

## **Brief on India-Mongolia Bilateral Relations**

### **Brief Historic Background**

India and Mongolia have interacted since antiquity through the vehicle of Buddhism throughout the history. Some Indian & Mongolian historians established that some tribes from Kangra kingdom migrated to Mongolian territory 10000 years ago. Mangaldev, son of the King headed the migrants and majority of them returned to India after staying there for about 2000 years. These living in Himachal Pradesh and whose family tree consisted of 490 families, called Katoch dynasty, started from 4300. In 1924, the then Prime Minister of Mongolia Mr. A. Amar mentioned in his book – “Short History of Mongolia” that Mongolian forefathers came from backside of Himalayan Mountains.

According to some Mongolian scholars, Buddhism came to Mongolian steppes through Tibet. During the Hunnu State of III century BC and later during the period of Great Mongol Empire Buddhist monks, several traders from India visited Mongolia. In 552 BC, a Lama Narendrayash from the State of Udayana (Northern India) with some others visited Nirun state. As India for Mongols is the country of Buddha, Lamas and students from Mongolia used to visit Nalanda, once the largest residential University in India to study Buddhism.

*“India and Mongolia are ancient lands of the ancient people of Asia. The historic and cultural collaboration between India and Mongolia is most fascinating and unique and is as old as the history of the spread of Indian culture and ideas into Central Asia and Siberia. We in India consider the Mongol veneration of Sanskrit, a matter of special privilege. We hold the people of Mongolia in high esteem for preserving in translation as well as in manuscripts, the vast collection of our precious Sanskrit text on our philosophy, poetry, logic and astronomy lost by us over centuries. In modern times, too many Mongols visited India—the land of Buddhism”* stated Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former EAM in 1978.

In modern times, Buddhism was promoted by cultural and literary contacts between the people of India and Mongolia. Dr. Raghu Vira, founding member of International Academy of Indian Culture in Delhi discovered that Mongolia’s spiritual and literacy heritage was the golden light, the Altangerel, the Suvarna-Prabhasa-Sutra, or the irreducible diamond in the rock of Vajra-chedika. Both India and Mongolia especially during 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> century AD were in close Direct contacts. It seems that Buddhism in Mongolia accelerated the process of further spread of Indian culture in Mongolia. The intellectual development of Mongolia was influenced by the Mahayana school of Buddhism and its philosophy. Philosophical treaties of Nagarjuna used even simplified expression of philosophical terminology.

### **Diplomatic Relations**

For Mongolians, India is one of counter-weights to their neighbours, a “spiritual neighbour”, a declared third neighbor and strategic partner and centre for pilgrimage. India established diplomatic relations with Mongolia on 24 December 1955. In January 1956, we had first Mongolian Ambassador in New Delhi. Indian resident Mission in Ulaanbaatar was opened on 22 February 1971. Earlier, Indian Ambassador in Moscow (T.N. Kaul) was concurrently accredited. Mongolians appreciate Indian’s support to its membership in United Nations in 1961 which was championed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1991, India supported Mongolia’s membership to Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Mongolia along with India and Bhutan co-sponsored famous UN Resolution for the recognition of Bangladesh as an independent country in 1972.

***First ever visit by PM Shri Narendra Modi to Mongolia in May 2015 marked the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Mongolia.***

## **High Level Visits from India to Mongolia**

Shri Hamid Ansari, Vice President (2016)  
Smt Sumitra Mahajan, Lok Sabha Speaker (2016)  
**Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister (2015)**  
Smt Pratibha Devisingh Patil, President (2011)  
Smt Meira Kumar, Lok Sabha Speaker (2010)  
Shri GMC Balayogi, Lok Sabha Speaker (2001),  
Shri Krishan Kant, Vice-President (1999)  
Shri P.A. Sangma, Lok Sabha Speaker (1997)  
Shri K. R. Narayanan, Vice-President (1996),  
Shri Shivraj Patil, Lok Sabha Speaker (1995),  
Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice-President (1992),  
Shri R. Venkataraman, President (1988)  
Dr. Balram Jharkar, Lok Sabha Speaker (1985),  
Dr. G.S. Dhillon, Lok Sabha Speaker (1974),  
Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice-President (1957),

During the state visit of President Smt Pratibha Devi Singh Patil to Mongolia in July 2011, **a line of credit of US\$20 million was announced for setting up of “Centre of Excellence for IT, Communication & Outsourcing” in Ulaanbaatar. Later, this Centre has been named after former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in May 2015. The construction work is likely to commence in 2018 for this Centre.** India also upgraded Rajiv Gandhi Polytechnic College for Production and Art and the Centre for Excellence in Information & Communication Technology Education. *Both phases of this project of US\$2.84 million were successfully implemented in November 2016.* During the visit, a bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement, a MOU on Media Exchanges and a MOU on Cooperation between Planning Commission of India and National Development and Innovation Committee (NDIC) were also signed. **Mongolia reiterated its support to India becoming a permanent member of a reformed and expanded UNSC.**

**First State Visit of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to Mongolia (16-18 May 2015):** The first-ever Prime Ministerial visit to Mongolia took place on 17 May 2015 (Sunday). PM was accorded with the privilege of addressing the Mongolian Parliament on a Sunday. In the past, Mongolian Parliament never convened on a holiday for any visiting foreign dignitary. The two Prime Ministers signed a Joint Statement on ‘Strategic Partnership’ between India and Mongolia. **PM announced a credit line of US\$1 billion for infrastructure sector in Mongolia. This is currently being utilized by Mongolia to build a first oil refinery.** Agreements/documents signed included were Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Prisoners, Revised Air Services Agreement, Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Animal Health and Dairy, MOU on establishment of a Joint India-Mongolia Friendship School, MOU on cooperation in the area of Traditional Systems of Medicine, Cultural Exchange Program for 2015-18, MOU on Cooperation in the field of Border Patrolling & Surveillance, MOU on cooperation between National Security Councils, and MOU on gifting a Bhabhatron-II Cancer Therapy Machine (implemented) to the National Cancer Centre in Ulaanbaatar.

Prime Ministers of India and Mongolia (J. Erdenebat) met in the sideline of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (2 June 2017) at St. Petersburg.

### **Visits from Mongolia to India:**

Mr. G. Munkhbayar, Minister of Construction & Urban Development (Dec 2016)–  
multilateral event  
Mr. U. Khurelsukh, Deputy Prime Minister (Nov 2016)  
Mr. L. Purevsuren, Foreign Minister (April 2016)  
Mr. Ts. Elbegdorj, President (2009)  
Mr. N. Enkhbayar, Prime Minister (2004)  
Mr. Natsagiin Bagabandi, President (2001)  
Mr. Ochirbat, President (1994)  
Mr. Yu. Tsendenbal, Premier (1973)

**Bilateral Cooperation Mechanism:** India and Mongolia have ‘India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation (IMJCC)’ chaired at Ministerial level. *Fifth meeting of IMJCC was held in New Delhi in April, 2016 under the Chair of MoS for External Affairs Gen (Retd.) V.K. Singh and Mr. L. Purevsuren, Foreign Minister of Mongolia.* A general agreement was signed between the EXIM Bank of India and the Ministry of Finance of Mongolia on utilization of the soft loan announced by PM.

**Indo-Mongolian Foreign Office Consultations:** Latest round of FOCs was held on 23 December 2016 in Ulaanbaatar. JS (EA) in MEA led the Indian side. The Acting Director, Department of Asia, Africa & Pacific Regions Co-chaired the consultations from the Mongolian side.

**International Cooperation** : Mongolia has been traditionally supporting India in the United Nations and various other international forums. It has supported us for the non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2011-2012. **India and Mongolia declared support to each other for UNSC non-permanent seats respectively for terms 2021-22 and 2023-24.** Mongolia voted in favour of India’s proposal to Yoga’s inscription into the list of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage. India also voted for registering Mongolian legacy on “Mongolian Traditional Custom to Worship Mountain and Ovoo” in the list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. Mongolia has publicly reiterated its support for India’s membership to the permanent seat of expanded UNSC. *In 2017, Mongolia supported Indian candidates to (i) International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) (ii) Executive Board of UNESCO, (iii) Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and (iv) International Court of Justice. For ICJ Mongolia’s support was on reciprocal basis. India also agreed for support Mongolian candidature to the Executive Board of United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) for the term 2019-2021.*

**Defence Cooperation:** There is India-Mongolia Joint Working Group for Defence cooperation which meets annually. *The Eighth JWG met in New Delhi (13-14 December 2016) and the Mongolian delegation was led by Deputy Defence Minister.* Joint India-Mongolia exercise ‘Nomadic Elephant’ is held annually and the last one was held in India in April 2017. India is a regular participant in the multilateral exercise ‘Khan Quest’ held in Mongolia. India also offers training to Mongolian Defence officers each year for capacity building.

**Border Patrolling Cooperation:** The BSF (MHA) of India and the Mongolian General Authority for Border Protection (GABP) have been closely cooperating on border patrolling and related subjects for over eight years. This cooperation has been formalized in the form of a MoU in May 2015 during PM’s visit. A Joint Steering Committee (JSC) has been constituted for furthering this cooperation. **The first meeting of the JSC was held on 21-23 Dec 2016 in Ulaanbaatar. The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (BM), MHA. A BSF delegation led by DG, BSF visited Mongolia from 28-30 October 2017 to discuss further cooperation. Several proposals on capacity building & technical assistance by BSF are under consideration.**

**Energy Cooperation:** A Working Group for cooperation in the field of nuclear energy has been set up between the respective agencies of the two countries i.e. the DAE and the Nuclear Energy Agency of Mongolia. The second meeting of this Working Group was held in Mumbai from 10-12 December 2012. The 3rd JWG meeting was held in March 2017 in Ulaanbaatar. Another JWG was constituted for cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy but there has not been any progress by either side.

### **Commercial, Economic and Technical Cooperation**

During the visit of then Minister for Commerce Shri Pranab Mukherjee in 1994, two MoUs pertaining to the establishment of a Joint Trade Sub-Committee and Co-operation between the Planning Commission of India and the National Development Board of Mongolia were signed. An agreement for co-operation in the field of geology and mineral resources was signed in September 1996. In 1996, an Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation between India and Mongolia was signed. The Agreement provides for MFN status to each other in respect of customs, duties and all other taxes on imports and exports. During the visit of President Bagabandi in 2001, both sides signed an Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement which is currently under review. Bilateral trade is modest in value & volumes. Main items of exports to Mongolia include medicines, mining machinery and auto parts, etc. Imports from Mongolia include raw cashmere wool. Bilateral trades for the last seven years as per Mongolian statistics are as follows:

(Million USD)

Imports/Exports	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (upto Nov)
India's Exports to Mongolia	16.8	45.3	54.2	34.2	12.67	16.8	24.7	32.6
India's Imports from Mongolia	0.6	1.4	6.0	0.8	3.03	3.7	2.2	1.7
<b>Total</b>	17.4	46.7	60.2	35.0	15.70	20.5	<b>26.9</b>	34.3

### **Mongolian Participation in various Commercial events in 2017**

Sl. No.	Date & Month	Name of event	Venue
1.	3 Feb 2017	The Health Tech Summit organised by CII	New Delhi, India
2.	15-17 Apr 2017	India Food Show and Buyer Seller Meet – China, Hong Kong and Japan	Kolkata, India
3.	12-14 Oct 2017	Advantage Healthcare India 2017	Bengaluru, India
4.	26-27 Oct 2017	International Regional Conference on Consumer Protection of East, South East & Eastern Countries	New Delhi, India
5.	9-11 Nov 2017	13 <sup>th</sup> FICCI Higher Education Summit 2017 (FHES 2017)	Greater Noida, India
6.	28-30 Nov 2017	The Global Entrepreneurship Summit 2017 (GES 2017)	Hyderabad, India
7.	4-7 Dec 2017	International Arogya 2017, 1 <sup>st</sup> Edition of International Exhibition and Conference on AYUSH	New Delhi, India
8.	7-9 Dec 2017	EIMA Agrimach 2017	New Delhi, India

**IITEC Assistance:** During Ex-President Elbegdorj's visit to India, 120 slots per annum were earmarked to Mongolia under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). From 2011-12, the number of these slots for civilian training programme were increased to 150 per year. It has been further increased to 200 from 2015-16 during PM's visit in May 2015. In the FY 2017-18

approximately 100 have been utilized and in defence sector 2 out of 16 ITEC slots have been so far utilized. 25 NEMA officers from Mongolia were trained in India under ITEC.

**ICCR scholarships:** For the Academic Year 2017-18, Mongolia has been offered 50 slots (20 slots each under Aid to Mongolia and General Cultural Scholarship Scheme and 10 slots under Cultural Exchange Programme/Education. Besides these scholarships are available under AYUSH scholarship scheme also). 1 candidate got acceptances from various universities in India.

**Rajiv Gandhi Polytechnic College for Production & Art (RGPCPA):** During the visit of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice President in 1992, it was decided to setup a Vocational Training Centre in Mongolia. The proposal envisaged training facilities in eight fields. The institution became functional thereafter. Six facilities for vocational training have been upgraded in two phases in 2015-16 with a total cost of US\$ 2.84 million.

**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre for Excellence in ICT:** Following an Agreement signed in September 2001 during the visit of Minister for IT Pramod Mahajan to Mongolia, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre of Excellence (ABVCE) in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and 5 Community Information Centres (CICs) in 5 provinces (Khovsgol, Bulgan, Kharkhorin, Darkhan-Uuland Sukhbaatar) were established. This will now be upgraded to a full-fledged Centre with credit of US\$20 million. WAPCOS has been designated to implement this project. Pre-qualification bids have been completed. EXIM Bank is in the process of finalizing the Tender Document. The construction work of the Centre is due to commence in 2018.

**Solar Energy:** A solar energy electrification project was executed by the Central Electronics Ltd. And formally inaugurated in April 2006 in Dadal Soum cost of project is approx. US\$ 100,000. Training of Mongolian experts on solar energy has been organized in India.

**Humanitarian Assistance in May 2017:** Humanitarian assistance worth US\$20,000 in the form of beds, bedrolls, toys, etc for the children of herders in Sukhbaatar Aimag (severely affected by harsh winter 'Zud') was provided. Deputy Prime Minister and other senior officials from the Province were present during this donation ceremony. In the past years also, GoI provided considerable assistance on various occasions.

**Medical Mission Vocational Training Team (VTT):** A team of 22 Indian Rotarians including 17 doctors led by Mr. R.K. Saboo, Ex-President of Rotary International participated in the VTT project from 28 Aug to 8 Sep 2017. Indian doctors conducted neurosurgery, microsurgery, anesthesiology, audiology, plastic surgery, etc. and trained the Mongolian doctors. Medical equipment worth of US\$ 30,000/- (approximately) donated to various Mongolian hospitals. Indian **Rotarian** club offered to treat 10 Mongolian poor children free of cost for their heart surgeries. The offer is being utilized by Mongolian children in 2018.

### **Cultural Cooperation**

The India-Mongolian Agreement on Cultural Cooperation was signed in 1961 and a CEP between the two countries in force. The Agreement envisages co-operation in the fields of education by way of scholarships, exchange of experts, participation in conferences etc. The CEP was renewed in 2003, 2005, 2009 and 2015 for 3-year periods. "Festival of India" commemorating 60 years of diplomatic relations with Mongolia was organized in November 2015.

ICCR provides 40-50 scholarships per year to Mongolian nationals for pursuing higher studies in India. Also, 3-5 students are granted scholarships to study Hindi language at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra annually. For the year 2017-18, 3 Mongolian students were granted scholarship to learn Hindi at KHS, Agra.

During the visit of Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the then Human Resources Development Minister to Mongolia in July 2002 an MOU on cooperation in the field of education was signed. Large number of Indian literary works including Panchtantra, Ramayana, Shakuntala, Ritu Samhara, Kamasutra, Godaan, Gaban and Kati Patang have been published in Mongolian language as also major Buddhist scriptures. *During PM's visit in May 2015, it was agreed to implement a new project for digitization of ancient manuscripts in Gandan Monastery with the assistance by CUTS (Varanasi).*

Hindi films are fairly popular in Mongolia. The serial Mahabharata, dubbed in Mongolian, has been telecast on Ulaanbaatar TV. A photographic exhibition entitled "Path of Compassion", another one titled 'Amrita Shergil Revisited' and an exhibition of 540 Indian paintings based on a private collection have been organized in Mongolia.

An International Conference on Chinggis Khaan, His Legacy and Indian Culture was organised by the ICCR in September 2016 in Ulaanbaatar. The second such Conference was held in JNU on 9 January 2018.

ICCR has donated 14 sets of Kanjurs (Urga & Narthang) to various Mongolian Institutions and Buddhist Monasteries.

21 volumes of Indian classic literature were translated into Mongolian language by Dr. Gendendarm and were published with financial assistance from ICCR.

3<sup>rd</sup> International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Mongolia in UB on 18 June 2017. An exhibition on Yoga was also organised in the National Museum of Mongolia.

There are regular exchanges of cultural troupe and performances of Indian performing groups that are well appreciated in Mongolia.

### **Indian Community**

The Indian community in Mongolia is small, numbering about less than two hundred according to Mongolian Immigration figures. Most Indians are either employed in organized sector or are self-employed such as operating Indian restaurants which are popular with the Mongolians and foreigners in Mongolia. There is a small number of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO). A small number of Mongolians are connected to India either by way of being married to Indians or been born and raised in India. Embassy celebrated Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) with good participation with Indians in Mongolia in 2017. Embassy organized community programmes like Diwali, Holi and etc. The community was also invited to take part in Diplomatic Women's charity Bazar.

### **Useful Resources:**

Embassy of India, Ulaanbaatar website:

<http://www.eoi.gov.in/ulaanbaatar/>

Embassy of India, Ulaanbaatar Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/India-in-Mongolia-Embassy-of-IndiaUlaanbaatar/209956815734086?ref=hl>

Embassy of India, Ulaanbaatar Twitter account:

<https://twitter.com/IndiainMongoli>

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(As on January 2018)