

India - Tajikistan Relations

Relations between India and Tajikistan have traditionally been close and cordial. Exchange of high level visits between the two countries has served to cement bilateral ties. President PratibhaDevisinghPatil paid a State visit to Tajikistan in September 2009. Vice-President Shri Hamid Ansari visited Tajikistan from 14 to 17 April, 2013. Smt. SushmaSwaraj, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister visited Tajikistan for the Council of Heads of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit held in Dushanbe from 10 to 12 September 2014. From the Tajik side, President Rahmon visited India from 1 to 4 September 2012 for the fifth time (Earlier he visited in 1995, 1999, 2001 and 2006) and Foreign Minister SirodjidinAslov visited India in May 2015.

2. India and Tajikistan elevated their bilateral relations to the level of a "Strategic Partnership" during the visit of President Rahmon to India in 2012, which encompasses cooperation in a wide spectrum of areas, including political, economic, education, health, human resource development, defence, counter-terrorism, science and technology, culture and tourism. The two countries have signed agreements/MoUs on (1) textiles (2) culture (3) education (4) sports (5) health and (6) labour (7) agriculture apart from agreements with private companies.

Visit of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Tajikistan (July 12-13, 2015)

3. India-Tajikistan relations have been further strengthened with the State visit of ShriNarendraModi, Hon'ble Prime Minister of India to Tajikistan (July 12-13, 2015) on the last leg of his Central Asian tour. During the visit, Prime Minister held wide ranging talks with President EmomaliRahmon to step up cooperation in the spheres of defence, connectivity and counter-terrorism. Prime Minister ShriModi also visited the India-Tajikistan Friendship Hospital in QurganTeppa in Southern Tajikistan; laid a floral wreath at the IsmailiSomoni Monument in Dushanbe; and unveiled a bust of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore along with President Rahmon. The two leaders also addressed an AgricultureWorkshop, which was attended by more than 1500 people.

4. Prime Minister ShriAtalBihari Vajpayee had visited Tajikistan in 2003.

5. India and Tajikistan have established several bilateral Consultative Mechanismssuch as Foreign Office Consultations, Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation, Joint Working Group on Combating International Terrorism, Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation etc. for developing and expanding cooperation between the two countries.

6. India and Tajikistan actively cooperate with each other under the aegis of Multilateral Fora, including SCO and the UN organizations. Tajikistan is supportive of India's permanent membership to UNSC. India extended support to Tajikistan's

accession to the WTO. On 3 August 2012, a Protocol supporting Tajikistan's accession to the WTO was signed between Mr. Sharif Rahimzoda, Minister of Economic Development and Trade and Ambassador Mr. AsithBhattacharjee and on 2 March, 2013, Tajikistan became 159th member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).

7. Bilateral trade with Tajikistan is not at any significant level and is much below the potential. Trade is hampered by the circuitous route for transportation of goods (India to Bandar Abbas by sea route, from Bandar Abbas via Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan by land). The major items of India's export are pharmaceuticals, tea, coffee, chemicals, textiles & clothing and machinery and the major imports from Tajikistan are aluminum, cotton, dry fruits, vegetables, organic chemicals and essential oils. Bilateral Trade figures are as follows:

Total Trade

Value in US \$ Million

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014	2014-2015
15.50	22.21	34.18	32.56	41.33	30.14	48.02	55.13	58.09

Exports from India to Tajikistan:

Value in US \$ Million

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014	2014-2015
7.45	12.40	16.71	15.71	18.31	21.28	35.16	54.27	53.71

Imports to India from Tajikistan:

Value in US \$ Million

2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-2014	2014-2015
8.05	9.81	17.47	16.85	23.02	8.86	12.86	0.86	4.39

(Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, India)

8. To overcome the crisis caused by an unprecedented harsh winter in January-February 2008, India gave a grant of US \$ 2 million to Tajikistan (US \$ 1 million as

cash assistance and US\$ 1 million in kind like power cables, generators and pump sets). In June 2009, US\$ 200,000 cash assistance was given by India to overcome damage caused by floods in April-May 2009. After the flashfloods in Kulyab province on 7 May 2010, India provided US\$ 200,000 humanitarian assistance. After the outbreak of Polio in southwest Tajikistan, India provided 2mn doses of oral polio vaccine through UNICEF in November, 2010. On 28 December, 2013, Govt. of India gifted a high quality ambulance to the Governor of Khorog city of the GornoBadakshan Autonomous Region (Pamirs). On 1 September, 2015, India granted US\$ 100,000 as humanitarian assistance to Tajikistan for providing relief to the flood and mudslide-affected people of GBAO and Rasht valley in response to Tajikistan's appeal for international humanitarian aid.

9. Project Assistance: (1) In 1995, India extended a credit line of US \$ 5 million to the Government of Tajikistan to set up a Joint Venture with a private Indian company "Ajanta Pharma" for production of pharmaceuticals. The Joint venture, "Tajik Ajanta Pharma" could not function due to the inability of Tajik side to provide working capital. The Government of India converted the principal amount along with the accrued interest of US\$ 3.37 million into a grant during the visit of Prime Minister of India in November 2003. (2) With a grant of US\$ 0.6 million, a Fruit Processing Plant was established in 2005. (3) With a grant of US\$ 0.6 million, an Information and Technology Centre (Bedil Centre) was commissioned in 2006. (4) Under a grant of US\$ 0.75 million, India set up a Modern Engineering Workshop, which was commissioned in June 2011. (5) During the State visit of President Rahmon to India in August 2006, India committed to undertake rehabilitation and modernization of a 1936 vintage Varzob-1 Hydro Power Station through Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) and National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC). Govt. of India financed the project through 100% grant at an estimated cost of approx. US\$ 20 million. After renovation, installed capacity was enhanced from 2x3.67 MW to 2x4.75 MW.

10. Private investments and projects: Indian private investments in Tajikistan include a 5 star hotel "Sheraton" in Dushanbe, which was constructed by CHL. The hotel was inaugurated by President Rahmon on 6 September, 2014. An Indian company KEC/RPG completed the construction of 116 km. long power transmission line from Sangtuda-1 Hydropower plant to the Afghan border in October 2010. On a commercial contract, BHEL supplied a 7 MW generator to Tajik company "Pamir Energy" in 2011. In 2014, an Indian Company, M/s Kalpataru bagged a contract worth approx. \$22 million for construction of electric transmission lines under Asian Development Bank financing.

11. New Package of Assistance: During the visit of President Rahmon to India in September 2012, India, as part of its ongoing developmental partnership with Tajikistan, announced new development projects including: an IT Centre of Excellence; an e-network, including tele-education and tele-medicine; medical centres; language laboratories; an Entrepreneurship Development Institute; supply of agricultural machinery; and the implementation of a package of small development projects [SDPs].

12. Air links with Tajikistan: Tajik Air started a weekly Dushanbe-Delhi direct flight on 6 July 2012, but suspended it in the second week of August, 2012. The flight was restarted on 31 May, 2013. However, since December 2014, Tajik Air converted it to a fortnightly flight.

13. Cultural Relations: In the cultural sphere, the bilateral relations are vibrant. The friendly relations with former Soviet Union positively influenced the attitudes of Tajik people towards India and its culture, which continues to manifest in the popularity of Indian movies, dance, music and yoga in Tajikistan. The two countries signed a Programme of Cooperation in the field of art and culture for the period 2016-2018 during Prime Minister's visit to Tajikistan in July 2015. An Indian Cultural Center-ICC attached to the Embassy was officially inaugurated on 30th June 2003. ICCR has deputed a Kathak (dance) teacher and a Tabla teacher to the Center. Besides regular dance and music classes, the centre conducts yoga and Hindi classes as well, which have become quite popular.

14. Scholarships: Till date, 993 slots for ITEC and 339 ICCR scholarships have been utilized by Tajik candidates to study in India. Tajikistan is one of the largest beneficiaries of the ITEC programme (ITEC training slots were increased from 100 to 150 during the visit of President Rahmon to India in September 2012).

15. Indian Community in Tajikistan: Number of Indian nationals in Tajikistan is approx. 400, out of which more than 300 are students in the Dushanbe Medical College.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Dushanbe website:
www.indianembassytj.com

January 2016