

INDIA & UZBEKISTAN: STRATEGIC PARTNERS



सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

16 Kara-Bulak Str. (Vakhshskaya) Street, MirzoUlugbek District,
Tashkent- 700052 (Uzbekistan)

Phones: (998-78) 1400983, 1400997, 1400998

Fax: (998-78) 1400987, 1400999

Website: <https://eoi.gov.in/tashkent/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInUzbekistan>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/amb_tashkent

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiainuzbekistan/?hl=en>



In Conversation with H.E. Manish Prabhat , Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan

Q1. Excellency, how has your stay in Uzbekistan been so far?

I have spent now more than two years in Uzbekistan as Ambassador. Professionally, it has been very satisfying. Uzbekistan is going through a very special period in its history as an independent state when it has been opening towards the world. Foreign investments are welcome. The Government of Uzbekistan is trying to build close partnership with various countries and regions of the world. It has consistently been trying to promote peace and stability in the region and promote cooperation among the Central Asian states. Relations with India have become further strengthened in last few years. In this backdrop, as Ambassador, I have several exciting opportunities to work upon in various fields to promote bilateral cooperation. More than two millennia of interaction between the peoples of India and Uzbekistan, who have been friends and neighbours throughout history, has provided a solid basis of friendship on which our relations could be further built upon. Wherever I go in Uzbekistan, I am treated with love, kindness and respect when people learn that I am from India. I have found myself often pleasantly surprised when people spontaneously break upon singing a popular Bollywood song while meeting a person from India. It just feels like home here in Uzbekistan.

Q2. India and Uzbekistan marked 30 Years of Diplomatic Ties. How is the Embassy celebrating this landmark occasion?

In March 1992, India and Uzbekistan had established diplomatic relations. India was one of the first countries in the world to

have accorded diplomatic relations to the newly independent Uzbekistan. We are currently celebrating the 30th anniversary of that great event in our bilateral history. Looking back to three decades, it has been a matter of great pride what we achieved together – close relationship of friendship, goodwill and cooperation; cooperation in the international arena on multiple platforms; sharing our perceptions and resolve to act together against challenges of our region such as development, economic growth, terrorism and extremism; climate change. There is so much more we can accomplish together in future by our joint work. The spirit of this cooperation was affirmed by exchange of congratulatory letters on this occasion in March 2022 between then President of India H.E. Shri Ram Nath Kovind and President of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev and External Affairs Minister H.E. Dr. S. Jaishankar and then Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Abdulaziz kamilov. Throughout the year, our Embassy organized many programmes to commemorate this occasion. On 1 November, at the Turkestan Hall in Tashkent, the Embassy organized a memorable Indian cultural evening of classical and folk dances by the artists of the Lal Bahadur Shastri Cultural Centre in Tashkent which is one of the overseas centre of the Indian Council for Cultural relations. Kazakh artists from the Indian Classical Dances & Yoga Centre from Almaty and the local Uzbek Bollywood singing sensation Havas Guruhi group also performed. A gala concert ‘Dil Hai Hindustani’ was presented by Havas Guruhi in Tashkent’s iconic People’s Friendship Theatre on 21 December dedicated to popular Indian movie songs. A packed hall of 4000 audience enjoyed and danced to Bollywood superhits. We are publishing books dedicated to this occasion. Prof. Chander Shekhar, ex-Director of the Centre and a scholar of Persian from Delhi University wrote

a book 'Indian Cultural Imprints in Uzbekistan' which was published this year by the Embassy. The book is based on his original research in the archives of Uzbekistan. The Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India supported a project of translation of the Constitution of India in Uzbek language. A team from the Tashkent State Law University has worked on the project. The book is going to be published later this month. We are also planning an India-Uzbekistan Friendship Run in March as a closing ceremony of the year-long celebrations. No doubt, these celebrations have raised awareness about the vitality of India-Uzbekistan relations among youth, academia, think tanks, media and common people of Uzbekistan.

Q3. In January 2022, at the initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the first India- Central Asia Summit was held virtually. Can you shed some light on this meeting?

The First India – Central Asia Summit was held on 27 January 2022 and became a historic landmark in the ever-strengthening relations between India and the Central Asian states. But for the reasons of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Summit had been planned to held in physical format but had to be conducted online. The close relationship between India and all the five Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan was brought into focus by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's back-to-back visit to all the five countries in July 2015. It was appreciated by all the leaders that time has come for India and Central Asia to work together to take a region-wide view of contemporary challenges and evolve common approaches to tackle them. Thus the India – Central Asia Dialogue was initiated at the level of Foreign Ministers. India and Uzbekistan took the lead initiative in organizing this and the Dialogue took place in Samarkand, Uzbekistan in January 2019. Since then two more rounds of the Dialogue at the level of Foreign Ministers were held and it was decided to hold the First Summit at the level of leaders. This Summit was hosted by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually. The Summit came out with a forward looking agenda to create a permanent secretariat of the India-Central Asia Summit in New Delhi, hold the Summit every two years and initiated regular dialogue on the tracks of Foreign Ministers, Trade Ministers, Culture Ministers and National Security Advisers. It was decided to hold regular programmes of training for Central Asian diplomats in India, holding youth gatherings, promote trade and energy cooperation, connectivity, defence and security cooperation promoting mutually beneficial synergies. It signals that India and the Central Asian states at the highest level are ready to promote their relationship in priority directions and this platform will play an important role in this endeavour. It also signals to the world the positive contribution to energize regional cooperation by India and the Central Asian states.

Q4. The government of India and various institutions offer numerous scholarships to students from Uzbekistan. How does this support the development of the academic partnership?

Cooperation in the field of higher education has emerged as one of the leading pillars of our relationship with Uzbekistan. Given strong interest in India among the universities and students alike in Uzbekistan who recognized India as a country with a large youth population, several universities of high quality, a strong standing in the field of Information Technology coupled with English language education which connects India with the world, Uzbekistan seeks to deepen its cooperation with Indian universities. Three Indian universities, viz. Amity, Sharda and Sambhram have already been functioning in Uzbekistan and there is demand for much more. The Embassy, along with the Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture has expanded its outreach among the Uzbek universities and with the help of grants given by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India and opened 13 India Study Centres in different universities of Uzbekistan. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) provides fully paid scholarship to Uzbek youth to study at graduation or higher levels in India. About 15-20 seats are given every year and we are open to accommodate more candidates from Uzbekistan. The ICCR also provides scholarship for learning Indian classical music and dances which are popular in Uzbekistan. The Ministry of External Affairs provides various duration of training courses for Uzbek officials and teachers in various fields such as languages, business administration, management, technical courses, governance, parliamentary training etc. These courses are conducted under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme. Since the independence of Uzbekistan, more than 2500 Uzbek candidates have trained in India under the ITEC programme.

Q5. Defence and security have always been one of the important aspects of the relationship between the two countries. Hon. Rajnath Singh visited Uzbekistan to attend the SCO Defence Ministers meeting. Can you shed some light on the outcome of this meeting?

India and Uzbekistan have held regular consultations on defence and security matters. Both countries recognize the serious challenges which our region faces from terrorism, extremism, drug trafficking, the issue of Afghanistan – all of these require coordination in our approaches. After the first visit of Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh to Uzbekistan in 2019, when he inaugurated the first ever India-Uzbekistan joint military exercise called 'Dustilik'; these exercises have become regular and its fourth edition will be held soon this year. Uzbekistan Armed Forces officers are attending on regular basis various training programmes in Indian

Armed Forces establishments and academic institutions. Our defence cooperation is expanding and both countries are looking forward to identifying areas of military-technical cooperation between us. These issues were discussed at length during the bilateral meeting held between Shri Rajnath Singh with his Uzbek counterpart Lt. Gen. Bakhodir Kurbanov in August 2022 in Tashkent on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers Meeting which took place in Tashkent. Our security cooperation has also advanced ever since the visit of the Interior Minister of Uzbekistan H.E. Mr. Pulat Bobojanov to India in 2019 on the invitation of Home Minister of India Shri Amit Shah. The two countries signed an agreement on security cooperation and decided to have interaction between training institutions from both sides; especially in the area of policing, para military operations. Director General of the National Security Guards Shri M.A. Ganapathy paid a visit to Uzbekistan on the invitation of the Uzbek National Guards last year. Our security and defence cooperation continues to forge ahead.

Q6. India and Uzbekistan have vibrant and diverse cultures. How do you see the cultural aspect strengthening the bond between the two countries?

Peoples of India and Uzbekistan have interacted with each other throughout history and profoundly influenced each other in the spheres of culture, language, cuisine, religion and philosophy. Both India and Uzbekistan can boast of diversity of handicrafts, weaving and textile traditions going back to centuries. Uzbekistan has been regularly hosted by Government of Haryana at the Surajkund Mela. A sense of shared history has provided a strong foundation of goodwill towards each other. If we look at the Soviet period, even then many Indian leaders visited Uzbekistan. Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away in Tashkent and became a strong symbol of friendship between India and Uzbekistan. There are Shastri statues, a school and a road in the city of Tashkent commemorating him. The Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture established by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations celebrated its 25th anniversary in Uzbekistan in 2021. The Centre imparts regular lessons in Hindi language, Kathak and Yoga. It is immensely popular with Uzbek students. Yoga has now become so popular that even Government of Uzbekistan encouraged the formation of the Yoga Federation of Uzbekistan and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations have sent an Indian Yoga teacher to work for the Yoga Federation. Indian movies still remain very popular. Earlier Raj Kapoor and many Indian film personalities used to attend the Soviet era Tashkent International Film Festival. The Festival has been revived for the last two years and Indian film delegations have started to attend it. Indian movies are being shot again in Uzbekistan. Readers would recall that famous Hindi movies like “Alibaba Aur 40 Chor” and “Sohni Mahiwal” were shot in Uzbekistan. We need to encourage cooperation in film making between the two countries. Indian



I thank Diplomacy & Beyond Plus for devoting an entire issue to focus on the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Uzbekistan. I take this opportunity to greet the readers and wish them a very happy new year! I call upon the readers in India and Uzbekistan to pay visits to each other's country; experience the hospitality of the people of India and Uzbekistan; marvel at the diversity of both countries and contribute to business, investment, academic and people-to-people relations existing between India and Uzbekistan.

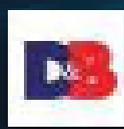
H.E. Manish Prabhat
Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan

TV shows and movies should be telecast on Uzbek channels – there is a great demand for them. Hindi language has been taught in the Oriental Studies Institute in Tashkent since 1947. The Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies today hosts the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Indology. Indian Council for Cultural Relations is going to open three Indian Chairs in this University as well as the University of World Economy & Diplomacy and the Samarkand State University. Under the India-Central Asia Summit framework, India recently hosted a 20-member Uzbek youth delegation. As we may appreciate, both countries are trying to further their cultural cooperation in different spheres involving their youth so that this tradition of close friendship carries on to the future. I may add that the Embassy of India in Tashkent has also been organizing several cultural presentations highlighting the occasion of the 75 years of India's independence and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav among the people of Uzbekistan.

DIplomacy & BEYOND PLUS

A Journal of Foreign Policy & National Affairs

Follow Us On:



**WE ARE AT THE CLICK OF
YOUR FINGERTIPS:**

WEBSITE: WWW.DIPLOMACYBEYOND.COM

FACEBOOK: FACEBOOK.COM/DIPLOMACYBEYONDPLUS

INSTAGRAM: INSTAGRAM.COM/DIPLOMACY_BEYOND

TWITTER: TWITTER.COM/DIPLOMACYBEYOND

LINKEDIN: IN.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/DIPLOMACYANDBEYOND

Publisher's Note



Dear Readers,

It is with immense pleasure that I present this special edition on the 30th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between India-Uzbekistan and to mark India@75 celebrations. Apart from sharing a relationship with Uzbekistan that is not only historical but also resilient, the two countries share commonalities. The remarkable ties between them are a prospect to further deepen their engagement in the years to come. The two countries have always looked to work towards developing an economic and social bond.

I would like to give a special mention and thanks to the Hon. Ambassador of India to Uzbekistan, H.E. Mr. Manish Prabhat for providing us with a prudent and heartening note on the existing bilateral relationship between the two countries. His Excellency offered a deep insight into the multi-faceted relationship between India and Uzbekistan.

This edition of India and Uzbekistan ties looks into an extensive understanding of the countries' relationship in various sectors, such as bilateral, economy, science and technology, culture, and more.

The special edition also includes an interesting read highlighting the formulations of programmes under Atmanirbhar Bharat.

On behalf of our entire team, I would like to convey my sincere gratitude to all the esteemed contributors for their valuable inputs to the Diplomacy and Beyond Plus Edition, dedicated to India-Uzbekistan.

I am certain that the strong ties shared between India and Uzbekistan will remain intact.



Surya Prakash
Publisher



India-Uzbekistan: 30 Years of Bilateral Ties

The year 2022 marked 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and Uzbekistan. In the last three decades, the relationship between the two allies has gone from strength to strength and witnessed accelerated growth following the high-level bilateral visits by leaders of both countries.

Rashi Randev

India was one of the first countries to recognize the state sovereignty of Uzbekistan after its independence, and the protocol on the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Uzbekistan was signed in Tashkent on March 18, 1992. The year 2022 marked the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Uzbekistan, and on this occasion, President Shri Ram Nath Kovind sent a congratulatory message to the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev. Following this, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Mr. Abdulaziz Kamilov, and the External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, also exchanged congratulatory messages on the

occasion. In addition, the Embassy of India in Uzbekistan hosted a gala concert in Turkistan Concert Hall in Tashkent to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Uzbekistan.

In May 2011, a Joint Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed between the countries. The document expanded the opportunities for boosting cooperation across a broad spectrum of dimensions, including all aspects of the political, economic, and cultural-humanitarian spheres that the two sides considered mutually advantageous. In the last three decades, the relationship between the two allies has gone from strength to strength and witnessed accelerated



growth following the visits of Prime Minister (PM) Shri Narendra Modi to Uzbekistan in 2015 and 2016 and the visits of Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to India in 2018 and 2019. This was followed by a virtual summit between PM Modi and President Mirziyoyev, held in December 2020, and PM Modi's two-day visit to Samarkand in Uzbekistan on September 15, 2022, to attend the SCO Summit. The India-Uzbek bilateral relationship has expanded to include political and strategic issues, defence and security, trade and investment, energy, agriculture, S&T, education, and people-to-people ties. Active regional and international interaction between Tashkent and New Delhi has become an important part of political dialogue and practical cooperation.

India and Uzbekistan have huge potential in terms of further strengthening bilateral cooperation in the spheres of trade and investment. The annual trade between India and Uzbekistan is more than \$440 million. The leaders of the two countries identified the task of increasing the level of bilateral trade to at least \$1 billion within a couple of years. India's major exports are pharmaceutical products, mechanical equipment, vehicle parts, services, optical instruments and equipment. India's imports from Uzbekistan consist largely of fruit and vegetable products, services, fertilizers, juice products and extracts, and lubricants. India and Uzbekistan signed a Joint Statement in September 2019 to set up a joint feasibility study for entering into negotiations for a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA). Prominent Indian investments by Indian companies include those in

the fields of pharmaceuticals, amusement parks, automobile components, and the hospitality industry. Investments in various fields, including pharma and healthcare, textiles and auto components, agriculture and food processing, and mining and the jewellery sector are in various stages of discussion. Regular dialogue between the leaders of the two countries is enhanced by active contacts at the level of governments, parliaments, and ministries. The establishment of direct cooperation between the regions of India and Uzbekistan is contributing to the further development of trade and investment relations.

In terms of Joint Working Groups (JWG) and sectoral cooperation, there are myriad areas for bilateral cooperation, such as textiles, IT, pharmaceuticals and healthcare, tourism, agriculture, science, technology, and energy cooperation, etc. The 3rd meeting of the JWG on Textiles, the 2nd meeting of the JWG on IT, along with the 1st meeting of the JWG on Pharmaceuticals and Healthcare and the 1st meeting of the JWG on Tourism were held in Tashkent alongside the 11th Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) in August 2018. The pharmaceutical and healthcare sector is a high priority for both countries. An e-Visa scheme was introduced for Uzbek nationals and the Uzbek government has also extended the 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 visiting in 2017.

The creation of a joint committee on e-Governance and ICT has been envisaged under the MoU signed in September, 2018. The 1st meeting of the JWG on Agriculture was held in September, 2019. In February 2019, a Joint Committee on Science and Technology was formed and in July 2019, the JWG on Counter-Terrorism held its eighth meeting in New Delhi, during which several areas for training and capacity building in the fields of law enforcement and counterterrorism operations were identified by the two sides for cooperation. Furthermore, the 1st meeting of the JWG on Space Cooperation was held in April 2019.



Defence and Security Cooperation

Defence and security cooperation has acquired a new level of intensity following the visits of the then Defence Minister of Uzbekistan, Maj. Gen. Abdusalam Azizov, to India from September 4-7 2018, and Defence Minister Shri Rajnath Singh, to Uzbekistan on November 1-3, 2019. During the visit, an MoU on Military Medicine was signed. As a follow-up to the MoU on Military Education signed in October 2018, two institutional-level MoUs were also signed for cooperation in training and capacity building. The Indian Defence Minister inaugurated the first-ever joint military exercise between India and Uzbekistan from November 4-14, 2019.

After this first edition of joint counter-terrorism military exercises held in Uzbekistan, the armies of India and Uzbekistan concluded 10-day-long joint military exercises at Ranikhet, Uttarakhand, from March 10-19, 2021. 45 soldiers each from the Uzbek and Indian armies participated in the exercise. The India-Uzbekistan Joint Military Exercise “Dustlik” took place between March 24 and March 31, 2022. The joint India-Uzbekistan operation focused on counter-terrorism operations in semi-urban terrain. India has also assisted in setting up an India Room at the Armed Forces Academy of Uzbekistan in Tashkent. Shri Rajnath Singh visited Uzbekistan on August 23-

25, 2022, to attend the SCO Defense Ministers meeting. During the visit, Shri Rajnath Singh held bilateral meetings with his Uzbek counterpart, Lieutenant General Bakhodir Kurbanov.

In terms of security cooperation, India and Uzbekistan share common perspectives on several security issues, including terrorism, transnational organized crime, illegal trafficking, smuggling, etc. The main focus of our engagement in this sphere has been to assist Uzbek security agencies through training and capacity building. Also, as a part of the growing cooperation in the security sphere, Minister of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, Pulat Bobojonov visited India from November 20-22, 2019. During the visit, he held consultations with Home Minister Shri Amit Shah. The two ministers signed an agreement on security cooperation.

High-Level Visits

PM Narendra Modi visited Uzbekistan on July 6-7, 2015, and held bilateral talks with then-President Islam Karimov on advancing the strategic partnership between both countries. An agreement on cooperation in the field of Tourism; a Protocol on cooperation between the Foreign Ministries; and a Programme of Cultural Cooperation for the years 2015-2017 were signed during the visit. PM Modi returned to Uzbekistan



in June 2016 as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) meeting of Heads of State. From 30th September-1st October 2018, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited India and during this 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. In January 2019, President Mirziyoyev participated in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit as a Guest of Honour.

On 11th December 2020, a virtual summit between PM Narendra Modi and President Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev was held, where both sides discussed bilateral issues in the fields of politics, development cooperation, security, space, education, and development projects. India and Uzbekistan have set up National Coordination Committees to oversee the implementation of mutually agreed upon projects and initiatives. The first meeting of the committee took place on 24 August 2020. Both sides reviewed projects through grant assistance, LOCs and private investment proposals along with other aspects of bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and education fields.

On 14th July, 2022, the delegation headed by the Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Mr. Furkat Sidikov met with the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Smt. Meenakashi Lekhi, as part of a visit to Delhi. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Uzbekistan to attend the

SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in Tashkent on 28-30 July 2022 and also called on the President of Uzbekistan, Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev, along with other Foreign Ministers.

Academic and Cultural Cooperation

In India-Uzbekistan relations, education is a key area of collaboration. Uzbekistan has been sending candidates under the ITEC programme since 1993. The higher education institutions of Uzbekistan cooperate with more than 10 Indian universities and research institutions and centers. Now several other Indian universities are working on the establishment of their campuses in Uzbekistan.

Cultural ties constitute an important pillar of our bilateral relationship, and there is close affinity between the cultures of India and Uzbekistan. Indian films, actors, and songs are extremely popular across the country.

Conclusion

The relationship between India and Uzbekistan has led to an increased cooperation in numerous areas, including health, science, innovation, technology, and many more. The solid foundations of 30 years of diplomatic ties built on centuries-old affection, trust, and understanding have boosted bilateral cooperation between India and Uzbekistan.

Rashi Randev is PhD Research Scholar at School of International Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University, India



India-Uzbekistan: Trade and Connectivity

India and Uzbekistan trade ties have evolved since the inception of bilateral trade; from merely oil, gas, natural resources and consumer goods, Indian companies' presence has radically spread across sectors in Pharma, machinery, tourism, electrical and electronics equipment. The leaders of India and Uzbekistan have paid significant attention to bilateral relations, which have manifested in positive trade relations between the two nations.

-Rajoli Siddharth Jayaprakash

Trade between India and Uzbekistan occurred through the old silk route, which involved traders tackling the perfidious ridges of the Hindukush, the Pamirs and the Karakoram ranges. Ancient Indian trade paths could be depicted on the modern M-39 highway from Khorezm to Temez along the river Oxus connecting the ancient cities of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. Records cite that goods from across the Indian subcontinent were found in the markets of Uzbekistan. Even as late as the 19th century, it was not uncommon to see Indian traders exporting goods such as cotton, pashmina shawls, salt, sugar, spices and indigo while

importing horses, cochineal, and raw silk. This historical anecdote is a testament to the increasing trade flows between India and Uzbekistan.

Uzbekistan is a double-landlocked country in Central Asia, rich in natural resources and cotton. It primarily exports gold, cotton yarn, petroleum gas, refined copper and ethylene polymers and imports pharmaceutical, mechanical products, fruits, vegetables, services, fertilisers, extracts and lubricants. This indicates various comparative advantages in trade for both India and Uzbekistan, which were understood by policymakers early on; hence, both nations signed

the 'Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation' in May 1993. This agreement provides for mutual Most-Favoured-Nation (MFN) treatment and promotes economic, scientific and technical cooperation. This also includes the active participation of small and medium-sized enterprises in bilateral economic cooperation. In the same year, both nations signed an agreement on avoiding double taxation. In 1999, India and Uzbekistan signed a contract for bilateral investment promotion and protection. An Inter-governmental commission (IGC) has met over ten times. In 2019, India and Uzbekistan signed a joint statement to conduct a feasibility study on



entering into a preferential trade agreement. The 12th session of the IGC on Trade, Economic, Scientific & Technological Cooperation was held on 4th December 2020 through a video meeting. The 13th meeting of the Uzbek-Indian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 28th July 2022. The meeting was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister - Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Uzbekistan, Mr. Jamshid Khodjaev and Minister of Railways, Trade and Industry of India, Shri Piyush Goyal. During the meeting, the Indian Minister remarked that despite Covid-19, interactions and trade have increased in the last few years; trade has increased from 2019-2022, reflecting a growth of 38.5%. He further added that there are further possibilities to explore initiatives to improve connectivity in facilitating trade between India and Uzbekistan. The 2nd India-Uzbekistan Joint Working Group (JWG) on Economic Cooperation was held on 22nd June'22 wherein a wide range of issues were discussed. The trade volume has significantly increased in the last three decades, and investments have followed suit.

To improve the business climate in Uzbekistan, the Uzbek government adopted and implemented a number of market reforms. The results of this experiment have so far remained positive. FDI, which was only limited to a few sectors of the economy, is now open for manufacturing, production, electricity distribution, tourism and banking; the flow of FDI increased from \$2 billion in 2017 to \$8 billion in 2021. Companies such as GMR have expressed interest in investing in Uzbekistan's airports, air corridors and Novoi Cargo complex; KDAH Hospital has expressed interest in setting up a specialty hospital in Uzbekistan. Cadila Pharmaceuticals invested \$50 million in setting up a pharmaceutical plant. Indian universities such as Sharda University and Amity University have set up campuses in Tashkent and Andijan.

Uzbekistan has made considerable progress in the renewable sector, where 4000 MW of solar and wind capacity will be developed through FDI and another 4000 MW by 2026; which will increase the level of renewable energy to 25% and decrease the usage of natural gas by 3 billion cubic centimeters in Uzbekistan.

This gives multiple avenues for Indian firms working with photovoltaics and other solar products. Furthermore, NTPC is participating in various tenders and ONGC Videsh and Uzbekneftgas are in talks about allocating and exploring specific blocks.

Increasing summit visits contribute to the increasing trade volume between India and Uzbekistan. In 2018, President Shavkat Mirziyoyev visited India and signed 17 agreements/MoUs in science and technology cooperation, agriculture, tourism, military education, justice, health, medical science, space, pharmaceuticals, etc. Similarly, three agreements were signed when Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Uzbekistan. Leaders of both countries have paid significant attention to bilateral relations, which have manifested in positive trade relations between the two nations.

Furthermore, Uzbekistan set up 22 Free Economic Zones (FEZs) in Navoi, Angren, Jizzakh, Urgut, Gijduvan, Kokand, Namangan, Hazarasp, Termez, Bukhara, Sirdaryo, Chirokchi, Balik, Charvak, Nukus, Zonin, Kosonsoy, Bosyun, Parkent and Andijaan etc. Investments

in these FEZs come with significant benefits, such as exemption from taxes and customs payments. Within 22 FEZs, more than 50 industries are covered, with 6 FEZs solely set up for the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals. Indian firms have a competitive edge in Uzbekistan, not only in the pharmaceutical sector but also in electrical engineering, mechanical engineering, mineral extraction and information technology. Furthermore, Uzbekistan has expressed a strong desire to expand cooperation in programming, the automobile industry, metallurgy, chemical, light industry, medical tourism, MSME development, and the banking system.

Along with the increased Indian business presence in the region, the number of local entrepreneurs in Uzbekistan has increased. Uzbekistan has the most prominent number of entrepreneurs in Central Asia.

As the level of trade between India and Uzbekistan increases, the question of faster connectivity emerges. Recently, government officials in New Delhi and Tashkent have been exploring alternate routes wherein Uzbek goods would be shipped to India via Chabahar port using the TIR (International Road Transport) system (which enables seamless transit through

customs between the origin country and destination); the pilot ship was flagged off in August 2022. The scramble for exploring new trade routes was not solely initiated by India but rather by President Mirziyoyev, as the current geopolitical realities have impacted Uzbekistan's black sea trade. Uzbekistan, therefore, is exploring southern routes and corridors to export its goods, such as the trans-Caspian multi-modal transit corridor, between Central Asia and South Asia and agreements such as the Ashgabat agreement, which includes Iran, Turkmenistan, Oman and several other nations in the region, increasing transit corridors along with the International North-South Trade corridor that will result in faster transit times, and create an alternate, self-reliant supply chain working under the aegis of South-South cooperation.

In an interview, former Ambassador to India, Ilkhomjon Nematov stated, 'India is not only being considered as one of the most important partners in Asia but in the whole world.' This shift in Uzbekistan's foreign policy and trade policy to attract businesses; and participate in transit agreements while having sound bilateral relations with other regional powers is indicative of a multi-vector foreign policy being followed by President Mirziyoyev.

Conclusion

India and Uzbekistan trade ties have evolved since the inception of bilateral trade; from merely oil, gas, natural resources and consumer goods, Indian companies' presence has radically spread across sectors in pharma, machinery, tourism, extracts, electrical and electronic equipments, etc. The trade relations have augmented as the trade flow between the two nations increased by 87.2 million dollars to \$442.7 million from 2019 to 2020. Despite the shocks caused to the global supply chains due to the pandemic, trade and cooperation between the two nations remained strong, where India exported \$137 million worth of pharmaceutical products in 2021 and provided vaccines and critical medicines for free. With the increased participation of Indian investors, firms and traders in Uzbekistan's economy, Tashkent and New Delhi are in talks to improve connectivity between the two nations through Chabahar Port and another multi-modal road/sea transit agreement in Central Asia.

Rajoli Siddharth Jayaprakash is a PhD Research Scholar at Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies in School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India



भारत 2023 INDIA

एकता कृतममृतम्

ONE EARTH • ONE FAMILY • ONE FUTURE

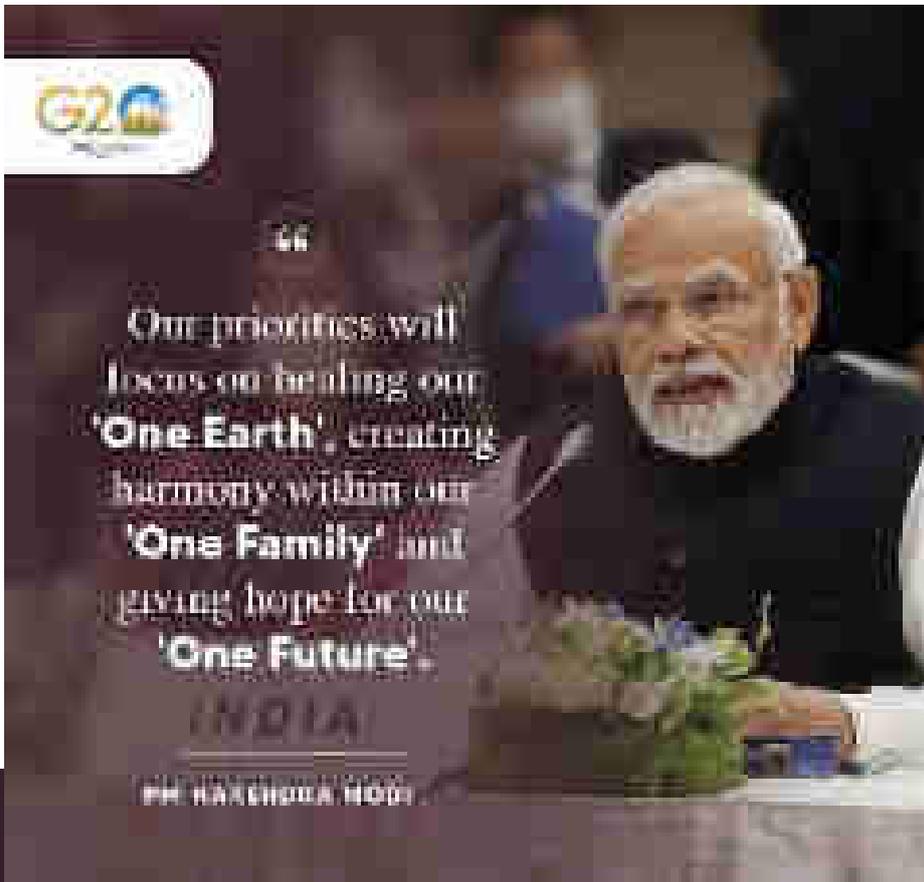
India's G20 Presidency 2023



India officially assumed the G20 Presidency on 1 December 2022, after the handover of the Indonesia's G20 presidency from President Joko Widodo to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi took place on November 2022, at the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia.

For India, the G20 Presidency also marks the beginning of "Amritkaal," the 25-year period beginning from the 75th anniversary of its independence on 15 August 2022, leading up to the centenary of its independence and leading towards a futuristic, prosperous, inclusive, and developed society, distinguished by a human-centric approach at its core.

The Group of Twenty (G20) comprises 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, United Kingdom and United States) and the European Union. The G20 members represent around 85% of the global GDP, over 75% of the global trade, and about two-thirds of the world population.

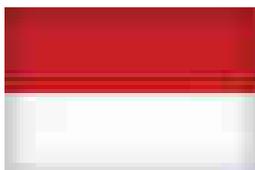


INDIA'S G20 PRIORITIES

- Green Development, Climate Finance & Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE)
- Accelerated, Inclusive & Resilient Growth
- Accelerating Progress on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- Technological Transformation & Digital Public Infrastructure
- Multilateral Institutions for the 21st century
- Women-led Development



INDIA
2023



INDONESIA
2022



BRAZIL
2024

India's special invitee guest countries are Bangladesh, Egypt, Mauritius, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Oman, Singapore, Spain, and the UAE. In addition to the regular International Organisations (UN, IMF, WB, WHO, WTO, ILO, FSB and OECD) and Chairs of Regional Organisations (AU, AUDA-NEPAD and ASEAN), India, as G20 Presidency, will be inviting ISA, CDRI and ABD as Guest IOs.

This year, the troika of the preceding, current, and succeeding presidencies are three developing countries: Indonesia, India, and Brazil. India will hold the G20 Leaders' Summit for the first time in India in 2023.



Cultural Cooperation: *India and Uzbekistan*

Under the programme promoting 'Make in India', cooperation in agriculture, pharmaceutical, and healthcare has expanded the contours of cultural cooperation. It was the policy of "near abroad" and "extended neighbourhood" that revitalised the century-old cultural linkages between India and Uzbekistan.

Dr. Preeti D. Das

The cultural relationship between India and Uzbekistan has a long history. Numerous mentions of Kamboja, which is said to include parts of modern-day Uzbekistan, can be found in Sanskrit and Pali literature. Their cultural ties date back to about the 6th–5th century BCE, which constantly influenced the diverse cultural ties between the two. The main articles of interest for import were green tea, indigo, muslin, calico, ambarsari, Kashmiri shawls, etc. The region was considered one, and several scholars from Uzbekistan found India to be their second native land. The proximity of socio-economic conditions and political and cultural lifestyles provided a stimulus for close cooperation in the fields of literature, poetry, astronomy, and others.

The Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture, which was founded in Tashkent in 1995 and is run by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), is well-known in Uzbekistan for its cultural initiatives. The Center arranges regular classes for Hindi language, Kathak, Yoga, Tabla, and seminar events focusing on Indian culture. From school to graduate level, three Uzbek educational institutes support Hindi language study nationally. Twenty-five scholarships are being offered to Uzbekistan annually for various courses in Indian universities under the ICCR's Scholarship Programmes and one scholarship is being offered for the study of Hindi at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra. In October 1992, a protocol on collaboration in the media sphere was signed. Since 1993–1994 Uzbekistan has been a partner in India's ITEC Program.



Developments in Cultural Ties

Under the programme promoting "Make in India," cooperation in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, and healthcare has expanded the contours of cultural cooperation. It was the policy of "near abroad" and "extended neighbourhood" that revitalised the century-old cultural linkages between India and Uzbekistan. Piyush Goyal, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, described India-Uzbekistan relations as "critical to India's vision of an integrated extended neighborhood."

Uzbekistan has a well-developed film industry and has become the centre of film production. The Indo-Uzbekistan Film and Culture Forum, which was established in 2018, displays the cooperation between the film industries. The establishment of this forum has been a step forward in strengthening cultural cooperation between the countries. There is a close affinity between the cultures of India and Uzbekistan. Indian films, actors, and songs are extremely popular across the country. There is a growing trend among Indian film production houses to use Uzbekistan as a location to shoot their films. During the 13th Tashkent International Film Festival 2021 gala opening, a tribute was given to Raj Kapoor.

Cultural Exchanges

There are regular visits by cultural troupes from both sides. Mr. Khayriddin Sultanov, State Advisor to the President, and Mr. Ruslanbek Davletov, Justice Minister, represented Uzbekistan at the concluding event, on October 2, 2018, of the

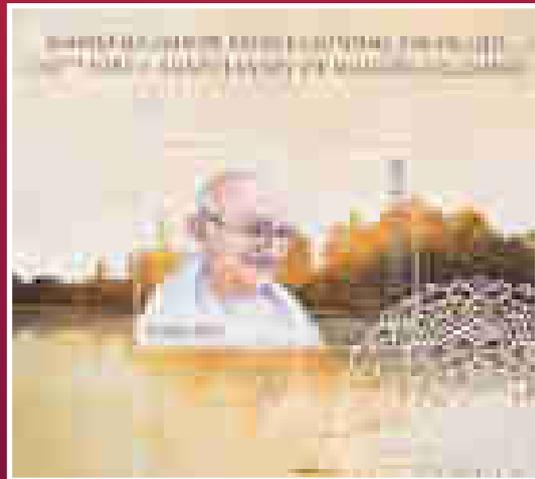


week-long Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention. The Uzbek government released a postage stamp on Mahatma Gandhi to mark his 150th birth anniversary. The Surajkund Crafts Mela entered into an MoU in September 2019 with Kokand International Handicrafts Exhibition for mutual participation and cooperation in each other's events.

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, which was 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 Sahasrabudde, President of the 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 dances, yoga, tabla, and the teaching of Hindi in Uzbekistan. The Cultural Exchange Programme between Uzbekistan and India for the period 2021-25 was signed during the visit of the Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture Meenakshi Lekhi to Uzbekistan in September 2021. Throughout the year, the Embassy of India to Tashkent, Uzbekistan organized many programmes to commemorate the 30th anniversary of India-Uzbekistan diplomatic relations. On 1st November 2022, at the Turkestan Hall in Tashkent, the Embassy organized a memorable Indian cultural evening of classical and folk dances by the artists of the LBSCIC. Kazakh artists from the Indian Classical Dances and Yoga Centre from Almaty and the local Uzbek Bollywood singing sensation Havas Guruhi group also performed at the event. The grand celebrations of thirty years of diplomatic ties, International Yoga Day, Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav and 74th Republic Day in Uzbekistan reflect the continued cultural cooperation between the two countries.

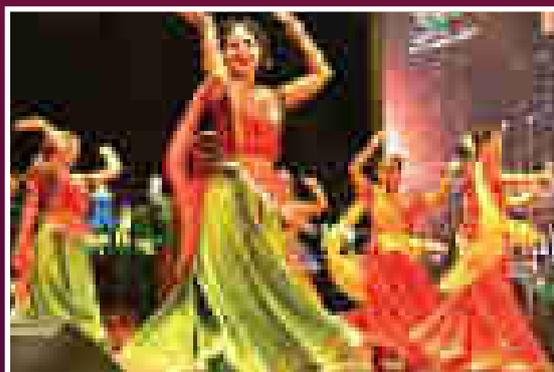
Conclusion

The frequent cultural exchanges and joint government initiatives make it clear that the two nations have long had close cultural ties. Tashkent features two streets named after Mahatma Gandhi and Lal Bahadur Shastri, demonstrating the city's strong ties to Indian history and culture.



Dr. Preeti Das is an Associate Professor at Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies at School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav



Bihar Diwas Celebrations in Tashkent

Focusing on Culture, Investment Opportunities & Tourism in the State.



Vishwa Hindi Diwas 2023



Glimpses of the 74th Republic Day Celebrations by the Embassy of India, Tashkent, Uzbekistan







India-Uzbekistan: Science and Technology Cooperation

India and Uzbekistan have made significant progress in developing their science and technology sectors. The two countries have established a number of research and development partnerships, and have also worked together on joint research projects in various fields, including information and communication technologies, biotechnology, and renewable energy.

Sudhanshu Kumar

Uzbekistan has a rich cultural heritage, and its people have made valuable contributions to fields such as mathematics, astronomy and medicine. In recent years, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in developing its science and technology sector. The government has invested in research and development, and has established partnerships with international organizations and institutions to support the growth of the sector, including establishing science and technology parks and incubators, and providing funding and support for scientific research. One of the key areas of focus in Uzbekistan's science and technology sector is

the development of renewable energy sources. The country has an abundance of solar and wind resources and is working to increase its use of these sources to meet its energy needs. In addition, the government is supporting the development of advanced materials and technologies, such as nanomaterials and biotechnology, as well as information and communication technologies. Uzbekistan has also focused on developing its digital infrastructure and increasing access to information and communication technologies. Over the years, the country has made substantial investments in improving its telecommunications infrastructure and increasing internet connectivity. This has led to the growth of the IT sector and the development of new digital technologies and services.

The government of Uzbekistan has enacted laws and regulations to support the growth of the science and technology sector, and has also established agencies and committees to oversee the development of science and technology in the country. In addition, the government has signed international agreements and partnerships with other countries and organizations to facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology. It has also encouraged collaboration between academia and industry, and established programs to support the commercialization of research and the development of new technologies.

Cooperation with India in Science and Technology

India and Uzbekistan have a remarkable level of cooperation in the field of science and technology. The two countries have established a number of partnerships and collaborations in this area, and have made significant progress in developing their science and technology sectors. Research and development are two of the most important areas of science and technology cooperation between India and Uzbekistan. The two countries have established a number of research and development partnerships, and have also worked together on joint research projects in various fields, including information and communication technologies, biotechnology, and renewable energy.

In addition, India and Uzbekistan have also worked together to promote the exchange of scientific knowledge and expertise. For example, the two countries have organized joint conferences and workshops, and have also established exchange programs for researchers and students. There are a number of factors that suggest that the cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in science and technology will continue to grow and expand in the future. One of these factors is the increasing importance of science and technology in the global economy, which has led to a greater emphasis on research and development in both countries. In addition, there are a number of areas in which India and Uzbekistan have a shared interest, such as energy, biotechnology, and IT. These areas offer significant potential



for cooperation and collaboration between the two countries. Some of the specific agreements between India and Uzbekistan are:

STI (Science, Technology and Innovation)- An agreement between India and Uzbekistan on collaboration in the areas of science, technology, and innovation was signed on 1st October 2018 at New Delhi in the presence of the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. The agreement was signed on October 1, 2018 in New Delhi in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, President of Uzbekistan Mr. Shavkat Mirayoyev, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, former Minister of Science, Technology, and Earth Sciences on the Indian side, and Mr. Ibrohim Abdurakhmanov, Minister of Innovative Development on the Uzbek side.

As agreed in the MoU signed in October 2018, a Joint Committee on Science and Technology was set up in February 2019. In line with the agreement, a Programme of Cooperation in S&T for the period 2019–22 was signed in October 2019, paving the way for collaborative research, expert visits, scholarships and internships for Uzbeks in prestigious Indian scientific organizations.

As a result of a considerable confluence of shared interests in science and technology, the execution of the agreement will usher in a new chapter in bilateral ties where both parties will now be able to capitalize on the core competencies of one another. The goal of the agreement is to encourage collaboration between the two nations in the



areas of science, technology, and innovation. Researchers from academic institutions, R&D centers, enterprises from India and Uzbekistan, as well as members of scientific bodies from both countries will be present. Potential fields for direct collaboration include energy, water, climate, and natural resources. Other prospective fields include agriculture and food science and technology, engineering sciences, information and communication technology, applied mathematics, and data science and technology, health and medical technology, materials science, life sciences, and biotechnology.

e-Governance and ICT

As per the MoU signed on September 28, 2018, the formation of a Joint Committee on e-Governance and ICT (Information, Communication and Technology) is envisaged. The Jawaharlal Nehru India - Uzbekistan Centre for IT (JNIUCIT) has been set up in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, by the Advanced Computing Training School of C-DAC (Centre for Development of Advanced Computing) of India. Under the aegis of the Tashkent University of Information Technologies (TUIT), a fully operational center is in operation now. Modern computing hardware, high-tech computer facilities, video conferencing facilities, a well-stocked library, and qualified personnel are all available at the center. JNIUCIT is intended

to be a significant institution for Uzbekistan's IT human resource development. Uzbekistan is utilizing the advancements in the sphere of IT by carrying out this project. The establishment of JNIUCIT has significantly aided Uzbekistan up the ante for IT education. JNIUCIT assists the government of Uzbekistan by serving as a focal point for all national IT endeavors. Experts from Uzbekistan are exchanging knowledge and receiving training from India, which is improving associated abilities and creating the state's much-needed information and communications technology and human resources.

Space Cooperation

The Joint Working Group on Space Cooperation conducted its inaugural meeting in April 2019, following the signing of an agreement 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 premier Indian scientific institutions. The agreement with Uzbekistan will focus on collaboration in space exploration and peaceful uses of space. In the process of exploring novel research projects, as well as prospective and applied prospects and applications in the fields of earth remote sensing, satellite communication, satellite navigation,



space science, and outer space exploration, it will enhance cooperation between India and Uzbekistan. Additionally, a joint working group has been formed to develop a plan of operation, including a timeline and the procedures for putting the agreement into effect.

Apart from this, Uzbekistan has expressed interest in joining the International Solar Alliance. There is interest in Indian participation in the development of the solar power sector through competitive bidding. Uzbekneftegaz and OVL are in talks for cooperation in the oil & gas sector, including the allocation and exploration of specific blocks.

Conclusion

Overall, the cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in science and technology has been

beneficial for both countries, and has contributed to the development of their respective science and technology sectors. Uzbekistan is making significant progress in developing its science and technology sector, and is well-positioned to make further contributions to these fields in the future. The cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in science and technology will continue to be a key aspect of their bilateral relationship in the future, and will contribute to the development and growth of their respective science and technology sectors.

*Sudhanshu Kumar is a Junior Research Fellow at
Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies in
School of International Studies, JawaharLal Nehru
University, India*



ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT

INDIA @ 75

“THIS COUNTRY HAS NOT BEEN MADE BY POLITICIANS, KINGS OR GOVERNMENTS. IT HAS BEEN MADE BY SAINTS, FARMERS, LABOURERS AND THE PEOPLE.”

SHRI NARENDRA MODI, PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

By- Abhigya Langeh

India is one of the oldest civilisations in the world. Set apart from the rest of Asia by the supreme wall of the Himalayas, the Indian sub-continent touches three large bodies of water and is immediately recognizable on any world map. The Indian peninsula defines the Bay of Bengal to the East, Arabian sea to the West and the Indian ocean to the South. Because of the old trade routes passed through this region, it has a long history of commercial and

cultural wealth. The history of India begins with the birth of Indus valley civilization and coming of Aryans, two phases which are famously described as pre-Vedic and Vedic era. The fifth century saw the unification of India under king Ashoka and spread of Buddhism. In the 7th Century Islam came with which lead to the formation of Delhi sultanate under which again India became a political entity.

By 1856, most of India was under the control of the British East India Company but on 15th August 1947, India got Independence and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru was elected as the first Prime Minister. On December 9th 1947, Constituent Assembly sat together for the first time to draft the constitution. It was on 26th

January 1950 that it came into effect. Comprising of 395 articles and 8 schedules, this lengthy document laid the foundation and framework of the new State. The Indian economy was liberalised in the year 1991 and included several objectives such as:

- To solve India's impending Balance of Payment crisis
- To boost the private sector's participation in the development of India's economy
- To increase the volume of Foreign Direct Investment in Indian businesses
- To introduce competition between India's domestic businesses
- To maintain India's economic potential by encouraging multinational and private companies to expand
- To usher in globalisation for the Indian economy
- To regulate exports and imports, and promote foreign trade



India's agenda primarily revolved around fostering better relationships to encourage peace, cooperation, resolution of existing disputes and conflict resolution. India's focus was and still is towards excellence, self-reliance, accelerated economic growth, stable political power and welfare of the people.

By virtue of physical size, strategic location, large young population, vast natural resources, the size of GDP and economic potential, India assumes a unique position in the South Asian region. India shares its boundaries with nations including Afghanistan, Bhutan, Bangladesh, China, Maldives, Myanmar, Pakistan, Nepal and Sri Lanka and greatly emphasizes to prioritize better ties with its

immediate neighbours. Due to increasing globalisation and interdependence among nations, India entails to healthy diplomatic relations with other nations at large. India's importance has grown not just on a regional but also on a global scale. It is the world's second most populated country, seventh biggest by land and the world's largest democracy.

The Government of India has greatly focused on bringing innovation, technology, enterprise and efficiency at the core of policy formulation and implementation. This has led to the growth and development of the country. The Government has made sure to reform the policy architecture in a way that the best outcomes are achieved.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had envisioned to lay the foundations of 'New India by the 2022'. In the process three key objectives were set out. To begin, every person will acknowledge his or her part in the country's growth and progress. This active engagement in policy will result in improved welfare implementation. Secondly, development strategy should help achieve broad based economic growth to ensure balanced development across all regions and sectors. Thirdly, strategy when implemented will bridge the gap between private and public sector performance.

Under the 'Strategy for New India @75', 41 different areas were focused to achieve India's true potential, so that India has a solid foundation for sustainable growth and development for the next three decades.

In the last few years, significant policy decisions and adoption of new schemes have been undertaken by the Government of India for the development and prosperity of the country. Some of the following are:



Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan: The phrase was first used by PM Narendra Modi in 2014 in relation to national security, poverty and digital India but gained momentum during the Covid-19 pandemic. Atmanirbhar Bharat means 'Self-Reliant India'. The concept stands on five pillars:

- Economy
- Infrastructure
- Technology driven system
- Demand
- Vibrant Demography

The aim is to make the country and citizen independent and self-reliant in all aspects.

Swachh Bharat Abhiyan: On 2nd October 2014, Swachh



Bharat Abhiyan was launched throughout the country as a national movement. The campaign aimed to achieve 'Clean India' as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th Anniversary in 2019. It is the Government of India's significant cleanliness programme, with citizens all throughout the country taking on the duty to making India clean.

The campaign will help proper waste management through the scientific process, hygienic disposal and recycling of the waste which will also help in protecting the environment.



Digital India: It is a programme launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on 1st July 2015. The aim of the programme is to transform India into a digitally empowered society and a knowledgeable economy. The vision includes the following:

- Digital infrastructures as a utility to every citizen
- Governance and services on demand
- Digital empowerment of citizens

India possesses the largest postal network in the world, with over 1.59 lakh post offices spread across the country, 90% of which are in rural areas. Of these, over 1.54 lakh post offices are Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-enabled so as to be suitably equipped to offer a wide range of services with changing times. The transaction through mobile phones in India has increased drastically. 2, 74,246 Km of optical fibre network has connected over 1.15 Lakh Gram Panchayats under the Bharat Net Programme.

India's digital economy will touch \$1 trillion by 2026 and India's e-commerce industry recorded a 36.8% year-on-year growth in 2022.



Infrastructure: It is a key sector for the Indian economy. It is responsible for India's overall growth and development. As per the data given by the Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways, in the last few years, the Government has built a significant number of highways and roads. It has led to rural connectivity and large construction of roads, railways, airports and sea ports.

Government has also introduced the concept of smart cities. Smart cities are an approach to urban development characterized by area based development; efficient delivery of basic infrastructure and services in an equitable manner with citizen's participation. As part of the Azadi Ka Amrut Mahotsav celebrations, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched the SAAR programme under the Smart Cities Mission. It is a joint initiative of MoHUA, National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA) and some of the leading academic institutions in India.

Government of India has allocated Rs 111 Lakh Cr under the National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) for FY 2019-2025. Sectors like energy, road, urban and railways amount to 71% of the projected infrastructure investments in India. Further, it plans to spend US\$ 1.4 trillion on infrastructure during 2019-2025 so as to focus on sustainable development of the country. The Government has also discussed to invest US\$ 750 billion for railway infrastructure from 2018-30.

Other major infrastructure projects are:

- Sagarmala project
- Bharatmala project
- Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, Shivaji Memorial
- India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway
- Setu Bharatam Project
- Rashtriya Rajmarg Zila Sanjyokta Pariyojna
- Inland Waterways
- Gujarat-Gorakhpur gas pipeline
- Chardham-Highway Project
- Highest bridge of the world on river Chenab

India is expected to become world's third largest construction market by 2025. A total of 1,44,634 Km of national highways were to be completed by 30th November 2022. The Government also aims to construct 23 new national highways by 2025.



Make in India: On September 25, 2014 the Government of India announced 'Make in India' initiative to encourage manufacturing in India and investment in manufacturing and services. Make in India is designed to achieve investments, encourage innovation, protect intellectual property in order to become a manufacturing hub. To achieve this the following targets were identified.

- To increase the manufacturing sector to 12-14% per annum so that the sector's share in economy also grows
- The sector's contribution to GDP is increased by 25% by 2020 (revised to 2025)

Several initiatives have been launched by the Government in the last few years other than Make in India. These include 'Start up India, Skill India, Digital India, with the aim to improve the global FDI and ease of doing business.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao: The BBBP scheme was launched in 2015. The main objectives of it includes:

1. Prevention of gender-biased sex selective elimination
2. Ensuring survival and protection of the girl child
3. Ensuring education and participation of the girl child
4. Protecting rights of girl child

As per the Health Management Information System



(HMIS), Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) has begun to improve in the country since 2015-16. As per the latest 5th report of National Family Health Survey (2019-21) of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare the sex ratio of total population (females per 1000 males) is 1020 for the country as a whole, with sex ratio rural at 1037 and sex ratio urban at 985. Out of 640 districts covered under BBBP, 422 districts have shown improvement. Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher secondary made significant improvement from 53.8 percent to 57.6 percent in 2021-22. as per unified District Information System for Education (UDISE).



Ayushman Bharat: Ayushman Bharat Programme was launched in 2018. It is an umbrella of health schemes by the Government of India. It addresses health issues at all levels—primary, secondary and tertiary. It comprises of two components:

- Health and Wellness Centre (HWCs)
- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY)

The vision of it is to ensure financial protection against health expenditure and access to affordable and quality health care for all. As of 4th December, 2022, Hospital admissions reached to 4.18 Crore.

Start-up India: Start-up India initiative was launched on 16th January 2016. It has provided several programmes with the objective of supporting entrepreneurs, building a start-up ecosystem and creation of job opportunities. These programmes are managed by Start-up India Team which reports to the Department for Industrial Policy and Promotion



(DIPP). The action plan includes three areas:

- Simplification and Handholding
- Funding Support and Incentives
- Industry-Academia Partnership and Incubation

During 2020, despite Covid-19 pandemic, Indian start-ups have garnered \$10.14 billion in funding in over 1,200 deals and the seed stage investment deals has grown by 50% from 420 deals in 2019 to 672 deals in 2020.

Recently, the Government has launched the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS). The aim of the above is to provide financial assistance to start-ups. It is launched by DIPP with an outlay of Rs 945 Cr. The scheme will support an estimated 3,600 entrepreneurs through 300 incubators for the next 4 years. An Expert Advisory Committee (EAC) will be responsible for the execution and grant of up to 5 Cr will be provided to the selected candidates.

Start-ups may be small companies yet they play a significant role in economic growth. They create job opportunities and new entrepreneurs can bring new ideas to the table which will lead to more innovation and development.



Yoga as a Wellness Activity: Practiced in India since 5th century, The practice of Yoga leads to stable mind and body, generating energy for the body, for stability, peace and calm.

On September 2014, Prime Minister Modi during his speech at the UN General Assembly (UNGA) proposed the idea of International Day of Yoga. The draft resolution endorsed a record of 177 member states and hence 21st June was declared as International Day of Yoga. The first International Yoga day was observed on 21st June 2015. The Ministry of Ayush organised it and 35,985 people including PM Modi and 84 nations performed 21 asanas at Rajpath, New Delhi. This day was also declared as the largest Yoga class held in the world.

During Covid-19, social isolation, health concerns, loss of employment and loss of human lives among other variables had led to anxiety and problems among the people. The studies recently showed that Yoga has led to improved immunity system hence the importance and relevance of Yoga during the covid-19 pandemic has increased substantially.

Covid-19: Government of India is committed to facilitate universal and affordable access to all relevant medical products and technologies, both existing and new, to tackle the reverberations of COVID-19 to accelerate progress towards achieving sustainable development goals and universal



health coverage. The government is working on strengthening health systems, improving access to free medicines and diagnostics and reducing catastrophic healthcare spending.

India is turning into a global healthcare provider and this will be a major part of its diplomacy in the coming years. India's priorities in international health diplomacy can be seen as it is working on "Health for All" policy. India has provided medical assistance to over 150 nations to battle Covid-19 outbreak. In its neighbourhood, India is supplying vaccination doses to Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Seychelles, and Brazil.

India has developed the Covishield vaccine, manufactured under license by Serum Institute of India and Covaxin vaccine developed by Bharat Biotech. India is the only country in the world to develop two vaccines during Covid-19. It has the added advantage of not only creating indigenous Covid-19 vaccines, but also to be a part of the major global supplier of the AstraZeneca-Oxford vaccine.

One Nation, One Tax, One Market: A 21 member selected committee was proposed to look into the Goods and Services Tax (GST) laws. The tax came into effect from

1 NATION TAX MARKET

1 July 2017 through the implementation of the One Hundred and First Amendment of the Constitution of India by the Indian government. The GST replaced existing multiple taxes levied by the central and state governments. It was launched at the midnight session of both the houses of the parliament and convened at the Central Hall of the Parliament. Prime objectives of GST are:

- To eliminate Indirect Tax issues
- To remove Cascading Tax effects
- To increase the number of tax payers
- To entertain Consumption-based tax administration instead of manufacturing
- To bring out a buoyancy in Govt. Revenue
- To diminish Tax evasion and Corruption

The introduction of the above has helped the Indian economy by the following ways:

- It has reduced taxes burden on producers and has fostered growth through more production
- A single taxation system will prevent wastage of unpreserved items from being transported
- There will be more transparency in the system
- GST will add to Government revenue by extending the tax base
- It will remove the custom duties applicable to exports
- Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) under the composition scheme can register

In 2022, India celebrated 75 years of its Independence and the Union Government announced a 75-week programme to mark this historic occasion. The 259 member committee, which includes Union Ministers, Governors, Chief Ministers, and eminent citizens from all walks of life, provided policy direction and guidelines for formulation of programmes for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of Indian Independence at national and international levels. The Ministry of Culture was the nodal point for all events, which included exhibitions on freedom fighters such as Mahatma Gandhi, Vallabhbhai Patel and Subhas Chandra Bose. Indian tourism was also promoted by celebrating 2022, as the 'Visit India Year' through a promotion campaign highlighting India's strengths, such as, heritage, culture, art, wellness and yoga. The programme, Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav, was commenced 75 weeks prior to August, 15, 2022 -- the day independent India turned 75 -- and ends on August 15, 2023.



India-Uzbekistan: Academic Cooperation

The centre for Uzbek language and Indo-Uzbek scientific and cultural relations has been opened at Delhi University in India. The centre opened within the framework of agreements between Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies and Delhi University, aims to teach Indian students the Uzbek language, develop cultural-educational relations, and conduct joint scientific research in this field.

D&B Bureau

Academic and research collaborations are instrumental in accelerating cooperation and enhancing bilateral progress between nations. Education is an essential field of cooperation in India-Uzbekistan relations and over the years several substantial initiatives have been taken in this respect. Uzbekistan has been sending candidates under the ITEC programme since 1993. More than 2400 Uzbek professionals have undergone training under ITEC at premier institutes in India so far. In 2019, 164 slots were utilized in regular and specialized courses. As per the MoU between Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar and the Ministry of Innovation Development of Uzbekistan, various post-graduate courses are now open for admission to Uzbek students along with the training of Uzbek officials in different forensic sciences. Uzbek students also avail themselves of ICCR and Kendriya Hindi Sansthan scholarships.

There are also scholarships under AYUSH and short-term scholarships for music and dance,

in addition to two annual scholarships for a one-year course in Hindi offered by KHS Agra. Regularly, Hindi and Urdu teachers receive from the Lal Bahadur Shastri Centre for Indian Culture (LBSCIC) for attending refresher courses/participating in international conferences and attending the 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, and artifacts with the assistance of the government of India, depicting various facets of Indian culture. In October 2019, Amity University and Sharda University opened campuses in Tashkent and Andijan respectively. In December 2021, a new campus of Sambhram Institute of Technology from Bangalore was inaugurated

in the Jizzakh region of Uzbekistan. Now several other Indian universities are working on the establishment of their campuses in other regions of Uzbekistan. At the same time, it is important to note that the Bukhara State Medical Institute named after Abu Ali Ibn Sino (Avicenna) opened a branch at the Indian International University in Noida.

In November 2022, the centre for Uzbek language and Indo-Uzbek scientific and cultural relations has been opened at Delhi University in India. The centre opened within the framework of agreements between Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies and Delhi University, aims to teach Indian students the Uzbek language, develop cultural-educational relations, and conduct joint scientific research in this field. The vice-chancellor of Delhi University noted that the cultural and educational relations between the peoples of the two countries have a centuries-old history, and expressed confidence that the opened centre will contribute to the ancient ties in the field of education between the two nations.

The Uzbek Ambassador to India, Dilshod Akhatov, emphasized that the establishment of Uzbek language courses in one of the leading higher educational institutions in India will strengthen the friendship between the peoples of the two countries. The centre has received books, fiction, and magazines covering information about the Uzbek language, literature, culture, history and modern development from the University of Oriental Studies and the Embassy of Uzbekistan in India. The University of Delhi has become the third higher education institution in India to offer courses in the Uzbek language. Uzbek language courses have been operating since 2004 at Jamia Millia Islamic University in Delhi and since 2021 at Jawaharlal Nehru University. The contours of academic cooperation between India and Uzbekistan have strengthened over the years and the engagements in this respective field will further build on this bilateral edifice.





India-Uzbekistan: Medical Diplomacy

India and Uzbekistan have a long history of cooperation in the field of health and medical science. Over the years, both countries have greatly benefited from this partnership, with India providing high-quality medical care and training to Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistan providing valuable resources and expertise to India. Further, India's vaccine diplomacy during COVID-19 helped in strengthening the ties of trust and cooperation between the two allies.

Ayushi Saini

India and Uzbekistan share deeply rooted relations that go back far beyond the centuries, which has always served as a solid foundation for the growth of bilateral cooperation between the two countries. The two nations have a long history of cooperation in the field of health and medical science. This cooperation has been centered around the exchange of expertise, training, and technology transfer between the two countries. The partnership in the healthcare sector has been dynamic. Medical professionals from India and Uzbekistan exchange visits within programs of retraining and attending specialized courses in the health centers of the two countries.

There are multiple areas where both countries have been cooperating for the past 30 years. Pharmaceutical exports from India is one of the areas where both countries have been cooperating largely. Another area of partnership is traditional medicine. Uzbekistan's herbs and India's Ayurveda are well known among each other's natives. Medical education is the third important area of cooperation. Uzbekistan's MBBS education is famous among Indian students due to various notable reasons. The fourth area of cooperation is post-Covid vaccine diplomacy which was developed through the exchange of medicinal products between the two countries due to Covid-19. Cooperation in health infrastructure is another important pillar that has contributed to the strengthening of Indo-Uzbek ties.



Pharmaceutical Industry

On October 1, 2018, upon the visit of the Uzbek President to India, an MoU was signed between India and Uzbekistan for the establishment of the Uzbek-Indian free pharmaceutical zone in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. It was aimed at the research and development of pharmaceutical products. The MoU explored the possibilities for the production of medicines, including active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in different therapeutic segments in both countries. The MoU facilitated Indian pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical companies' investments and the establishment of production facilities in the Uzbek-Indian free pharma zone for the manufacture of pharmaceutical products.

Ambassador of Uzbekistan to India, H.E. Mr. Dilshod Akhatov remarked, "Uzbekistan is interested in attracting Indian investments in advanced technologies to produce modern competitive drugs, and the creation of modern laboratories and research centers focused on the development of original drugs". In 2021, Mr. Vijay Kalantri (Chairman, World Trade Center Mumbai, and Honorary Consulate of Uzbekistan in Mumbai), emphasized medicines, vaccines, antibiotics, ayurvedic medicines, and among other products as major Indian exports to Uzbekistan. India's pharmaceutical exports to Uzbekistan more than doubled in the financial year 2020-21.

Traditional Medicine

Another significant area of cooperation has been in the field of traditional medicine. India has a long tradition of using Ayurveda, a system of traditional medicine, for the prevention and treatment of various health conditions. Uzbekistan also has a rich tradition of using traditional medicine, including herbs and natural remedies. In recent years, both countries have worked together to promote the use of traditional medicine and have undertaken joint research projects to study the effectiveness of traditional remedies for various health conditions. In September, 2022, addressing the leaders at the 22nd Summit of the Council of Heads of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Member States (SCO-CoHS) at Samarkand, PM Modi emphasized India's initiative for a new SCO working group on traditional medicine. Ayurveda is one of the most reliable Indian treatments in Uzbekistan. Maatrveda is a well-known Ayurveda company in Uzbekistan and other CIS countries.

Cooperation in Medical Education

MBBS in Uzbekistan is one of the more favorable choices for Indian students wanting to practice medicine abroad. Studying in Uzbekistan's medical colleges provides excellent training in regional pathology, learning diagnostics, taking care of patients, practising medical care, and other areas. The affordable expenses of medical

training and education, English being the medium of communication, easiness of traveling, suitable climate, etc. make Uzbekistan a preferred destination for Indian medical students. Above everything, the close cultural affinity between both countries, make Uzbekistan a preferable educational hub for Indian students. Uzbekistan is quite popular among Indian students for having an easy immigration process. Medical Colleges in Uzbekistan such as Andijan State Medical Institute, Bukhara State Medical Institute, Tashkent Medical Academy, and Samarkand State Medical Institute are popular among Indian students.

Post- Covid Vaccine Diplomacy

After the outbreak of Covid-19, India and Uzbekistan have continued to maintain strong diplomatic relations, with both countries working closely to combat the pandemic and support each other during these challenging times. In April 2020, India sent a consignment of medical supplies to Uzbekistan, including ventilators, protective gear, and other essential equipment to help combat the spread of the virus. India has also offered assistance to Uzbekistan in the development and production of vaccines, as well as in providing technical support for the country's healthcare system. In 2020-21, Indian pharmaceutical exports to Uzbekistan increased more than twofold with an increment in the supply of COVID-19 related essential drugs, while Uzbekistan supplied medical-oxygen concentrators and other medical equipment to India. In a meeting on 'Doing Business with Uzbekistan' organized by the MVIRDC (M. Visvesaraya Industrial Research and Development Centre) World Trade Center in 2021, Alisher Temirov (Deputy Minister of Pharmaceutical Industry Development of Uzbekistan) spoke about Indian companies setting up diagnostic labs and hospitals in Uzbekistan, keeping in mind the emergency created by COVID-19.

Vaccine diplomacy during COVID-19 further strengthened the ties of trust and cooperation between the two allies. According to the Embassy of India in Tashkent, India and Uzbekistan established strong cooperation in the supply of pharmaceuticals during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This cooperation has continued

with the arrival of 'Made in India' vaccines in Uzbekistan. Under its 'Vaccine Maitri' (Vaccine Friendship) Initiative, India supplied 6,60,000 doses of Covishield vaccine against COVID-19 to Uzbekistan on 17 March 2021.

India gave HCQ (hydroxychloroquine) and paracetamol tablets sought by Uzbekistan, along with lifting the ban on exporting essential medicines to fight Covid-19. India also conducted e-ITEC programmes (for the capacity building of medical professionals from Uzbekistan). In India's fight against the second wave of Covid-19, Uzbekistan provided 100 oxygen concentrators and 2000 injections of Remdesivir.

Cooperation in Health Infrastructure

The President of Uzbekistan has invited major hospitals of India to collaborate with the local healthcare providers of Uzbekistan. This policy has attracted many Indian investors to cities like Tashkent and Samarkand to invest in private hospitals and clinics and upgrade the quality of healthcare by implementing an Indian healthcare system in Uzbekistan that the common citizens of the country expect. This policy has also encouraged Indian physicians and surgeons to visit hospitals throughout the country to treat patients. Collaboration with Indian hospitals has strengthened the healthcare relationship between the two countries. Indian companies have opened Pratiksha Hospital in Samarkand and Aakash Healthcare in Tashkent. Manufacturing medicines and injection drugs in Surkhandarya and Tashkent regions with "Novafarm" and "Ultra Healthcare" companies are successful examples of investment cooperation in the field of medical science.

Medical Tourism

India's advanced facilities, skilled doctors, and low-cost treatment have made it an ideal destination for patients from Uzbekistan. Both the Indian physicians and healthcare systems are trusted by most of the citizens of Uzbekistan. With India emerging as one of the best and leading medical tourism hubs internationally, patients from almost all sections of society in Uzbekistan started coming to India for treatment. A close cultural connection between medical staff and doctors from India and Uzbekistan has made



people from both countries reliable in each other's healthcare systems. Cultural tourism has enabled medical consultations and other facilities at their home, rather than travelling to another country.

Conclusion

India and Uzbekistan have a long history of cooperation in the field of health and medical science. Over the years, both countries have greatly benefited from this partnership, with India providing high-quality medical care and training to Uzbekistan, and Uzbekistan providing valuable resources and expertise to India. One of the key areas of cooperation has been in the field of telemedicine, with both countries working together to develop and implement innovative technologies and systems to improve access to healthcare in remote and underserved areas. Other

areas of collaboration include medical education and research, as well as the exchange of best practices and knowledge in the field of public health. Overall, the cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in the field of health and medical science has been a resounding success, with both countries achieving significant progress and improvements in healthcare outcomes as a result of their partnership. India is known as the "pharmacy of the world" and its pharmaceutical exports have more than doubled over the past decade. As such, this cooperation will continue to thrive and grow in the coming years, bringing even more benefits to both countries.

Ayushi Saini is a PhD Research Scholar at Centre for Russian and Central Asian Studies in School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India

MAGNIFICENT

INDIA

"[India is] the One land that all men desire to see, and having seen once, by even a glimpse, would not give that glimpse for all the shows of all the rest of the globe combined."
- Mark Twain

From Delhi, the capital of India, to Tamil Nadu, the southernmost state of India; spawning from its river-meshed plains and snow-capped mountains, the land is blessed with incredible scenic beauty. The myriad options of India's historical heritage and bountiful natural magnificence can truly take one's breath away, whether a cultural or nature enthusiast.

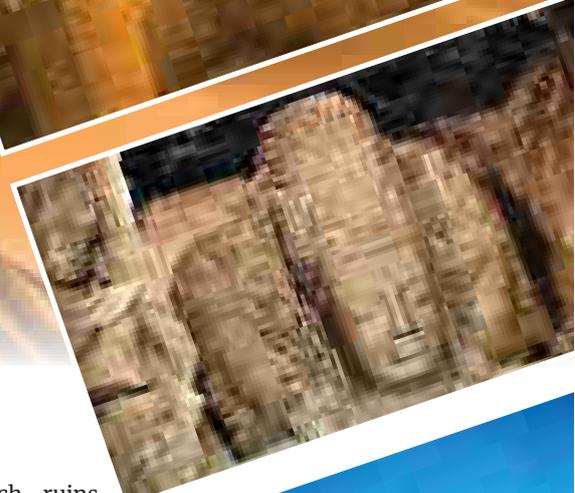
Ananya Tiwary

One of the most ancient continuous civilisations of the world, India is a motherland filled to the brim with abundant beauty that is intoxicating. Spanning five thousand years, with a succession of religions and mores spawning from its river-meshed plains and snow-capped mountains, India's historical heritage and natural enchantments are so numerous that, whether a cultural or nature enthusiast, the myriad options can truly take one's breath away. India is prized with 40 World Heritage sites by UNESCO that are scattered as gems, dazzling in the light, and even this formal enumeration is not comprehensive enough to take account of the glory of Indian culture and landscape, and does not even encompass the food and handicrafts which used to dominate the world.

ETHEREAL TAJ MAHAL

India is renowned for the phenomenal 'monument of love', the Taj Mahal, built by the Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan for his deceased wife Mumtaz Mahal, in the 17th c. Blazing the horizon with its ivory-white marble facade that is as resplendent as it is pure, the Taj Mahal has become an emblem of the glory of India, compelling Emperor Shah Jahan to exclaim wondrously that it made 'the sun and the moon shed tears from their eyes'. Situated at the heart of Northern Plains in Agra, the Taj Mahal is a testimony to the grandeur and magnificence that was medieval India.





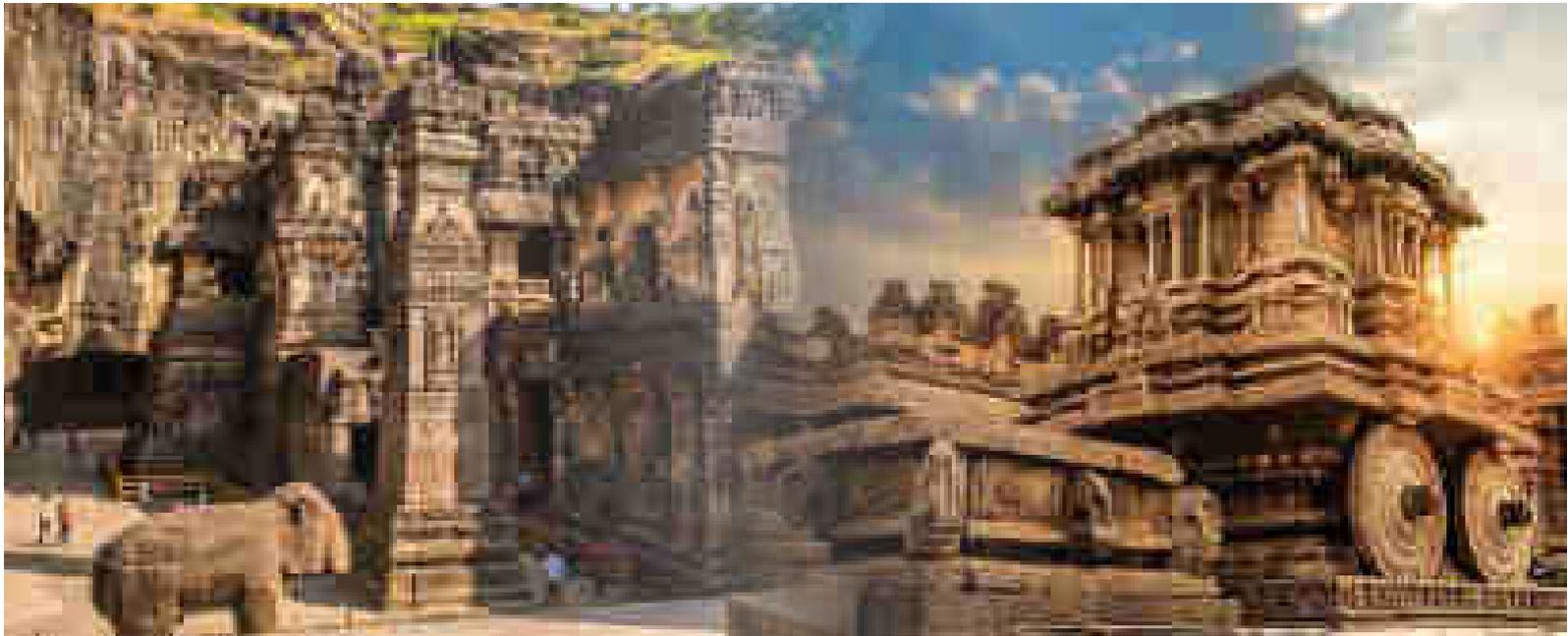
ORIENTAL RAJASTHAN

Moving westwards from the lush, river-strewn plains to the arid and dry desert, are the airy palaces and forts of Rajasthan. As though stepping into another world, these palaces and forts girdling the hills are grand, imposing and imbued with the visage of Hindustan, and typify the grand Indian royal experience. One can viscerally visualise the elephants and the camels, laden with jewelled Rajas and their Ranis on ornate seats; the thriving and proud Rajputana clansmen seated on cushions on the carpeted floor as they surveyed the affairs of the state; and the women laden with glittering gems and auroral clothes even as they kept themselves veiled. These forts and palaces are alluring and can transport one back centuries into a mystical and enchanting past.

IMPERISHABLE DELHI

There are many such ruins and artefacts to explore. More so, many forgotten ones deserve attention to beget them from total ruin. The region of Delhi, Dilli, Dehli, or Rai Pithora, with the Yamuna slicing it from north to south, has been inhabited since the Palaeolithic times, making it one of the oldest cities in the world. Its history has been an array of conquests one after another. It has been the royal centre of myriad empires: the Pandavas from the epic Mahabharata, the Rajputs of Tomara dynasty, Prithviraj Chauhan, the five successive dynasties of the Delhi Sultanate, the Mughals, the British Indian empire; and it is no coincidence that it is now crowned as the national capital of independent India. It is, therefore, no





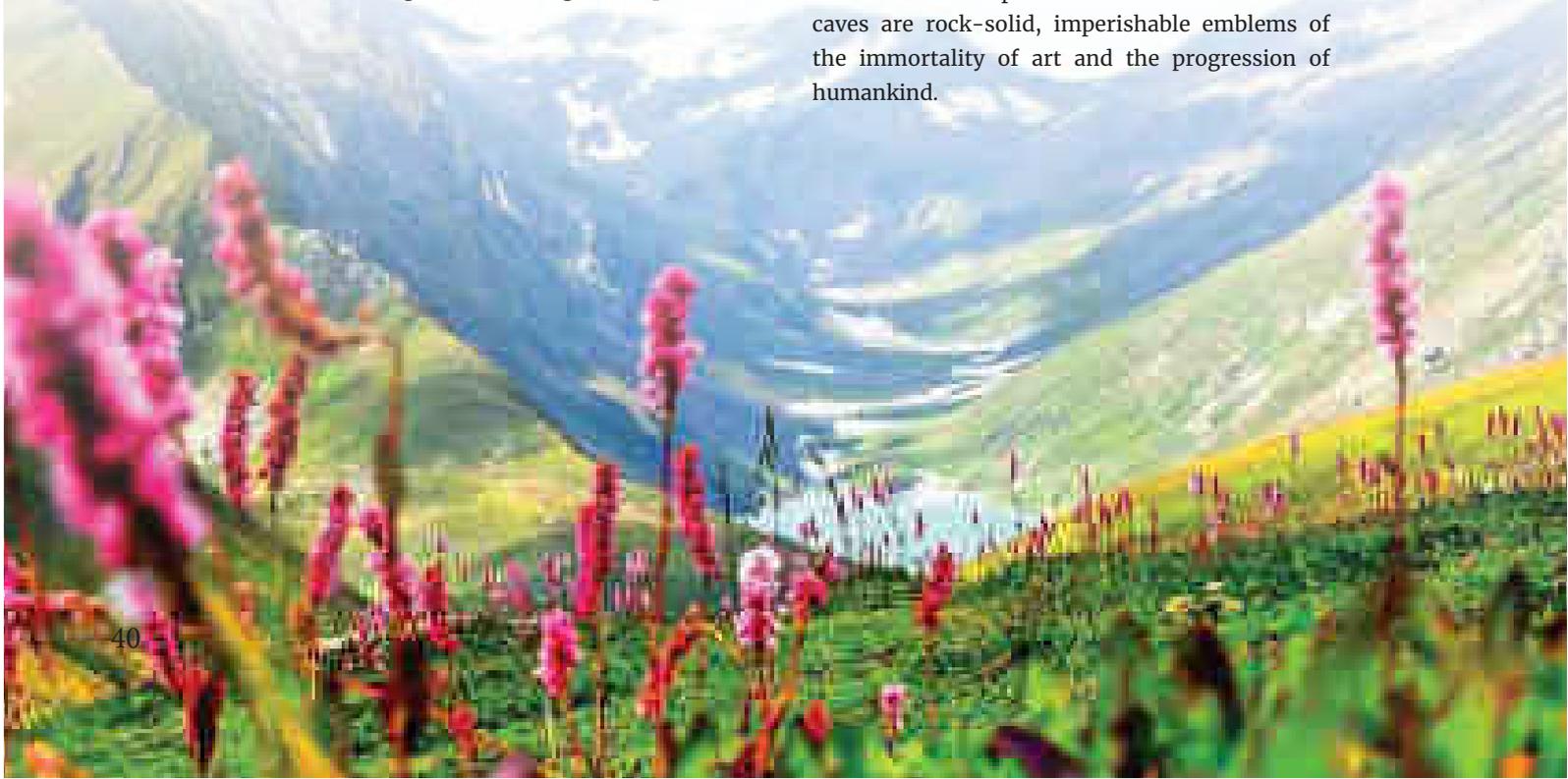
surprise, that Delhi is a conglomerate of nine cities, constructed over thousands of years. With each dynasty the city gained yet another limb – Indraprastha, Rai Pithora, Lal Kot, Mehrauli, Siri, Tughlakabad, Firozabad, Shergah, Shahjehanabad, Lutyens – and by the 19th c, it had transformed into a captivating and languid city of palaces and high poetry. One can delve into this aura whilst strolling through the stunning ruins of the Lodhi garden; witness the making of an empire through the ambitious Qutab Minar; shop at a bazaar that once used to be a street gilded with palaces at Chandni Chowk; and behold the heart of one of the world’s most resplendent dynasties by visiting the Red Fort.

Delhi is almost sparkling with such gems of history, which almost dot its every curve. An ancient city having nine lives, which has resurrected as many times, and never submitting itself to the ravages of history and abandonment, Delhi is a capital upon capitals, at once the centre of the modern Indian world and a tangible link to its glorious past.

FROM WHEN CIVILISATION EMERGED

Cultural remains go back deep in history. Whilst empires everywhere rise and fall with the turn of the wheel of time, mankind’s first steps into civilization fascinate those who to comprehend man’s evolutionary progress. In India, nearly each of the 29 states possess OTO: Kashmir Valley such pre-historic sites. Stepping into these cool caves and glimpsing layers upon layers of ancient organic art still preserved, one can contemplate the desire of artistic expression that has forever compelled humanity to evolve.

The Bhimbetka cave paintings reveal a historical progression that seems too fascinating to believe. The oldest art gallery in India, the paintings date back 30,000 years, and the caves are said to have been inhabited as far back as 100,000 years ago. One era after another, the walls of the caves read as a scroll of animation, successively bringing to life one civilisation after another, from the Upper Palaeolithic to the prehistoric to the ancient. These caves are rock-solid, imperishable emblems of the immortality of art and the progression of humankind.





The more recent caves are the Ajanta, Ellora and Elephanta caves in Maharashtra. How austere, yet cultured, life used to be two thousand years ago, is indicated by these decorated and sculpted caves from the bygone Buddhist era. Though also comprising of Hindu and Jain temples engraved into the rock-faces (Kailashnath temple), these enigmatic caves are testament to Buddhism's wide zeal amongst the global populace back then. A revolution in religion, Buddhism was the first of many – in upholding reason, enshrining egalitarianism and equality, and in emphasising good conduct reminiscent of a modern ethos. This fervent austerity, a high degree of refinement and purpose, combined with the reclusiveness that begets a monk: these cavernous caves reflect these attributes as much as they embody architectural greatness.

THE MYSTICAL LAND

Though Hinduism predates Buddhism, it is these Buddhist stupas and viharas which featured as inspiration for Hindu temples. Myriad magnificent and ancient temples adorn the peninsular, towering over the horizon as they hold the images of gods and goddesses and lift them up to the skies. The Brihadeshwara temple constructed by King Rajaraja Chola during the turn of the first millennium is a fascinating treasure from the wealthy southern dynasties which once formed Dravidian India. The Konark sun temple on Orissa's coast rises up like black mountain spires over the horizon, and were the first things European traders beheld (these temples radiated such an imposing energy that they coined the word 'juggernaut', meaning a powerful, overriding force). The temples at Hampi

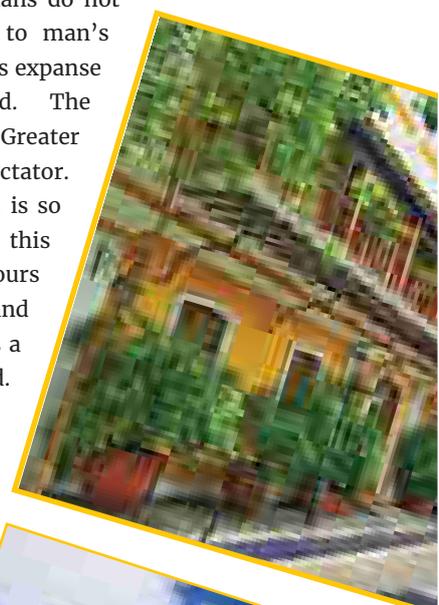
retain their imperial aura even after thousands of years. The Kailashanatha temple is sculpted onto a single stone face of the mountain that also houses the Ellora caves. The Chennakeshvara temple on the banks of the Yagachi river is yet another masterpiece of stone sculpturing.

PURIFYING HIMALAYAS

Monuments and historical artefacts aside, though they provide a thought-provoking historical adventure, are not the only gifts that the country has to offer. The bountiful nature, with its rawness and freshness, are for display to any visitor. Though, unlike other civilisations, Indians do not endeavour to submit nature to man's logic and structure, yet nature's expanse remains spectacular indeed. The ethereal and breath-taking Greater Himalayas will dazzle any spectator. Kashmir, the heaven on earth, is so beautiful that one can gaze at this God-gifted landscape for hours at end. Untouched, pure, and lofty – the Himalayan range is a transcendental vision to behold. This soul-stirring beauty is also home to monasteries where one can find peace and tranquillity.

TEMPORAL DUNES

The seemingly infinite Thar Desert is imbued with that unique Oriental romanticism that captivates those



from other cultures as well as Indians themselves. Camel rides and jeeps traverse through the temporal sand dunes; and it is only in here, during the sunset, that the orange sky and the beaming sands conjoin into one. Jaisalmer is that town that bridges civilisation and the unforgiving, yet peerless, Thar Desert.

THE EIGHT ENIGMATIC SISTERS

As though emerging from a long, deep sleep, the eight sister states of the North-East are waking up to Indian tourism, and have finally exhibited their natural splendours to the world to see. Forming an arc of the lower Himalayas, the north-eastern states abide with lakes, mountain ranges and villages of such virginal and avid beauty, that it is astonishing that they have remained veiled from view for so long. The vivid and exquisite Dzukou Valley and Mechuka, was created for poets; the glacial Tsangmo Lake in Sikkim and its aquamarine blue and crystal clear water are purity personified; the dreamy and cool tea hills of Assam are enchanting along with the Ziro Valley that seems to be held up by the heavens – the North-East is an unexplored world beckoning to be traversed.

THE HOLY AND STILL BACKWATERS

The Kerala backwaters are an abode of spirituality, known for offering Yoga and meditation experiences, along with relaxing massages. A venous network of brackish water lagoons on the Malabar coast, these backwaters are picturesque, with coconut trees overhanging the grass-green waters and tiny islands habituated by people providing anchor: all of which can be felt by traversing the lagoons through a simple but quaint houseboat.

ROARING GIANTS

India was and remains the land of Bengal tigers, who have been enshrined as the national symbol of the country. Innumerable



tiger reserves dot the once-jungled expanse of the country, and one can watch them spread themselves out in the sun on the shores of a water-hole. One can witness the gentility of elephants, ride on the back of camels, take a dip into the coral seas, or watch the lions and rhinoceroses from the safety of a jeep. A wild country and the inspiration for Rudyard Kipling of *The Jungle Book*, it is the density and enigma of this jungle atmosphere which is captivating and unique to India. India's biodiversity is spread across the peninsular, the coasts and the plains, and multiple explorations continue to occur to count these myriad forms of life still.

Unity in diversity is the hallmark of India's uniqueness and evolving with the passage of time is the distinctive element of Indian culture. It could not have been said with more cognizance than the British historian William Dalrymple when he scribed: "So vast is India, and so uniquely resilient and deeply rooted are her intertwined social and religious institutions, that all foreign intruders are sooner or later either shaken off or absorbed."

Ananya Tiwari is a Freelance Writer





सत्यमेव जयते

Embassy of India

Tashkent, Uzbekistan

16 Kara-Bulak Str. (Vakhshskaya) Street, MirzoUlugbek District,
Tashkent- 700052 (Uzbekistan)

Phones: (998-78) 1400983, 1400997, 1400998

Fax: (998-78) 1400987, 1400999

Website: <https://eoi.gov.in/tashkent/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInUzbekistan>

Twitter: https://twitter.com/amb_tashkent

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/indiainuzbekistan/?hl=en>