

India-U.S. Bilateral Relations

Overview: Shared democratic values and growing convergence on bilateral, regional, and global issues have provided a strong base for India-U.S. relations, which have now evolved into a strategic partnership of global significance. The relationship enjoys strong bipartisan and popular support in both countries.

2. **High-level Exchanges:** Mutual visits at the leadership-level are an integral element of our engagement with the U.S. The outcomes generated by these visits have been instrumental in further strengthening and developing the multifaceted ties between the two countries.

I. Recent telephone conversations:

Prime Minister spoke to President Biden on 17 November 2020 to congratulate him on his election. The leaders had a telephone call on 8 February during which they discussed regional issues, shared priorities and working together to address climate change.

EAM spoke to U.S. Secretary of State, Antony J. Blinken twice to congratulate him on his appointment on 29 January 2021 and then on 9 February 2021 to discuss bilateral and regional issues.

II. Recent visits to the U.S.:

- a. **Visits by PM:** Since assuming office in May 2014, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi (PM) has visited the U.S. six times including two exclusively bilateral visits (in June 2016 and June 2017). PM's visit to Washington, D.C. in June 2017 was the first opportunity for PM and then US President, Donald J. Trump to meet and exchange views. Many outcomes emerged from this visit in areas such as defence, security and strategic cooperation, energy, and counter-terrorism. PM Modi also attended "Howdy Modi", an Indian community event in Houston on 22 September 2019.
- b. **Visit by Vice President:** Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu visited the U.S. in September 2018.

- c. **Visits by EAM:** EAM visited the U.S. in September-October 2019; in December 2019.
- d. **Visit of Raksha Mantri:** RM had a bilateral meeting with his then counterpart Secretary Esper in November 2019 and October 2020.
- e. **Visit of CIM:** CIM visited the U.S. in September and November 2019.
- f. **Visits of Chief Ministers:** The Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya, and Tamil Nadu visited the U.S. in 2019.

III. **Recent visits to India:**

a. **Recent Visits of U.S. Presidents:**

- i. President Donald J. Trump, accompanied by First Lady Melania Trump, paid a State Visit to India on 24-25 February 2020. During the visit, he also visited Ahmedabad to attend “Namaste Trump”, a community event. Two MoUs related to cooperation for the safety of medical products and for promoting mental health were also concluded.
- ii. President Obama paid a State visit to India in January 2015 and participated in the 66th Republic Day Celebrations as the Chief Guest.

b. **Visit of Secretary of State:** Then Secretary of State, Michael R. Pompeo visited India in June 2019.

c. **Visit of Secretary of Commerce:** Then U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross visited India in May 2019 and October 2019.

IV. **Other visits:** Then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, John Sullivan, a five-member Congressional delegation, and other senior U.S. officials took part in the India-U.S. Forum held in New Delhi in August 2019. The Governors of U.S. States of Indiana, New Jersey, Colorado, and Arkansas led business delegations to India in 2019. Several Senators and Congressmen & women visited India in 2019. Then U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen E Biegun, visited New Delhi on 12-14 October for bilateral consultations.

V. High-level Bilateral Exchanges on Margins of Multilateral Events:

- a. PM and President Trump met at: Manila (13 November 2017), Osaka (28 June 2019), and Biarritz (26 August 2019). In 2019-20, PM had many telephone conversations with President Trump in 2019 and 2020 including to exchange views on the COVID-19 pandemic. PM met then Vice President Michael R. Pence on 14 November 2018 on the margins of the East Asia Summit in Singapore.
- b. Raksha Mantri held a bilateral meeting with Secretary Esper on the side-lines of ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus in Bangkok in November 2019 and the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi October 2020. They spoke on several occasions.
- c. EAM met Secretary Pompeo on the side-lines of ASEAN Regional Forum in Bangkok on 2 August 2019; EAM met U.S. Secretary Pompeo and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on the side-lines of the Munich Security Conference on 15 February 2020 and EAM had a bilateral meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the side-lines of QUAD Foreign Ministers Meeting held on 6 October 2020 in Tokyo and the 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi October 2020.

VI.High-Level Dialogue Mechanisms: India and the U.S. have more than 50 bilateral inter-governmental dialogue mechanisms for exchange of views on issues of mutual interest. Many such dialogues are held at the Ministerial-level including:

- a. **India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue:** India-U.S. 2+2 Annual Ministerial Dialogue is led by the Foreign and the Defence Ministers of India and then U.S. counterparts. Three rounds have been held. The third 2+2 Ministerial was held on 27 October 2020 in New Delhi with the participation of U.S. Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper.
- b. **India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue:** The India-U.S. Commercial Dialogue is led by the Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) and the U.S. Secretary of Commerce. This was last held in Delhi in February 2019. The CEO's Forum was held virtually on 14 July 2020. A telephone call between CIM and U.S. Secretary of Commerce took place on the same date.

- c. **India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership:** The India – U.S. Economic and Financial Partnership is led by the Finance Minister (FM) and the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury. This was last held in Delhi in November 2019.
- d. **India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum:** The India-U.S. Trade Policy Forum is led by CIM and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR). This was last held in Washington, D.C. in October 2017.
- e. **India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership:** The India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership is led by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the U.S. Secretary of Energy. The last meeting was held virtually on 17 July 2020.
- f. **India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue (HSD):** The India-U.S. Homeland Security Dialogue is led by the Minister of Home Affairs and the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security. This was last held in Washington, D.C. in May 2013. The date for the next meeting is being worked out.

VII. Defence Cooperation: Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-U.S. Strategic Partnership with intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy. Important bilateral exercises are: Yudh Abhyas, Vajra Prahar, and Tiger Triumph. Aggregate worth of defence-related acquisitions from the U.S. is more than US\$ 21 billion. In June 2016, the U.S. recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner" to facilitate technology sharing to a level commensurate with that of its allies and partners. India's elevation to Tier I of the Strategic Trade Authorization (STA) license exception in year 2018 facilitates interaction in advanced and sensitive technologies. Conclusion of LEMOA (2016), COMCASA (2018), ISA (2019) and BECA (2020) further strengthened the framework for defence cooperation.

ii. Dialogue mechanisms for defence cooperation : Defence Policy Group, Military Cooperation Group, Defense Technology and Trade Initiative and its Joint Working Groups, Executive Steering Groups for Army; Navy; and Airforce, Defence Procurement and Production Group, Senior Technology Security Group and the Joint Technical Group.

- VIII. Counter-terrorism and Internal Security:** Cooperation in counter-terrorism has seen considerable progress with enhanced intelligence sharing, information exchange and operational cooperation. The bilateral Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism and Designation Dialogue is an important mechanism. It last met in-person in Washington in March 2019 (16th Meeting) and virtually (17th Meeting) on 9-10 September 2020. Both sides work together in law-enforcement and security cooperation through the HSD and cooperate on counter-terrorism and security issues in multilateral bodies, including on listing and designations of terrorists and terror groups.
- IX. Cyber security:** Cyber security cooperation is under the India-U.S. Cyber Framework signed in September 2016. The two important dialogue mechanisms are – India-U.S. Cyber Security Dialogue and the India-U.S. Joint Working Group on ICT (last held virtually on 1 October 2020). The inaugural India-US Cyber Defence Dialogue was held virtually on 17 September 2020.
- X. Trade and Economic:** The U.S. is India's largest trading partner, goods and services combined. In 2019, overall U.S.-India bilateral trade in goods and services reached \$146.1 billion compared to US\$ 139.6 billion in 2018 [Source: U.S. Department of State]. Two-way merchandise trade stood at around US\$ 92 billion. Of this, India's goods exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 57.7 billion and India's goods imports from the U.S. were valued at US\$ 34.3 billion. The India-U.S. trade in services stood at US\$ 54.1 billion. Of this, India's services exports to the U.S. were valued at US\$ 29.7 billion and India's imports of services from U.S. were valued at US \$ 24.3 billion. U.S. Foreign Direct Investments in India has increased to \$ 45.9 billion in 2019.
- XI. Energy:** The U.S. has emerged as a key partner for India in the field of energy. The bilateral Strategic Energy Partnership (SEP) launched in April 2018, is robust and enabled diversification across both conventional and renewable energy sources. An India-U.S. Natural Gas Task Force was also created in 2018. India started importing crude and LNG from the U.S. from 2017 and 2018 respectively. Bilateral hydrocarbon trade reached US\$ 9.2 billion during 2019-20, a 93% increase since 2017-18.

One of the key deliverables of the SEP Ministerial meeting held on 17 July 2020 was signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

between MoPNG and US DoE on co-operation in the area of Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs). The scope of MoU covers cooperation in the areas such as safety, technology development, and management of SPRs. It will also facilitate in exchange of operational best practices, exchange scientific and technical information and conducting Emergency Response Exercises and sharing data on release and replenishment mechanisms.

XII. Civil Nuclear Cooperation: The bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in October 2008. India and the U.S. have a Civil Nuclear Energy Working group on R&D activities which has met 10 times and has ongoing projects under R&D collaboration. A U.S. company - Westinghouse is in discussions with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for implementation of a project that envisages six AP 1000 reactors at Kovvada (A.P.).

XIII. S&T/Space: The multi-faceted cooperation in Science and Technology has been growing steadily under the framework of the India-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005, which was renewed for a period of ten years in September 2019. The Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) set up in the year 2000 is an autonomous, bi-national organization promotes cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation. It is playing an important role in strengthening cooperation especially during Covid-19.

iii. Both countries also have a long history of cooperation in civil space arena that includes cooperation in earth observation, satellite navigation, and space science and exploration. The India-U.S Joint Working Group on Civil Space Cooperation regularly reviews the status of cooperation and identifies new areas for furthering space cooperation and NASA are working towards intensifying cooperation in Mars exploration, heliophysics, and human spaceflight through relevant working groups between both sides.

iv. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and U.S. National Aeronautical and Space Administration (NASA) are working together to realise a joint microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, named NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR). This joint mission is targeted to be launched in early 2023.

- XIV. Indian Diaspora:** The number of Indians and Indian Americans in the U.S. is estimated at over 4 million. It includes a large number of professionals, entrepreneurs and educationists with considerable and increasing influence in U.S. polity, economy and the society. They are a big stakeholder in India-U.S. relations having significantly contributed to the growth and development of the U.S. economy and fostering people-to-people ties.
- XV. Education:** India and the U.S. have very strong linkages and collaboration in the field of higher education. U.S. is one of the most favoured destinations by Indian students for higher education. More than 200,000 Indian students are currently pursuing various courses in the U.S. Last year, Indian students enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities contributed over \$8 billion to the U.S. economy.
- XVI. Regional and International Cooperation:** Both countries are collaborating and coordinating on a number of regional and global issues in both security as well as development spheres. We are also intensively engaged in areas such as maritime and cyber security, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. The U.S. has expressed strong support for India's candidature for a permanent seat/role in an expanded UN Security Council and for India's early entry into the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Both countries have also been working together to promote peace, security, stability in the Indo-Pacific as well as globally.
- XVII. Cooperation in combating Covid-19 pandemic:** India and the U.S. have enhanced collaboration in R&D, especially with regard to pharmaceuticals, therapeutics and vaccine development. Indian vaccine companies are collaborating with US based agencies to develop and produce a vaccine against COVID-19 on a rapid platform. Seven such vaccines are currently under development, in addition to several research initiatives aimed at developing therapeutics and diagnostics to combat the pandemic. India supplied 35.82 lakh tablets of hydroxychloroquine to the U.S. along with nine metric tons of active pharmaceutical ingredient required in the manufacturing of the drug. The U.S. Government donated 200 ventilators to Indian Red Cross Society through the U.S. agency for International Development (USAID). India and U.S. have engaged with other like-minded Indo-Pacific countries to exchange information on COVID response, vaccine development and therapeutics, share best practice and discuss issues

such as transparency and supply chain management issues and reopening of economies.

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