

Brief on India-Mongolia Bilateral Relations

Brief Historic Background

India and Mongolia have interacted since antiquity through the vehicle of Buddhism throughout history of over a period of 2000 years. Some Indian historians established that Indians 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. The people, who returned, were 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 our fore fathers came from backside of Himalayan Mountains.

“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.

The spread of 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 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 Vajracchedika. Both India and Mongolia especially during 5th to 7th 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 big neighbours, a “spiritual neighbour”, a declared third neighbour and strategic partner and centre for pilgrimage. India established diplomatic relations with Mongolia on 24 December 1955 (2015 was the 60th anniversary year). In January 1956, we had first Mongolian Ambassador in New Delhi. Our resident Mission in Ulaanbaatar was opened on 22 February 1971. Before that our Ambassador in Moscow was concurrently accredited. Mongolians highly value our support for its membership of the United Nations in 1961 which was championed by Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. In 1991 India supported Mongolia’s membership of 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.

2015 marked the 60th 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 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 and Out Sourcing” in Ulaanbaatar. Later, this Centre has been named after former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee in May 2015. India also agreed to upgrade and modernize 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 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. 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 Guarding, MOU on cooperation between National Security Councils, and MOU on gifting a Bhabatron-II Cancer Therapy Machine (implemented) to the National Cancer Centre in Ulaanbaatar.

Prime Ministers of India and Mongolia met in the sideline of St. Petersburg International Economic Forum on 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 by MoS (EA) on the Indian side and Minister of Education & Science from Mongolia. *Fifth meeting of IMJCC was held in New Delhi in April, 2016 under the chair of MoS for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh and Foreign Minister of Mongolia, Mr. L. Purevsuren.* 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) led the Indian side. The Acting Director, Department of Asia, Africa and Pacific Regions co-chaired the consultations from the Mongolian side.

International Cooperation : Mongolia has been traditionally supporting us in the United Nations and various other international forums. It has last supported us for the non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2011-2012. In recent times, it has supported almost all of our candidatures to various international agencies. Mongolia voted in favour India’s proposal to Yoga’s inscription into the list of UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage. **India and Mongolia has declared support to UNSC non-permanent seats to each other respectively for terms 2021-22 and 2023-24.** Mongolia has publicly reiterated its support for India’s membership to the permanent seat of expanded UNSC.

Defence Cooperation: India and Mongolia also cooperate in the defence sector. There is India-Mongolia Joint Working Group for Defence cooperation which meets annually. Seventh meeting of this Working Group was held in August 2015 in Mongolia. *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'. India contributes to various regular training of Mongolian officers.

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.**

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.

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. Bilateral trade is very modest in value & volumes. The 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
India's Exports to Mongolia	16.8	45.3	54.2	34.2	12.67	16.8	24.7
India's Imports from Mongolia	0.6	1.4	6.0	0.8	3.03	3.7	2.2
Total	17.4	46.7	60.2	35.0	15.70	20.5	26.9

Mongolian Participation in various Commercial events in recent years

No.	Date & Month	Event	Venue
1.	10-11 March 2016	INDIASOFT 2016	Mumbai, India
2.	21-23 April 2016	Global Exhibition on Services – 2016	India Expo Centre and Mart, Greater Noida (National Capital Region, New Delhi)
3.	27-29 April 2016	OPHEX	Mumbai
4.	3-5 October 2016	Advantage Healthcare India 2016	Noida, India
5.	10-12 November 2016	FICCI Higher Education Summit 2016 (FHES 2016)	Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, India
6.	20-30 November 2016	46 th International Film Festival of India	Goa, India
7.	5-7 December 2016	Petrotech 2016 (State Secretary in M/o Mining & Industry)	Delhi, India

ITEC 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 2016-17 only 106 were utilized and in defence sector 7 out of 14 ITEC slots have been so far utilized.

ICCR scholarships: For the Academic Year 2016-17, Mongolia has been offered 40 slots (20 slots each under Aid to Mongolia and General Cultural Scholarship Scheme). 13 candidates got acceptances from various universities in India.

Rajiv Gandhi Polytechnic College for Production and Art (RGPCPA): During the visit of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma, Vice President in 1992, it was decided to set up 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-Uul and 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.

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: Humanitarian assistance worth US\$ 20000 in the form of beds, bed rolls, toys, etc for the children of herders in Sukhbaatar Aimag (severely affected by harsh winter 'Zud') has been provided in the month of May 2017. Deputy Prime Minister and other senior officials from the Province were also available during this donation ceremony.

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 and 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 2016-17, 5 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) which is currently being implemented by GoI.*

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.

ICCR has donated 12 sets of Kanjurs (Urga & Narthang) to various Mongolian Institutions and Buddhist Monasteries.

3rd International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Mongolia at the Sukhbaatar Square 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.

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/IndiainMongolia>

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