,

security, defence, economic, scientific & technological, IT, cultural and people-to-people relations. (http://www.indembassy.or.kr/press_detail.php?nid=205)

It has been decided to institute a regular dialogue between the *national security structures* of both countries as also exchange classified military information (*a Military Wing was established at the Embassy in Oct 2012*), establish a *CEO's Forum* and upgrade the *Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA)*. South Korea for the first time is to set up an *Industrial Park in Rajasthan* while the landmark *POSCO Project* is likely to break ground soon. *KITA* (Korea International Trade Association) has set up a Centre in New Delhi and *KOTRA*, yet another office in Bangalore. Further, MoUs of Cooperation in Science & Technology, Outer Space and IT have been concluded. Details of the nine Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed during the visit are as given below:-

- (a) Agreement on the Protection of Classified Military Information.
- (b) Implementing Agreement between Indian Space Research Organization and Korea Aerospace Research Institute for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.
- (c) MoU between the Indian Ministry of Science and Technology and Korean Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning on a Joint Applied Research and Development Programme in Science and Technology.
- (d) Cultural Exchange Programme for the Years 2014-2017.
- (e) MoU on the Establishment of Nalanda University.
- (f) MoU between Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) in Department of Electronics and Information Technology and Korea Computer Emergency Response Team Coordination Centre (KRCERT/CC) of Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) on Cooperation in the Field of Cyber Security.
- (g) MoU between Controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA), Department of Electronics & Information Technology and Korea Certification Authority Central (KCAC), Korea Internet & Security Agency (KISA) on Cooperation and Information Exchange for Development of an Arrangement for Mutual Recognition of Certifying Authorities.
- (h) Agreement on Cooperation in the Field of Broadcasting between Doordarshan and Korea International Broadcasting Foundations (Arirang TV).
- (i) Joint Declaration of Intent between the Indian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology and the Korean Ministry of Science, ICT and Future Planning on Cooperation in the Field of Information and Communications Technology.

In order to boost people-to-people relations and travel between the two countries, India extended ***visa-on-arrival facility*** for Korean tourists from April 15, 2014. As a gesture of friendship and goodwill to the Korean people, Prime Minister of India gifted a sapling of the sacred *Bodhi Tree* under which Lord Buddha had attained enlightenment. The sapling was handed over by the Ambassador to ROK Forest Minister Shin Won-sop, at a formal ceremony at Korea's National Arboretum on 19 March 2014, in the presence of a number of dignitaries, including Foreign Minister Yun Byung-se and Secretary East Anil Wadhwa.

Bilateral relations are anchored on a strong economic foundation. CEPA in particular facilitated rapid expansion of trade volume. Bilateral trade in 2011 crossed \$ 20.5 billion registering a 70% growth over a two year period. A revised trade target of \$40 billion by 2015 was established by PM. Singh and President Lee on 25 March 2012. The trade has since declined a bit to \$17.57 billion (in 2013) and \$18.84 billion (in 2012).

Major Korean conglomerates (Chaebols) such as Samsung, Hyundai Motors and LG have made significant investments into India, estimated at over \$3 billion. Indian investments in ROK have already exceeded \$2 billion. There are officially 603 large and small Korean firms, which have offices in India. Novelis, a Hindalco subsidiary, acquired a Korean aluminium company by investing about \$600 million (Their total investment in ROK is nearing the \$2 billion now). Mahindra & Mahindra acquired a majority stake in SsangYong Motors, the country's 4th largest auto manufacturer, in March 2011, with an investment of about \$360 million. Tata Motors acquired Daewoo Commercial Vehicle Company for \$102 million in March 2004. Other Indian companies present in India include IT majors, Indian Overseas Bank, State Bank of India etc.

India-RoK Joint Commission for bilateral cooperation was established in February 1996, which is chaired by the External Affairs Minister (EAM) and the Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Korean side. So far, seven meetings of the Joint Commission have been held, the last being on 9th November 2013 in New Delhi. The third India-ROK Foreign Policy and Security Dialogue (FPSD) at Secretary (Vice-Ministerial) level was held in Seoul on 2nd September 2013.

In recent years pointed efforts are being made to scale up bilateral security and Defence ties. National Security Advisor (NSA) Mr. Shivshankar Menon paid a visit to Seoul from 30 June-2 July 2013 as Prime Minister's special envoy. He called on President Park Geun-hye and met with Defence Minister and the National Security Advisor. It was a first bilateral visit by an Indian NSA to RoK.

Earlier Defence Minister Shri A.K. Anthony visited RoK in September 2010. MoUs on Defence Cooperation, as well as, between Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) of India and Defence Acquisition Programme Administration (DAPA) of RoK for cooperation in R&D were signed. A **Defence Wing** was established in the Embassy of India in October 2012. Korean Minister of Defense Mr. Kim Kwan-jin visited India from 28 Nov to 1 Dec 2012, following that of his predecessor Mr. Kim Jung-soo in May 2007. The Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC), Air Chief Marshall N.A.K Browne visited RoK with a Tri-Service delegation from 8 to 11 July 2013. An 18-member team led by the Scientific Advisor to Defence Minister & Chief of DRDO participated in the Seoul International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition from 29 October to 3 November 2013, which was DRDO's biggest ever overseas outreach initiative.

To further enhance cultural exchanges between Indian and Korea, an **Indian Cultural Centre (ICC)** was established in RoK in April 2011 (<http://indoculture.org/>). An inaugural Festival of India in Korea was held from June 2011 to March 2012 with a visit by Dr. Karan Singh, President of ICCR, for the inauguration. A bust of Rabindranath Tagore was unveiled in Seoul by the Speaker of the Lok Sabha Smt. Meira Kumar in May 2011. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has deputed Indian Yoga and Kathak-cum-Contemporary dance instructors, who hold classes regularly at ICC. Hindi, Odissi, Tabla and Bharathanatyam classes have also been added with local teachers given the ever increasing interest in Indian culture. Catering to popular demand ICC also organizes monthly movie shows and cooking classes. Lectures, exhibitions and performances are arranged periodically by ICC, which have been evoking excellent response, across RoK. On 6 December 2013 another ICC was established in Busan at the initiative of Ven. Shim San, Head monk of Hongbeopsa Temple and Chairman of the Hannarae Foundation (<http://www.iccbs.or.kr/intro.php>).

Good air connectivity between the two countries has been established with Air India, Asiana Airlines and Korean Air operating flights. In 2013, a total of 70,713 visas were issued by the Mission as compared to 79,028 in 2012. This is mostly attributable to the issuance of large number of long-term multiple entry visas. The actual number of travellers between the two countries appears to have gone up as a result.

Indian Community in RoK is estimated at 10,500, which includes businessmen, IT professionals, scientists, research fellows, students and workers. There are about 150 businessmen dealing mainly in textiles and gems and jewellery. Prominent associations of expatriate Indians in ROK include the Annapurna Indian Women's Association (AIWA), Indians in Korea (IIK) - comprising mostly of professionals, Indian Student Association in Korea and Indian Merchants' Association (IMA).

The Associations function under the aegis of the Mission and undertake various cultural as well as social activities every year including organizing Holi and Diwali functions which provide the community an opportunity to socialize with other members and stay in touch with Indian culture. They also play an important role in promoting India-Korea relations.

Educational, Media and People to people ties: India and Korea attach great importance to education and Human Resource Development. This sector is emerging as one of the thrust areas of cooperation. Presently, around 2,500 Koreans including 1,500 school children are studying English, IT and Management in India. Around 1,000 Indian scholars are pursuing post-graduate and Ph. D programmes, mostly in pure sciences in Korea. A number of Indian teachers / professors are now working in different Korean educational institutions and universities in ROK. Many of our educational institutions and think tanks have established institutional cooperation agreements which include:

- **FSI Korea National Diplomatic Academy (KNDA)** signed a MoU of Cooperation in March 2012 during the visit of Prime Minister of India to Seoul. For the first time ever, ten IFS probationers from the 2011 batch visited RoK in July 2012 and had an interaction with KNDA, as well as, with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade during their familiarization tour.
- **Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Delhi University (DU)** offer programmes in Korea Studies and Korean Language Courses respectively. **Madras University** has also opened a Department of Korean Studies encouraged by the sizeable presence of Koreans including Hyundai Motors in Tamil Nadu. Recently Central University of Jharkhand (CUJ) started offering five-year integrated postgraduate degrees in Korean language. Manipur University and Madras Christian College are offering Diploma courses in Korean Language.
- JNU has signed MoUs of cooperation with several universities in Korea including Yonsei University, Korea University, Hankuk University of Foreign Studies and Pusan University of Foreign Studies. Delhi University also has an understanding with Korea University.
- Two South Korean Universities viz. **Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFFS) in Seoul, and Pusan University of Foreign Studies in Busan** have Indian Studies Departments. In 2012 South Korea's Premier **Seoul National University** established a New Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations

wherein they are offering a major on Indian Studies. Various other Universities in Korea offer degree courses in Indian Philosophy, Yoga and Ayurveda. With the support of the Embassy of India, HUFs organised an **Asia Pacific International Hindi Conference** from 13-14 March 2014 under the theme '*Hindi Education in the 21st century: the Asia-Pacific context*' with participation of leading scholars from India, China, Japan, South Korea and Australia.

- **Tongmyong University, Busan** signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) on educational exchanges with **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Guwahati** and **Amity University**, as well as, a letter of engagement with **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** in January 2014.
- **Seoul Forum for International Affairs (SFIA)** and Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (**ICRIER**) have been jointly organizing the India-Korea Dialogue that makes recommendations on policies and practical measures to strengthen the bilateral partnership to the two governments. The 11th round was held in Seoul in October 2012 and the 12th dialogue round in New Delhi in October 2013.
- Korean Advanced Institute for Science and Technology (**KAIST**) signed MoUs with **IIM, ISB and IIT**. IIM, Bangalore has been sending its students to KAIST on study tour since 2010, including for Executive Development Programmes. A large group of MBA students from IIM (B) came to KAIST for a 2 week orientation in August 2012, and were also addressed by Ambassador.
- The **Institute for Indian Studies Korea (IISK)** was established at Korea International Trade Association (**KITA**) on 3 December 2013. Headed by bestselling author and India expert Dr Lee Ok-soon, IISK is a platform that brings together large number of Korean academics, economists and business representatives. The inaugural business seminar saw participation of over 110 Korean companies.
- '**India Fortune**' has been organizing 'India Advanced Management Programme' for MPs, senior Korean officials, and CEOs covering Indian economy, corporate environment and Indian culture. The participants are always taken to India on a familiarization tour. This is a private business promotion initiative by a Korean scholar Dr. Oh Hwaseok. 40 senior Korean officials, CEOs, executives and journalists enrolled themselves for the 2013 programme which concluded on 16 December 2013.

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy** of Administration, Mussoorie has established an institutional partnership with Korea Development Institute (KDI) School of Public Policy & Management. Since 2010, eight batches of IAS officers have come to Korea for a two week study tour as part of their mid-career or advanced training. The last group of IAS officers visited RoK in May 2013.
- **Exchange of youth delegations** between India and RoK has been taking place on an annual basis for several years now. The nodal Ministries on the two sides are: Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, India and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family, RoK.
- A MoU between **ICCR and Hankuk University of Foreign Studies (HUFS)** was signed in August 2009 to establish an Indian Chair on Indian Economics in HUFS. ICCR has since then been deputing a visiting Indian professor as the Chair in Contemporary Indian Studies.
- Government of India offers **scholarships and fellowships** to meritorious Korean nationals every year to study in India in recognized Indian universities/educational institutions. These ICCR scholarships are available for various programmes and disciplines covering research work and non-formal courses (Religion, Classical Music, Dance and Crafts). (<http://www.iccrindia.org/scholarships/terms.htm>)
- **Ayush Scholarship Scheme** facilitates courses in Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, Yoga and Homeopathy, while many Korean students are also learning Hindi language at the **Kendriya Hindi Sansthan**, Agra. (www.hindisansthan.org & <http://www.indianmedicine.nic.in/index2.asp?slid=622&sublinkid=220&lang=1>)
- **ROK Government Scholarship:** RoK Government also offers scholarships to Indian nationals each year to study Korean Language and Literature at Masters and PhD level at select Korean Universities. Notification is normally issued on the website of the Ministry of HRD around the month of February. (<http://proposal.sakshat.ac.in/scholarship/>)
- Under a MoU signed in July 2011, **journalists and media representatives** have been undertaking reciprocal visits to each other's country. A batch of Indian journalists came to RoK in November 2012, following the visit to India by a group of Korean journalists earlier in September.

- A tourism 'Road Show' was held in Seoul in February 2013 during the visit of a Ministry of Tourism delegation led by Secretary Mr. Parvez Dewan. Close to 90 travel agents and media representatives participated in the event. Over 110,000 Korean tourists travelled to India in 2012 making them one of the top 15 nationalities visiting India.
- India was '*guest of honour*' country for the first time at the **Seoul International Book Fair (SIBF)** from 19-23 June 2013, which facilitated tie-ups between the Indian and Korean publishers. Korean President Madame Park Geun-hye visited the India pavilion and spent some 10 minutes studying the exhibits. Led by the National Book Trust, 26 Indian publishers displayed a wide range of books. 10 books for children were specially translated into Korean.

Both countries celebrated 2013 as the **40th anniversary of establishment of Diplomatic Relations**, with a series of commemorative events. A joint celebration of India and Korea's Independence Day was held on 15 August 2013. The Embassy and ICC held Film Festivals in Busan, Seoul, Incheon and Suncheon while a Food Festival was held in Seoul besides a number of other events. A special 'India Week' was held at the **Seoul National University** in November 2013, and a two-day 'India Days' program was held at **Hanyang University** in October 2013. The famous Nami Island also held a special 'India Month' in September 2013.

Useful Resources:

For more information and latest updates please visit

Embassy of India, Seoul website:

<http://www.indembassy.or.kr/>

India Global- AIR FM Gold Program featuring India and Korea (ROK) Relations:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HROnEKY1cPk>

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