

India-Azerbaijan Relations

India and Azerbaijan have warm relations, based on civilisational linkages, cultural affinities and shared values of understanding and respect for other cultures.

Highlights

- India is the seventh largest trading partner for Azerbaijan, with bilateral trade at US\$ 1.435 billion, in 2023.
- In 2023, India was the third largest destination for Azerbaijan's crude oil.
- In 2023, Azerbaijan received more than 115,000 tourists from India, nearly double the number of arrivals in 2022. India is the fourth largest source of inbound tourists for Azerbaijan after Russia, Türkiye and Iran. Leaving aside the neighbours, India is the largest source of tourists for Azerbaijan.
- Direct flight connectivity between Delhi and Baku has increased to 10 flights a week. There are 4 direct flights a week between Mumbai and Baku.
- Around 30 Indian movies and advertisements have been filmed at various locations in Azerbaijan in the last 4 years.

Historical Relations

2. The 'Ateshgah' fire temple in the vicinity of Baku is a fine example of the age-old historical relations and cultural exchanges between India and Azerbaijan. This 18th century monument, with a much older history, has wall inscriptions in Devanagiri and Gurmukhi, and is a surviving proof of the trade links and hospitality that Indian merchants on the Silk Route to Europe enjoyed in Azerbaijani cities such as Baku and Ganja.

3. During the period when Azerbaijan was a part of the erstwhile Soviet Union India's Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore, former President Dr. S. Radhakrishnan (as Vice President in 1956) and former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru (in 1961) visited the Azerbaijan Soviet Socialist Republic.

4. India recognized Azerbaijan as an independent country in December 1991 and established diplomatic relations in February 1992. The resident Mission was opened in Baku in March 1999. Azerbaijan opened its resident Mission in New Delhi in October 2004.

Political Relations

5. Former Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, visited Baku for the NAM Summit from 24-26 October 2019, accompanied by EAM, Dr. S. Jaishankar. More recently, EAM met Azerbaijani Foreign Minister, Jeyhun Bayramov on the side-lines of 19th NAM Summit in Kampala in January 2024. Former EAM, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, visited Azerbaijan in Apr 2018 for attending NAM Ministerial Conference and for a bilateral visit. Hon'ble PM participated in the online NAM Summit on the theme "United against COVID-19" held at the initiative of Azerbaijani President, on 04 May 2020. Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State from Commerce and Industry visited Baku for the 6th meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission, held on 25 Oct 2023.

6. There have been several Ministerial level visits from Azerbaijan to India since 1991. DFM Mr. Elnur Mammadov visited India in November 2022 for the Foreign Office Consultations, and again in March 2023 to participate in Raisina Dialogue. Deputy Minister of Economy, Mr. Sahid Mammadov, visited India to participate in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit in January 2019. Mr. Mukhtar Babayev, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources visited Delhi to attend the 5th Inter-Governmental Commission in October 2018. Mr. Samir Sharifov, Minister of Finance visited India in February 2018. Mr. Nagif Hamzayev, Member of Parliament, visited India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors' Programme in August 2019.

Economic and Commercial Relations

7. Over the years, India's bilateral trade with Azerbaijan has increased substantially from around US\$ 50 million in 2005 to US\$ 1.435 billion in 2023, with India becoming Azerbaijan's seventh largest trading partner. During the year, India's import from Azerbaijan were US\$ 1.235 billion and exports were US\$ 201 million.

8. In 2023, India was the third largest destination for Azerbaijan's crude oil. India accounted for 7.6% of Azerbaijan's total crude oil export worth US\$ 1.227 billion.

9. There is a direct flight connectivity between Delhi and Baku, with ten flights a week – 7 operated by Indigo and 3 by Azerbaijan Airlines. Azerbaijan Airlines also operates 4 direct flights a week between Mumbai and Baku. In 2023, Azerbaijan received 117,302 tourists from India, which is nearly double the number of tourist arrivals in 2022 (60,731). India is now the fourth largest source of tourists for Azerbaijan after Russia, Türkiye and Iran. Leaving aside its neighbours, India is the largest source of inbound tourists.

Cooperation in Capacity Building and Education

10. Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme, the Government of India offers about 30 fully paid training courses to Azerbaijani officials every year. More than 230 Azerbaijani scholars have availed ITEC courses till Dec 2023. During the period of pandemic, these training programmes were switched to online mode and more than 200 Azerbaijani scholars attended e-ITEC programmes. India also provides scholarship slots to Azerbaijani students under the General Scholarship Scheme of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR). Azerbaijani diplomats are also trained under the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) in India. A Hindi teaching Center with the support of ICCR functioned at the Azerbaijan University of Languages (AUL) between October 2010 and November 2019. An India Centre is also functioning in the Institute of Literature of Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS).

Cultural Cooperation

11. The cultural exchanges over ages between Azerbaijan and India have led to close cultural affinity and shared traditions. World renowned Azerbaijani poet Nizami Ganjavi had a profound influence on eminent Indian poets like Amir Khusrau. In recent past, the famous Azerbaijani artist, Rashid Behbudov, a noted tenor who switched to singing popular Azeri songs in European classical tradition, was a close friend of late Raj Kapoor. Indian intellectuals like Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore are well known in Azerbaijan.

Indian Community

12. The Indian community in Azerbaijan comprises of more than 1500 people, including professionals employed with international companies in the oil and gas sector, businessmen engaged in commodities trading, catering & restaurant business, and construction workers on short-term contracts. There are five Indian associations in Azerbaijan, viz., Indian Association Azerbaijan (IAA), Baku Malayalee Association (BMA), Baku Tamil Sangam (BTS), Azerbaijan Telugu Association (ATA), and Indian Student Association Azerbaijan (ISAA), which work in close association with the Embassy. They regularly hold social events to celebrate major Indian festivals and events. The Indian community is very active both professionally and socially and has integrated well with the local population.

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