

**Embassy of India
Tashkent**

Brief on India-Uzbekistan Bilateral Relations

India and Uzbekistan have relations that go back in history. In recent years, there has been significant intensification in bilateral ties, mainly due to the visit of PM in July 2015 and June 2016 to Tashkent; the opening up of Uzbekistan by President Mirziyoyev; and President Mirziyoyev's visit to India in October 2018 and in January 2019. Bilateral relations now encompass a wider canvas, including on political and strategic issues, defence and security, trade and investment, energy, agriculture, S&T, education and people-to-people ties.

High Level visits/meetings

2. **Visit of PM:** PM visited Uzbekistan on July 6-7, 2015, during which he held bilateral talks with the then President Islam Karimov on advancing our strategic partnership. An Agreement on cooperation in the field of Tourism; a Protocol on cooperation between the Foreign Ministries; and a Programme of Cultural Cooperation for year 2015-2017 was signed during the visit. PM also visited Uzbekistan in June 2016 as part of the meeting of the Heads of State of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

3. **Visit of President of Uzbekistan:** President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited India from 30 September-1 October 2018. During the visit, 17 Agreements/MoUs were signed, including in areas of S&T cooperation, agriculture, tourism, military education, justice, health and medical science, pharmaceuticals, space, and other areas.

4. President Mirziyoyev participated in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit as Guest of Honour in January 2019.

5. **Visit of EAM/MOS:** The then EAM visited Uzbekistan for the first India-Central Asia Dialogue at the Ministerial level in Samarkand in January 2019.

6. **Visit of FM:** Uzbek FM Abdulaziz Kamilov presented key-note address at the Raisina Dialogue in January 2020 in New Delhi. He met EAM and PM during the visit. FM Kamilov met EAM again in Moscow in September 2020 on the sidelines of the SCO FM meeting.

7. **PM- President Virtual Summit:** A Virtual Summit between PM Shri Narendra Modi and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev was held on 11 December 2020. Both sides discussed bilateral issues including in the fields of politics, development cooperation, security, space, education, development projects and regional issues including Afghanistan.

Regional Exchanges

8. **State/Region Agreements:** Agreements on establishment of cooperation between Andijan region and the State of Gujarat and between the cities of Samarkand and Agra were signed during the visit of Uzbek President in October 2018. Proposals for a similar agreement between Bukhara and Telangana is also under consideration.

9. **Visit of CM Gujarat:** Chief Minister of Gujarat Shri Vijay Rupani led a 47-member delegation from Gujarat to Uzbekistan from 20-23 October 2019. The delegation attended the International Investment Forum “Open Andijan” in Andijan and visited Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent. Apart from meetings with the Governors of these regions and B2B Forums between Indian and Uzbek businessmen, the CM also met with President Mirziyoyev and DPM Ganiev. Chairman of Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. A. Ikramov and Minister of Innovation Development, Ibrokhim Abdurakhmonov visited India from 28-30 November 2019 as a follow-up of the visit of Gujarat CM. Altogether, 45 agreements have been signed and 59 projects worth USD 992 million in different areas, including agriculture and agro-processing, chemicals and petrochemicals, textiles, pharma and healthcare, IT and innovation, energy, mining, and jewellery are being pursued. Both sides have also agreed to monitor and implement these projects through nodal points of contacts and regular follow up visits.

Parliamentary Exchanges

10. The last visit by Speaker of Oliy Majlis (Lower House of Uzbek Parliament) was in November 2005. Vice-President Shri Hamid Ansari led a parliamentary delegation to Uzbekistan in May 2013. An invitation to Lok Sabha Speaker from his Uzbek counterpart is under consideration. Uzbek side is also interested in a visit by the Chairman of the Senate of Uzbekistan to India.

Bilateral and multilateral Mechanisms

11. **National Coordination Committees:** India and Uzbekistan have set up National Coordination Committees to oversee the implementation of mutually agreed projects and initiatives. The Committee is led by MOS(VM) on the Indian side and comprises senior MEA officials and a representative from Government of Gujarat. On the Uzbek side, it is led by Sardor Umurzakov, Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Foreign Economic Affairs-Minister of Investments and Foreign Trade (MIFT) and includes First Deputy Foreign Minister, Chairman of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI), and senior officials from MIFT and Andijan. The first meeting of the Committee took place on 24 August 2020. Both sides reviewed projects through grant assistance, LOC and private investment proposals along with other aspects of bilateral cooperation in trade, investment and education fields.

12. **Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC):** The 12th session of the IGC on Trade, Economic, Scientific & Technological Cooperation was held on 04 December 2020 through video meeting. It was led by Special Secretary (DOC) Shri B B Swain and 1st Deputy Minister for Investments and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan Mr. Laziz Kudratov.

13. **FOC:** The last (14th) round of Foreign Office Consultations was hosted by the Indian side in November 2020 through video meeting. The 13th round was held in Tashkent in March 2017.

14. **JWG on CT:** The last (8th) meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism was held in New Delhi in July 2019. Several areas for training and capacity building in the field of law enforcement and counter terrorism operations were sought by the Uzbek side.

15. **India-Central Asia Business Council:** Second meeting of the India-Central Asia Business Council was held on 20 October 2020 through VC with participation of Chairman of

Uzbek Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mr. A. Ikramov. The dialogue brought together Business Councils of all five Central Asian countries to take the trade and investment partnership forward with special focus on energy, pharmaceuticals, automotive, agro-processing, education, urban infrastructure and transport, civil aviation, IT and tourism.

16. **India- Central Asia Dialogue:** Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr. Kamilov participated in the 2nd India-Central Asia Dialogue held at the level of Foreign Ministers on 28 October 2020 which was hosted by India in the virtual mode.

17. Uzbekistan Chamber of Commerce & Industry also participated in the 2nd India-Central Asia Business Council (ICABC) meeting which was hosted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in virtual mode held on the same day. The report of the ICABC meeting was presented by FICCI later in the day to all the Foreign Ministers participating in the India-Central Asia Dialogue.

Defence Cooperation

18. Defence cooperation has acquired a new level of intensity following the visit of the then Defence Minister of Uzbekistan Maj. Gen. Abdusalam Azizov from 4-7 September 2018. Regular defence cooperation is carried out through annual plans. The Plan for 2019-20 included joint training of special forces, conduct of training capsules in military engineering for Uzbeks and exchanges between air forces for assistance in development of Qarshi Aviation School in Uzbekistan. India has also assisted in setting up an India Room at the Armed Forces Academy of Uzbekistan in Tashkent.

19. **Visit of RM:** RM visited Tashkent and Samarkand on 1-3 November 2019 and held bilateral discussions with his Uzbek counterpart Maj. Gen. Bakhodir Kurbanov. An MoU on Military Medicine was signed. As a follow up of MoU on Military Education signed in October 2018, two institutional level MoUs were also signed for cooperation in training and capacity building. RM inaugurated the first-ever joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan from 4-14 November 2019. Earlier in the year, India and Uzbekistan held their first annual JWG on Defence in New Delhi on 27-28 February 2019 followed by a visit of Defence Secretary to Tashkent in March 2019.

20. As part of defence industrial cooperation, India has offered a Line of Credit of USD 40 million to Uzbekistan. India also organized two defence industrial workshops in September 2019 and November 2020 respectively during which representatives from public and private sector defence companies participated.

Security Cooperation

21. India and Uzbekistan share common perspectives on a number of security issues, including on terrorism, trans-national organized crime, illegal trafficking and smuggling, etc. The main focus of our engagement in this sphere has been to provide assistance to Uzbek security agencies through training and capacity building.

22. As part of the growing cooperation in the security sphere, Minister of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan Pulat Bobojonov visited India from 20-22 November 2019. During the visit, he

held consultations with HM and the two Ministers signed an Agreement on Security Cooperation.

Bilateral Trade and Investments

23. Bilateral trade at about USD 355 million is well below potential. The major items of India's exports are pharmaceutical products, mechanical equipment, vehicle parts, services, optical instruments and equipment. India's import from Uzbekistan consist largely of fruit and vegetable products, services, fertilizers, juice products and extracts, and lubricants.

As per latest figures provided by the Uzbek Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade, Uzbekistan's bilateral trade with India during the last six years is:

Year (Jan- Dec)	Imports from India (in US\$ million)	Exports to India (in US\$ million)	Total trade turnover (in US\$ million)
2014	248.8	67.9	316.7
2015	260.6	58.7	319.3
2016	318.2	48.3	366.5
2017	291.1	33.8	325.0
2018	261.4	25.1	286.5
2019	330.5	25.0	355.5

24. India and Uzbekistan have signed a Joint Statement in September 2019 to set up a joint feasibility for entering into negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).

25. Notable Indian investments by Indian companies include those in the field of pharmaceuticals, amusement parks, automobile components, and hospitality industry. Indian majors like GMR have expressed interest in investment in airports, development of air corridor, Navoi cargo complex in Uzbekistan; KDAH (Ambani Hospital) from Mumbai has expressed interest in setting up a specialty hospital. During the visit of CM Gujarat, a ground breaking ceremony for setting up a pharmaceutical plant with an investment of USD 50 million was held. Investments in various fields, including pharma and healthcare, textiles and auto components, agriculture and food processing, and mining and jewellery sector are in various stages of discussion. In October 2019, Amity University and Sharda University have opened campuses in Tashkent and Andijan respectively. Indian institutions like iCreate are actively cooperating with Uzbek counterparts for promoting start-up ecosystem in Uzbekistan and training entrepreneurs in setting up incubators. Indian companies like Dev IT has entered into bilateral cooperation in field research, technologies, start-ups and innovations with

budding Uzbek partners. NTPC is also participating in various tenders including solar PV power plants and consultancy assignment for gas projects in Uzbekistan.

26. Bilateral Investment Treaty is under negotiation between both countries.

Cooperation during the Covid-19 pandemic

27. India gifted HCQ and Paracetamol tablets sought by Uzbekistan, along with lifting ban on export of essential medicines to fight Covid-19. India also conducted e-ITEC programmes for capacity building of Medical professionals from Uzbekistan.

JWGs and Sectoral Cooperation

28. **Textiles:** The 3rd meeting of the JWG on Textiles was held in Tashkent alongside the 11th IGC in August 2018.

29. **IT:** The 2nd meeting of the JWG on IT was held in Tashkent alongside the 11th IGC in August 2018. An expert from Software Technology Park of India (STPI) has been deputed to assist with establishment and further expansion of an IT Park in Tashkent. The first phase of IT Park was inaugurated in July 2019.

30. **Pharmaceutical and Healthcare:** This is a high priority for the Uzbek side. The 1st meeting of the JWG on Pharmaceutical and Healthcare was held in Tashkent alongside the 11th IGC in August 2018. Investment by Indian companies in pharma as well as medical care sectors has been a major focus for the Uzbek side.

31. **Tourism:** The 1st meeting of the JWG on Tourism (set up under an MoU signed in October 2018) was held in Tashkent alongside the 11th IGC in August 2018. On 1 April 2017, an e-Visa scheme was introduced for Uzbek nationals. The Uzbek government has also extended e-Visa facility to Indian tourists. Uzbekistan has also emerged as a significant source of medical tourism with about 8,000 Uzbeks annually seeking medical treatment in India. India too has emerged as a growing source of tourists for Uzbekistan with about 40,000 tourists having visited in 2017.

32. **Agriculture:** The 1st meeting of the JWG on Agriculture (set up under an MoU signed in October 2018) was held on 5 September 2019 through DVC. During the visit of CM Gujarat, an agreement for cooperation in agro-processing sector, including the entire value chain comprising organic cultivation, cold storage, warehousing and processing was reached. The Uzbek government has pledged allotment of initially 35,000 hectares, increasing eventually to 50,000 hectares for this purpose.

33. India has granted market access for lemon and melon from Uzbekistan. Pest Risk Analysis (PRA) for plum and sweet cherries have been completed and while conveying this, we have sought additional information from the Uzbek side. Request for PRA of almonds have been received and being considered. Uzbekistan has granted market access for banana and mango from India. PRA for Soyabean oil cake has been completed though additional information sought is being provided. Request for PRA from India include wheat, wheat flour, potato, pomegranate and pomegranate seeds.

34. **e-Governance and ICT:** The Joint Committee on e-Governance and ICT has been envisaged under the MoU signed on 28 September 2018. It is yet to be formed.
35. **S&T:** A Joint Committee on S&T was formed in February 2019 as envisaged under an MoU signed in October 2018. In pursuance to the agreement, a Programme of Cooperation in S&T for the period of 2019-22 was signed in October 2019, facilitating joint research, visits of scientists and specialists and fellowships and internships for Uzbeks in premiere Indian scientific institutions.
36. **Space Cooperation:** The 1st meeting of the JWG on Space Cooperation (set up based on an Agreement signed in October 2018) was held in April 2019 through DVC.
37. **MSME:** The 3rd meeting of the JCM on MSME took place in Tashkent on 3 October 2011.
38. **Civil Aviation:** There are 6 weekly flights between Tashkent and Delhi in addition to 3 to Amritsar and 3 to Mumbai operated by Uzbekistan Airways. Uzbekistan has not been forthcoming in offering 5th freedom rights demanded by Indian operators to consider flying to Uzbekistan. In response to an Uzbek proposal for assistance with management of the Navoi Air Logistics centre, a team from GMR visited Navoi and Tashkent in early October 2019 to discuss terms of cooperation and potential involvement. Uzbek side is in talks with UAE on this issue. DPM Sardor Umurzakov during his meeting with CIM in April 2020 told that Uzbek and UAE side were ready to discuss participation by GMR. VC with Dy Minister of Transport along with officials of MFA (Eco Diplomacy division) and MIFT took place in May 2020. Response from Uzbek side about participation in Tashkent Airport and Task force for Air corridor is awaited.
39. **Solar Power:** Uzbekistan has expressed interest in joining the International Solar alliance. There is interest in Indian participation in development of solar power sector through competitive bidding.
40. **Oil & Gas:** Uzbekneftegaz and OVL are in talks for cooperation in oil & gas sector, including for allocation and exploration of specific blocks.
41. **Civil Nuclear Energy:** An Agreement on the long-term supply of Uranium ore concentrate was signed between Department of Atomic Energy and the Navoi Mining and Metallurgical Combine of Uzbekistan in January 2019. Uzbek side has expressed interest in information and experience sharing leading to a possible consultancy in the context of Uzbek-Russian cooperation to set up NPP in Uzbekistan.

Joint Business Council and CII Office in Tashkent

42. The first meeting of the India-Uzbekistan Joint Business Council was held in Ahmedabad on 17 January 2019. The second meeting was held in October 2020 through virtual mode. It is led on the Indian side by CII and on the Uzbek side by CCI. CII continues to pursue the matter of opening a representative office in Tashkent in partnership with CCI.

Development Assistance and Line of Credit (LOC)

43. In response to a request for LOC of USD 1 billion by the Uzbek Government, a Line of Credit Agreement for USD 200 million for construction of affordable housing and social infrastructure projects was signed between the State Investment Committee of Uzbekistan and the EXIM Bank in January 2019. India has also conveyed an offer for additional USD 800 million as Line of Credit/Buyers Credit to Uzbekistan. The Uzbek side had identified 4 projects under LOC so far and have signed an agreement to this effect.

44. A Joint Centre for Information Technology was set up in 2006 and upgraded in 2014 with Indian assistance. An India-Uzbekistan Entrepreneurship Development Centre (EDC) was inaugurated on 24 December 2018 in Tashkent. An Indian expert has been deputed at EDC for training and capacity building of Uzbek entrepreneurs.

45. India has offered grant assistance for implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects to Uzbekistan.

Education and Culture

46. Uzbekistan has been sending candidates under the ITEC programme since 1993. More than 2400 Uzbek professionals have undergone training under ITEC in premiere institutes in India so far. 164 slots were utilized in 2019 in regular and specialized courses.

47. As per the MoU between Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar and Ministry of Innovation Development of Uzbekistan, various post-graduate courses are now open for admission to Uzbek students along with training of Uzbek officials in different forensic sciences. Uzbek students also avail of ICCR and Kendriya Hindi Sansthan scholarships. 20 scholarships under General scholarships for UG/PG/Research degrees and 5 under CEP have been allotted for 2019-20. There are also scholarships under AYUSH and short-term scholarships for Music and dance, in addition to two annual scholarships for one-year course in Hindi by CHS Agra. Regularly, Hindi and Urdu teachers are getting support of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture (LBSCIC) for attending refresher courses/participating in International Conferences/Vishwa Hindi Diwas. Indian faculty and scholars visit Uzbek institutions as guest lecturers and for research and conferences. The Samarkand State University has set up an Indian Study Centre, which is headed at present by a senior professor from India. Bukhara State University, Tashkent state University of Oriental Studies have also opened an India Room with IT instruments installed in it. The rooms will be equipped with books, musical instruments, dresses, artifacts with assistance of GOI, depicting various facets of Indian culture.

48. There is close affinity between the cultures of the two countries. Indian films, actors and songs are extremely popular across the country. There is interest in reviving the tradition of co-production and organization of and participation in film festivals. There is a growing trend among Indian film producing houses to use Uzbekistan as a location to shoot their films.

49. There are regular visits of cultural troupes from both sides. LBSCIC teaches Hindi, yoga, Kathak and table and holds cultural performances across Uzbekistan. Hindi is taught in several schools and universities in Tashkent. Mr. Khayriddin Sultanov, State Advisor to President and Mr. Ruslanbek Davletov, Justice Minister represented Uzbekistan at the concluding event, on 02 October 2018, of the week-long Mahatma Gandhi International

Sanitation Convention. Uzbek Government has released a postage stamp on Mahatma Gandhi to mark his 150th birth anniversary.

50. The Surajkund Crafts Mela entered into an MoU in September 2019 with Kokand International Handicrafts Exhibition for mutual participation and cooperation in each other's events.

51. In October 2020, the Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture (LBSCIC) run by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) completed its 25 years of establishment in Uzbekistan. The celebrations on the occasion were kicked off by holding a cultural programme at the LBSCIC attended by Her Excellency Ms. Kamola Akilova, Deputy Minister of Culture of Uzbekistan. On this occasion, a live congratulatory message through video conference was delivered by Dr. Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, President of ICCR in which he recalled the great contribution made by the LBSCIC in strengthening India-Uzbekistan cultural relations and imparting quality training in the fields of Indian classical dancing, yoga, table and the teaching of Hindi in Uzbekistan.

Diaspora

52. There are about 1800 Indian nationals living in Uzbekistan, in Tashkent, Qarshi, Andijon, Ferghana, Urgench and Bukhara regions. The community hails from different parts of India and enjoys a positive image. They are involved mostly in pharmaceutical and hospitality businesses; some are university and school teachers; and many serve as doctors in local hospitals and many work in the oil and gas sector.
