

6 CHAPTER

India and Uzbekistan Relations

After reading the chapter, the reader will be able to develop an analytical understanding on the following:

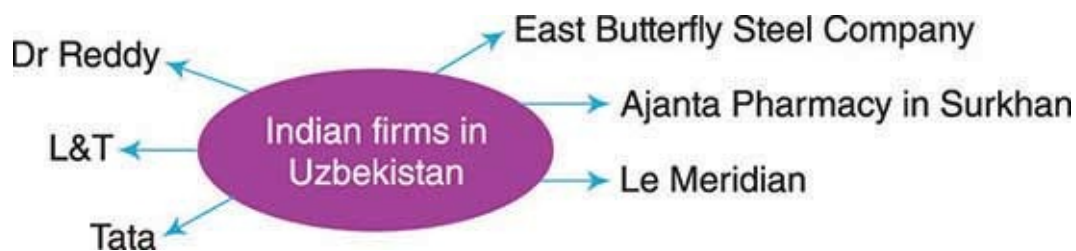
- Basic background
- Commercial diplomacy
- Tashkent Declaration
- Analysis of PM visit in 2015
- Final analysis of Indian PM visit to CA in 2015

BASIC BACKGROUND

Uzbekistan is located between Amu Darya and Syer Darya, and has a lot of fertile land. Agriculture is the core activity and is dominated by cotton and wheat. East Uzbekistan is mineral-rich, especially in the Fergana valley region. India and Uzbekistan have diplomatic relations since 1991. The two interact in very broad areas ranging from economic interaction to technology to small and medium enterprises (SME). After the visit of Narsimha Rao in the 1990s, cultural cooperation under ICCR has been frequent and a cultural centre has been established in Tashkent. India has an IT centre in Tashkent University. Since 2011, the two are strategic partners.

COMMERCIAL DIPLOMACY

In 1992, the India–Uzbekistan IGC was established. The cooperation led to a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement being signed. India extends lines of credit and cooperates predominantly in IT and pharmacy sector. A lot of Indian firms are present in Uzbekistan.



India exports pharma products, meat, and coal tar while importing fertilizers, silk, pulses, and spices. Uzbekistan is a cotton producer and has been inviting FDI in textiles. An Indian firm Spandex is a big player in textiles. In 2011, the two nations signed an MoU in textiles to promote and enhance cotton production. A visit by former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam led to signing of Tashkent declaration.



India, on priority, is helping with the establishment of the chemical sector of Uzbekistan. India has also purchased six Ilyushin-78 (IL-78) aircrafts from Tashkent Aviation Production Association.

ANALYSIS OF THE INDIAN PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT—2015

In 2015, the Indian PM visited Tashkent and met President Karimov. He gave Karimov a compilation of the *Khan-i-Khusrau* by Amir Khusrau.



While addressing Indologists, the PM appreciated the completion of 50 years of Hindi broadcasting by Uzbek Radio. The two nations agreed to establish joint working groups on terror. Uzbekistan has also agreed to supply 2000 million tons of Uranium to India. The two sides have concluded an MoU on defence cooperation and cyber security. India has agreed to join the Ashgabat Agreement which was signed in 2011 and is an international transit corridor between CA and Persian Gulf. In July, 2016, India sent its approval to the repository state of Turkmenistan.

FINAL ANALYSIS

In 2015, there have been visits by the Indian PM to all the five CA republics. India has brought the region back into its foreign policy considerations. As the US troops withdraw from Afghanistan, the significance of the region will increase. The prime ministerial visits have conveyed to all these nations the importance India attaches to all of them. An important aspect of the visits was the carefully selected choice of gifts the Indian PM presented his counterparts with. For example, the Turkmenistan head of state, Gurbanguly, is an avid horse rider and is very fond of the Turkman horse breed, Akul Terke. Aptly, the PM gifted him a saddle of leather. In all, 21 agreements were signed during the visits, ranging from connectivity to energy to combating terrorism and defence cooperation. Due to the rise of the Islamic State (ISIS), no doubt security and defence dominated the theme in all countries. Advancement in the TAPI pipeline, Uranium supply from Nursultan Nazarbayev and permission granted to the OVL to drill in Satpayev remain some of the major achievements of the premier visits.

End of Part Questions

1. To what extent does India's Look North Policy help India meet the challenges in CA at the end of the Cold War? Why did the policy fail?
2. Why did India initiate the Connect CA Policy? Outline its key features.
3. How will India be able to stabilize the region of CA as a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation?
4. To what extent does India's CA policy synchronise with the other regional powers?

5. For India its engagement with CA is a litmus test for its global power aspirations. Examine.
6. Outline the broad contours of India's engagement with each Central Asian Republic.
7. What are the major challenges India is likely to witness in its energy diplomacy with CA?
8. What are the fundamental differences in USA's and Russia's engagement in CA? What impact is it likely to have on Indian policy in CA?