

National Drinking Water Policy

The policy of the Government of India in the rural drinking water supply sector is laid down in the National Water Policy and the Framework for Implementation of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP).

Since rural water supply is a State Subject, the State Governments are empowered to enact legislation on this subject. Hence, there is no proposal by the Government of India to enact any legislation on the subject.

To ensure availability of potable drinking water in all rural habitations within a timeframe, rural drinking water has been included as one of the components under Bharat Nirman. At the commencement of Bharat Nirman as on 1.4.2005, 55067 uncovered habitations, 3,31,604 slipped back habitations and 2,16,968 quality affected habitations existed in the country. At the end of Bharat Nirman phase - I i.e. on 31.3.2009, there were 627 uncovered and 1,79,999 quality affected habitations yet to be covered with provision of safe drinking water. These habitations are proposed to be covered during Bharat Nirman Phase - II. To ensure that these remaining habitations are covered during the Bharat Nirman Phase - II, State Governments have been requested to prepare Annual Action Plans to cover the uncovered and quality affected habitations on priority and also mark the targeted habitations in the online Integrated Management Information System (IMIS). To achieve the targets laid down since the launch of Bharat Nirman, the allocation of funds for rural drinking water has been increased substantially from Rs.2,585crore in the year 2004-05 i.e. year preceding the launch of Bharat Nirman to Rs.9,000 crore in 2010-11.

India at climate talks in Cancun

As pressure builds on China and India to accept greater obligations to cut down carbon emissions, both countries have asserted that measures to combat climate change need to factor in the principle of equitable access to development opportunities. Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh said developing countries have to strike a balance between growth objectives and emission mitigation as experts reminded that developed nations have over-used their fair share. "I want to reiterate that we are not talking about the right to pollute... Sustainable development is a fundamental right," said Ramesh at an event hosted by India on the sidelines of climate talks in Cancun. The larger developing countries, he said, "needed to ensure that the commitments that they take or have taken does not come in the way of these growth objectives," the Minister said. He pointed out that academic work on equitable access was not being factored into negotiations. "Somehow the negotiating committed is oblivious of this work," he added.

China, the largest emitter of greenhouse gases, has also maintained that developed countries should take major responsibility for climate change and shoulder due obligations as the unrestrained emission during their 200-year industrialisation process was largely to blame for the global warming.

Michael Khor, executive director of South Center, said that between 1850 and today about 1300 gigatonnes of CO₂ have been emitted, and in the next five years the world could only afford to pump 600 gigatonnes more, if global average temperature rise had to be limited to 2 degree Celsius. "What is the historical situation and who has put it into the atmosphere... the developed countries have over-used what is their fair share (by 500 gigatonnes from 1850 to 2008)," he said, defining fair share as the share in accordance with the country's share in the world's population. "We need the environment, we need development and we need equity to clinch the two," he added.

Most developed countries, however, do not see the vast amounts of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere as their fault since for the majority phase of their development, they did not realise the long-term impact of their actions, he said.

Indian scientist T Jayaraman said that even if developed countries slashed their carbon emissions by 90 per cent from 1990 levels, India would develop as much as Portugal and developing countries would still never have their fair share of atmospheric space

Pike River Coal Mine

Why Pike River Coal Mine is in the news in time, because an explosion. The first explosion on 19 November 2010 trapped 29 workers inside the mine. Rescuers delayed entering the mine, due to the risk of another explosion. On 24 November, a second explosion occurred and it was subsequently presumed that the workers could not have survived. A third explosion occurred on 26 November; it appeared to be smaller than the first two.

The Pike River Mine is a 29 Mile (46 Km.) long coal mine operated by Pike River Coal Ltd. It is situated in north-northeast of Greymouth in the West Coast Region of New Zealand's South Island.

It was to begin production in early 2008, and was initially expected to produce around one million tonnes of coal per year for around 20 years, making the mine the second-largest coal export mine in the country, as well as the largest underground coal mine of the country. The estimate for production was reduced to between 320,000 and 360,000 tonnes for 2011. The coal of the mine is described as "New Zealand's largest known deposit of high fluidity and quality hard coking coal" (a type of coal in high demand for iron smelting), and is expected to earn around NZ\$170 million in export income annually.

Yeonpyeong Island

Why Yeonpyeong Island is in the news in this time, because this South Korean island hit last week by a North Korean artillery attack was designated as a "control zone," in which the military can effectively ban the entrance of civilians and order their departure when necessary. Ongjin County, which governs the Yellow Sea border island of Yeonpyeong, said it has approved a military request to declare the island a control zone under the United Defense Act, aimed at effectively defending the nation through unified command in times of a security crisis.

Tensions remained high on the island as South Korea and the United States continued their joint military drill south of it in the Yellow Sea. The North brands the exercises an attempt to "ignite a war." North Korea fired some 170 artillery shells on and near Yeonpyeong Island on Nov. 23, killing two marines and two civilians and injuring at least 18 people.

Yeonpyeong Island or Yeonpyeongdo is a group of South Korean islands in the Yellow Sea, located about 80 km (50 mi) west of Incheon and 12 km (7.5 mi) south of the coast of Hwanghae Province, North Korea. The main island of the group is Daeyeonpyeongdo also referred to simply as Yeonpyeong Island, with an area of 7.01 km² (2.71 sq mi) and a population of around 1,300.

Cold War Era

India played a key role in establishing the Non-Aligned Movement in 1961. Though India pursued close relations with both USA and USSR, it decided not to join any major power bloc and refrained from joining military alliances. India however began establishing close military relationship with the Soviet Union.

After the Sino-Indian War and the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, India made considerable changes to its foreign policy. It developed a close relationship with the Soviet Union and started receiving massive military equipment and financial assistance from the USSR. This had an adverse effect on the Indo-USA relationship. The United States saw Pakistan as a counter-weight to pro-Soviet India and started giving the former military assistance. This created an atmosphere of suspicion between India and USA. The USA-India relationship suffered a considerable setback during the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan when India openly supported the Soviet Union.

Relations between India and the United States came to an all-time low during the early 1970s. Despite reports of atrocities in East Pakistan, and being told, most notably in the *Blood telegram*, of genocidal activities being perpetrated by Pakistani forces, U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and U.S. President Richard Nixon did nothing to discourage then Pakistani President Yahya Khan and the Pakistan Army. Kissinger was particularly concerned about Soviet expansion into South Asia as a result of a treaty of friendship that had recently been signed between India and the Soviet Union, and sought to demonstrate to the People's Republic of China the value of a tacit alliance with the United States. During the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, Indian Armed Forces, along with the Mukti Bahini, succeeded in liberating East Pakistan which soon declared independence. Richard Nixon, then USA President, feared that an Indian invasion of West Pakistan would mean total Soviet domination of the region, and that it would seriously undermine the global position of the United States and the regional position of America's new tacit ally, China. In order to demonstrate to China the *bona fides* of the United States as an ally, and in direct violation of the USA Congress-imposed sanctions on Pakistan, Nixon sent military supplies to Pakistan, routing them through Jordan and Iran, while also encouraging China to increase its arms supplies to Pakistan.

When Pakistan's defeat in the eastern sector seemed certain, Nixon sent the USS *Enterprise* to the Bay of Bengal, a move deemed by the Indians as a nuclear threat. The *Enterprise* arrived on station on December 11, 1971. On 6 December and 13 December, the Soviet Navy dispatched two groups of ships, armed with nuclear missiles, from Vladivostok; they trailed U.S. Task Force 74 into the Indian Ocean from 18 December 1971 until 7 January 1972. The Soviets also sent a nuclear submarine to ward off the threat posed by USS *Enterprise* in the Indian Ocean.

Though American efforts had no effect in turning the tide of the war, the incident involving USS *Enterprise* is viewed as the trigger for India's subsequent nuclear program. American policy towards the end of the war was dictated primarily by a need to restrict the escalation of war on the western sector to prevent the 'dismemberment' of West Pakistan. Years after the war, many American writers criticized the White House policies during the war as being badly flawed and ill-serving the interests of the United States. India carried out nuclear tests a few years later resulting in sanctions being imposed by United States, further drifting the two countries apart. In recent years, Kissinger came under fire for comments made during the Indo-Pakistan War in which he described Indians as "bastards." Kissinger has since expressed his regret over the comments.

Post Cold War Era

Since the end of the Cold War, India-USA relations have improved dramatically. This has largely been fostered by the fact that the USA and India are both democracies and have a large and growing trade relationship. During the Gulf War, the economy of India went through an extremely difficult phase. The Government of India liberalized the Indian economy. After the break up of the Soviet Union, India started looking for new allies and tried improving diplomatic relations with the members of the NATO particularly the United States, Canada, France and Germany. In 1992, India established formal diplomatic relations with Israel.

Pokhran tests

In 1998, India tested nuclear weapons which resulted in several U.S., Japanese and European sanctions on India. India's then defence minister, George Fernandes, said that India's nuclear program was necessary as it provided deterrence to some potential nuclear threat. Most of the sanctions imposed on India were removed by 2001. India has categorically stated that it will never use weapons first but will defend if attacked. In fact Pakistan is the first country that India informs if any nuclear tests are on the agenda.

The economic sanctions imposed by the United States in response to India's nuclear tests in May 1998 appeared, at least initially, to seriously damage Indo-American relations. President Bill Clinton imposed wide-ranging sanctions pursuant to the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act. U.S. sanctions on Indian entities involved in the nuclear industry and opposition to international financial institution loans for non-humanitarian assistance projects in India. The United States encouraged India to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) immediately and without condition. The U.S. also called for restraint in missile and nuclear testing and deployment by both India and Pakistan. The non-proliferation dialogue initiated after the 1998 nuclear tests has bridged many of the gaps in understanding between the countries.

Post-September 11 attacks

After the September 11 attacks in 2001, Indian intelligence agencies provided the U.S. with significant information on Al-Qaeda and related groups' activities in Pakistan and Afghanistan. India's extensive contribution to the War on Terrorism has helped India's diplomatic relations with several countries. Over the past few years, India has held numerous joint military exercises with U.S. and European nations that have resulted in a strengthened U.S.-India and E.U.-India bilateral relationship. India's bilateral trade with Europe and U.S. has more than doubled in the last five years.

However, India has not signed the CTBT, or the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, claiming the discriminatory nature of the treaty that allows the five declared nuclear countries of the world to keep their nuclear arsenal and develop it using computer simulation

testing. Prior to its nuclear testing, India had pressed for a comprehensive destruction of nuclear weapons by all countries of the world in a time-bound frame. This was not acceptable to the USA and other countries. Presently, India has declared its policy of "no-first use of nuclear weapons" and the maintenance of a "credible nuclear deterrence". The USA, under President George W. Bush has also lifted most of its sanctions on India and has resumed military co-operation. Relations with USA have considerably improved in the recent years, with the two countries taking part in joint naval exercises off the coast of India and joint air exercises both in India as well as in the United States.

India has been pushing for reforms in the UN and WTO with mixed results. India's candidature for a permanent seat at the UN Security Council is currently backed by several countries including United Kingdom, France, Germany, Japan, Brazil, African Union nations and recently People's Republic of China. In 2005, the United States signed a nuclear co-operation agreement with India even though the latter is not a part of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The US argued that India's strong nuclear non-proliferation record made it an exception and persuaded other Nuclear Suppliers Group members to sign similar deals with India.

On March 2, 2006 India and the USA signed the Indo-U.S. Nuclear Pact on co-operation in civilian nuclear field. This was signed during the four days state visit of USA President George Bush in India. On its part, India would separate its civilian and military nuclear programs, and the civilian programs would be brought under the safeguards of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The United States would sell India the reactor technologies and the nuclear fuel for setting up and upgrading its civilian nuclear program. The U.S. Congress needs to ratify this pact since U.S. federal law prohibits the trading of nuclear technologies and materials outside the framework of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

Indo-USA strategic partnership

Indo-USA relations got strategic content in the early 1960s. The rise of China worried the policymakers in Washington. Chinese assertion in Tibet, its role in Korean war and other such acts concerned Washington. As the relations between India and China deteriorated during late fifties, the Americans found a golden opportunity to take advantage of this situation to promote India as a counterweight to China. But any unidimensional alliance is bound to be short-lived and this alliance was no exception to this general rule. As China ceased to be a headache for the American policymakers by the late sixties, this unidimensional alliance disappeared into thin air.

The end of the Cold War necessitated as well as facilitated the infusion of strategic content to Indo-USA relations—this time multidimensional. In the post Cold War era, the strategic objectives of India and the USA converge on a number of issues and not just one—as well as the case earlier. These issues include, inter alia, containment of terrorism, promotion of democracy, counter proliferation, freedom of navigation in the Indian Ocean, Asian balance of power, etc.

One of the very interesting features of Indo-USA relations of recent times is the changes on the terms of engagement between the two countries on the issue of nuclear proliferation. While earlier, in the USA strategic thinking on nuclear proliferation, India figured mainly because of American concern about latter's nuclear and missile programmes, in the twenty-first century, however, American strategic thinking on the issue of nuclear proliferation has undergone radical reorientation. Now, the Americans are increasingly realising the futility of insisting on a rollback of India's nuclear programme. They, rather, want to leverage India's growing power and influence in favour of their broader nonproliferation and counter proliferation objectives.

As promotion of democracy around the world is one of the most important foreign policy objective of the USA, India – as the largest democracy of the world-can hardly be ignored by the USA. This is the reason; cooperation in promotion of democracy in the world has become one of the most important facets of Indo-USA relations in recent times. India is a founding member of the 'Community of Democracies' – a prominent endeavour of the USA on promotion of democracy. However, India rejected the suggestion of the USA about setting up a Centre for Asian Democracy.

Agriculture is another important area of cooperation between India and the USA in present times. Considering the fact that both the nations at present have a vast pool of human resources adept at knowledge economy, it is only natural that the most optimal course such partnership can aim at is harnessing these human resources by concentrating on development and dissemination of agricultural knowledge through research, education and training etc. An initiative to forge such a partnership is the 'India-USA Knowledge Initiative on Agriculture' (KIA).

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was the guest of honor at the first state dinner, which took place on November 24, 2009, of the administration of US President Barack Obama. Obama later visited India from November 6-9, 2010, signing numerous trade and defence agreements with India. He addressed the joint session of the Indian parliament in New Delhi, becoming only the second US President to do so, and announced that the United States would lend it's support to India's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council, signifying the growing strategic dimension of the relationship between the world's two largest democracies.

Europe

European Union

India was one of the first countries to develop relations with the Union, signing bilateral agreements in 1973, when the United Kingdom joined. The most recent cooperation agreement was signed in 1994 and an action plan was signed in 2005. As of April 2007 the Commission is pursuing a free trade agreement with India.

The Union is India's largest trading partner, accounting for 20% of Indian trade. However, India accounts for only 1.8% of the EU's trade and attracts only 0.3% of European Foreign Direct Investment, although still provides India's largest source. During 2005 EU-India trade grew by 20.3%.

There was controversy in 2006 when the Indian Mittal Steel Company sought to takeover the Luxembourg based steel company, Arcelor. The approach met with opposition from France and Luxembourg but was passed by the Commission who stated that were

judging it on competition grounds only.

The European Union (EU) and India agreed on September 29, 2008 at the EU-India summit in Marseille, France’s largest commercial port, to expand their cooperation in the fields of nuclear energy and environmental protection and deepen their strategic partnership. French President Nicolas Sarkozy, the EU’s rotating president, said at a joint press conference at the summit that “EU welcomes India, as a large country, to engage in developing nuclear energy, adding that this clean energy will be helpful for the world to deal with the global climate change.” Sarkozy also said the EU and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan pledged to accelerate talks on a free trade deal and expected to finish the deal by 2009. The Indian prime minister was also cautiously optimistic about cooperation on nuclear energy. “Tomorrow we have a bilateral summit with France. This matter will come up and I hope some good results will emerge out of that meeting,” Singh said when asked about the issue. Singh said that he was “very satisfied” with the results of the summit. He added that EU and India have “common values” and the two economies are complementary to each other.

European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, also speaking at Monday’s press conference, expounded the joint action plan on adjustments of EU’s strategic partnership with India, saying the two sides will strengthen cooperation on world peace and safety, sustainable development, cooperation in science and technology and cultural exchanges.

Reviewing the two sides’ efforts in developing the bilateral strategic partnership, the joint action plan reckoned that in politics, dialogue and cooperation have enhanced through regular summits and exchanges of visits and that in economy, mutual investments have increased dramatically in recent years, dialogue in macro economic policies and financial services has established and cooperation in energy, science and technology and environment has been launched. Under the joint action plan, EU and Indian would enhance consultation and dialogue on human rights within the UN framework, strengthen cooperation in world peacekeeping mission, fight against terror and non-proliferation of arms, promote cooperation and exchange in developing civil nuclear energy and strike a free trade deal as soon as possible. France, which relies heavily on nuclear power and is a major exporter of nuclear technology, is expected to sign a deal that would allow it to provide nuclear fuel to India.

Trade between India and the 27-nation EU has more than doubled from 25.6 billion euros (\$36.7 billion) in 2000 to 55.6 billion euros last year, with further expansion to be seen. “We have agreed to achieve an annual bilateral trade turnover of 100 billion euros within the next five years,” Singh told reporters. A joint statement issued at the end of the summit said the EU and India would work to reach an agreement on climate change by the end of 2009.

United Kingdom

Since 1947, India’s relations with the United Kingdom have been through bilateral, as well as through the Commonwealth of Nations framework. Although the Sterling Area no longer exists and the Commonwealth is much more an informal forum, India and the UK still have many enduring links. This is in part due to the significant number of people of Indian origin living in the UK. The large South Asian population in the UK results in steady travel and communication between the two countries. The British Raj allowed for both cultures to imbibe tremendously from the other. The English language and cricket are perhaps the two most evident British exports, whilst in the UK food from the indian subcontinent are very popular. The United Kingdom’s favourite food is often reported to be Indian Cuisine, although no official study reports this.

Economically the relationship between Britain and India is also strong. India is the second largest investor in Britain after the US. Britain is also one of the largest investors in India.

The Queen’s visits to India have been enormously successful along with those by other members of the Royal Family. Britain has also supported India’s rise to prominence on the international stage, including advocating a permanent seat on the Security Council. The UK recently gave India a £825 million aid package to help India develop its health and education systems.

France

France and India established diplomatic relationships soon after India achieved independence in 1947. India’s strong diplomatic ties with France resulted in the peaceful cession of Pondicherry to India on November 1, 1954 without any military opposition from France.

France, Russia and Israel were the only countries that did not condemn India’s decision to go nuclear in 1998. In 2003, France became the largest supplier of nuclear fuel and technology to India and remains a large military and economic trade partner. India’s permanent member aspirations in the UN Security Council have found very strong support from former French President Chirac and more recently by the current French President Nicolas Sarkozy. The recent decision by the Indian government to purchase French Scorpène class submarines worth \$3 billion USD and 43 Airbus aircraft for Air India worth \$2.5 billion USD has further cemented the strategic, military and economic co-operation between India and France.

Nicolas Sarkozy visited India in January 2008 and was the Chief Guest of the Republic Day parade in New Delhi. France was the first country to sign a nuclear energy co-operation agreement with India; this was done during Prime Minister Singh’s visit, following the waiver by the Nuclear Suppliers Group. During the Bastille Day celebrations on July 14, 2009, a detachment of 400 Indian troops marched along with the French troops as well as the Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh was the guest of honour.

Italy

Despite racial and religious disconnections, India and Italy have enjoyed overall pleasurable and strong relations throughout history. Italy and India are also close economic partners and is home to a large population of Indian immigrants. The chief of India’s leading political party, the Indian National Congress, Sonia Gandhi, arguably the most powerful Indian woman, is of Italian descent.

Unfortunately at diplomatic level the relations seem not to be always good, an example is the terrible visa situation between the two countries for the past few years, visas of any kind (tourist, business, employment and others) are issued for very short term and after a

lot of hurdles for both Indian and Italian nationals. This situation has reduced noticeably the possibility of tourism and business development between the two countries. It is not officially known the reason for the current diplomatic situation. India has an embassy in Rome, a general consulate in Milan. Italy has an embassy in New Delhi, two general consulates (in Mumbai and Calcutta).

There are around 100,000 people of Indian Origin living in Italy, meanwhile there are only around 300 Italian citizens residing in India mostly working on behalf of Italian industrial groups.

Germany

During the Cold War India maintained diplomatic relations with West Germany and East Germany. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the reunification of Germany, relations have further improved. The German ambassador to India, Bernd Mutzelburg, once said that India and Germany, are not just ‘natural partners’, but important countries in a globalised world. Germany is India’s largest trade partner in Europe. German Chancellor Angela Merkel visited India recently, as did the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visit Germany. Both countries have been working towards gaining permanent seats in the United Nations Security Council. As both countries are strong liberal democracies, they have similar objectives. UN reforms, fighting terrorism and climate change, and promotion of science, education, technology, and human rights, are some areas of shared interests, and collaboration between these two countries. Culturally too, Indian and German writers and philosophers, have influenced each other. Recently, Germany has invested in developing education and skills amongst rural Indians. Also of note, during World War 2 an Indian division known as the Tiger Legion was attached to the German Wehrmacht.

Greece

The first contact between both civilization dates back from Alexander the Great’s visit to India and eventual retreat. Alexander’s seemingly un-stoppable eastward expansion was halted at the Kingdoms of North-Western of India. 3000 BC and earlier, the Mahabharata talks of Indian warrior Kings’ conquest of Greece and the cultural exchange resulting therefrom.

In modern time, diplomatic relations between Greece and India were established in May 1950. The new Greek Embassy building in New Delhi was inaugurated on February 6, 2001.

Turkey

Due to controversial issues such as Turkey’s close relationship with Pakistan and India’s strong relations with Greece and Armenia, relations between the two countries have often been blistered at certain times, but better at others. India and Turkey’s relationship alters from unsureness to collaboration when the two nations work together to combat terrorism in Central and South Asia, and the Middle East. India and Turkey are also connected by history, seeing as they’ve known each other since the days of the Ottoman Empire, and seeing as India was one of the countries to send aid to Turkey following its war of independence. The Indian real estate firm GMR, has invested in and is working towards the modernization of Istanbul’s Sabiha Gökçen International Airport. sameer shekhar

West Asia

Arab states of the Persian Gulf

India and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf enjoy strong cultural and economic ties. This is reflected in the fact that more than 50% of the oil consumed by India comes from the Persian Gulf countries and Indian nationals form the largest expatriate community in the Arabian Peninsula. The annual remittance by Indian expatriates in the region amounted to US\$20 billion in 2007. India is one of the largest trading partners of the CCASG with non-oil trade between India and Dubai alone amounting to US\$19 billion in 2007. The Persian Gulf countries have also played an important role in addressing India’s energy security concerns, with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait regularly increasing their oil supply to India to meet the country’s rising energy demand. In 2005, Kuwait increased its oil exports to India by 10% increasing the net oil trade between the two to US\$4.5 billion. In 2008, Qatar decided to invest US\$5 billion in India’s energy sector.

India has maritime security arrangement in place with Oman and Qatar. In 2008, a landmark defense pact was signed, under which India committed its military assets to protect “Qatar from external threats”. There has been progress in a proposed deep-sea gas pipeline from Qatar, via Oman, to India.

Bahrain

India is a close ally of Bahrain, the Kingdom along with its GCC partners are (according to Indian officials) among the most prominent backers of India’s bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, and Bahraini officials have urged India to play a greater role in international affairs. For instance, over concerns about Iran’s nuclear programme Bahrain’s Crown Prince appealed to India to play an active role in resolving the crisis.

Ties between India and Bahrain go back generations, with many of Bahrain’s most prominent figures having close connections: poet and constitutionalist Ebrahim Al-Arrayedh grew up in Bombay, while 17th century Bahraini theologians Sheikh Salih Al-Karzakani and Sheikh Ja’far bin Kamal al-Din were influential figures in the Kingdom of Golkonda and the development of Shia thought in the sub-continent.

Bahraini politicians have sought to enhance these long standing ties, with Parliamentary Speaker Khalifa Al Dhahrani in 2007 leading a delegation of parliamentarians and business leaders to meet Indian President Pratibha Patil, opposition leader L. K. Advani, and take part in training and media interviews. Politically, it is easier for Bahrain’s politicians to seek training and advice from India than it is from the United States or other western alternative.

In December 2007, the Bahrain India Society was launched in Manama to promote ties between the two countries. Headed by the former Minister of Labour Abdulnabi Al Shoala, the Society seeks to take advantage of the development in civil society to actively work to strengthen ties between the two countries, not only business links, but according to the body’s opening statement in politics, social affairs, science and culture. India’s Minister of State for Foreign Affairs E Ahmed and his Bahraini counterpart Dr Nazar Al Baharna attended the launch.

Egypt

Modern Egypt-India relations go back to the contacts between Saad Zaghloul and

AFSPA Story End

Article 9 of the ICCPR guarantees liberty and security of person, and the AFSPA violates all five sub-parts of this right. Sub-part (1) guarantees that “Everyone has the right to liberty and security of person. No one shall be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of his Liberty except on such ground and in accordance with such procedure as are established by law.” All the residents of a disturbed area are subject to arbitrary arrest. The military can arrest them on mere suspicion and detain them for unspecified amounts of time before handing them over to the nearest magistrate. Sub-part (2) states “Anyone who is arrested shall be informed, at the time of arrest, of the reasons for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of any charges against him.” The AFSPA does not require the arresting army officer to inform the person of the reason for their arrest. This is a requirement under Indian criminal procedure, but the military are not trained in this procedure. Sub-part (3) requires that “Anyone arrested or detained on a criminal charge shall be brought promptly before a judge or other official authorized by law to exercise judicial power and shall be entitled to trial within a reasonable time of release.” The AFSPA requires less than this since it states that the person should be brought to the nearest police station “with the least possible delay”.

Moreover, requiring the person to be handed over to the police station does not assure that they will be brought promptly before a judge.

Article 26 of the ICCPR, like article 14 of the Indian Constitution guarantees equal protection for all persons before the law. The AFSPA violates this right because the inhabitants of the North East do not have equal protection before the law. They live under a virtual but undeclared state of emergency and are given no remedy for the injustices they suffer at the hands of the military. Inhabitants of the rest of India, with the exception of Punjab and Kashmir are not subject to this law.

In response to the UN Human Rights Committee in 1991, the Attorney General from India did not address the specific points of these various ICCPR articles. He justified the AFSPA under Section 355 of the Indian Constitution which makes it the duty of the Union to protect each state from external aggression. He said the AFSPA was necessary given the context of the North East where there is “infiltration of aliens into the territories mingling with the local public, and encouraging them towards this [secession].” He stated that the ICCPR does not encourage secession and governments are not encouraged to promote it. He said the AFSPA is a “temporary measure”, not addressing the concern of committee members that the AFSPA has proven to be a longterm provision as it has been in force for over thirty years.

International Customary Law

The UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials, the UN Body of Principles for Protection of All Persons Under any form of Detention, and the UN Principles on Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-legal and summary executions all form part of international custom-

ary law because they were passed by UN General Assembly resolutions. They lend further strength to the conclusion that the AFSPA violates basic human rights standards.

The UN Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials was adopted by the UN General Assembly in resolution 34/169 of 17 December 1979. This code applies to all security forces stationed in the North East since “law enforcement officials” are defined as all those who exercise police powers, and it can include military officers. The first article requires that, “Law enforcement officials shall at all times fulfil the duty imposed upon them by law, by serving the community and by protecting all persons against illegal act, consistent with the high degree of responsibility required by their profession.” A high degree of responsibility is sadly lacking in the troops stationed in the North East. As exemplified by the atrocities noted above, the BSF, CRPF and Assam Rifles are not concerned with the requirements of the law enforcement profession, rather they are operating on a “war footing”.

The second article of the code requires that, “In the performance of their duty, law enforcement officials shall respect and protect human dignity and maintain and uphold the human rights of all persons.” As demonstrated above, multiple provisions of the basic human rights standards in the ICCPR are violated under the AFSPA. The AFSPA encourages the military officers to violate human rights because it allows the armed forces to base arrests, searches and seizures on their subjective suspicion. The armed forces know their actions will not be reviewed and that they will not be held accountable for their actions. They have neither the training nor the incentive to comply with this article of the Code.

Under Article 3 of the Code, “Law enforcement officials may use force only when strictly necessary and to the extent required for the performance of their duty.” The Attorney General of India tried to convince the UN Human Rights Committee that the use of force under the AFSPA is strictly necessary and is “squarely within the requirements of Article 3 [of the Code].” However, this argument ignores the sub-sections of Article 3 which stipulate that “(a) This provision emphasizes that the use of force by law enforcement officials should be exceptional; while it implies that law enforcement officials may be authorized to use force as is reasonably necessary under the circumstances for the prevention of crime or in effecting or assisting in the lawful arrest of offenders or suspected offenders, no force going beyond that may be used.” This provision aims at establishing proportionality between the use of force by an officer and the use of force by an offender. Under 4(a) of the AFSPA, the military personnel can use force against people who are not presenting any force. Under 4(c) they can use any amount of force necessary to arrest someone who is suspected of having committed, or being about to commit, an offence. Under 4(d), this same excessive use of force can be justified in entering and searching premises without a warrant.

Sub-section (c) of the code further clarifies that “in general,

firearms should not be used except when a suspected offender offers armed resistance or otherwise jeopardizes the lives of others and less extreme measures are not sufficient to restrain or apprehend the suspected offender.” When armed forces fire upon an unlawful assembly under Section 4(a) they are violating this basic provision. Moreover, the fact that the armed forces have begun firing into crowds and lob mortar shells in the middle of a town in the North East proves they are not interested in “less extreme measures”.

Under the Code, the armed forces have no grounds on which to justify their broad powers in the North East. Article 5 of the code reads, “No law enforcement official may inflict, instigate or tolerate any act of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, nor may any law enforcement official invoke circumstances such as state of war or a threat of war, a threat to national security, internal political instability or any other public emergency as a justification of torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.” (emphasis added) This sweeps aside all the arguments made in the Lok Sabha to justify the original passage of the AFSPA, as well as the Attorney General’s arguments before the UN Committee. Even if the North East is a “disturbed area” there is no justification for the human rights abuses being carried out by the military in the region.

The Body of Principles on Detention or Imprisonment was passed by UN General Assembly resolution no. 43/173, on 9 December 1988. This body of principles applies to all persons under any form of detention. It further strengthens several of the points raised under both Indian and international law.

Principle 10 states that “Anyone who is arrested shall be informed at the time of his arrest of the reason for his arrest and shall be promptly informed of the charges against him.” The armed forces are not obliged to provide this information under the AFSPA. Moreover, under principle 14, “A person who does not adequately understand or speak the language used by the authorities responsible for his arrest, detention or imprisonment is entitled to receive [information] promptly in a language which he understands”. Since the armed forces stationed in the North East are foreign to the region they are unable to comply with this principle. Under principle 32 the right to habeas corpus must be absolutely guaranteed.

The Principles on the Effective Prevention and Investigation of Extra-Legal, Arbitrary and Summary Executions adopted by Economic and Social Council also offer guidance for the use of force. Principle 3 says, “Governments shall prohibit orders from superior officers or public authorities authorizing or inciting other person to carry out any such extra-legal, arbitrary or summary executions. All persons shall have the right and the duty to defy such orders. Training of law enforcement officials shall emphasize the above provisions.” The armed forces operating in the North East should therefore not follow the excessive power to shoot to kill granted in the AFSPA.

International Humanitarian Law

tarian Law

The four Geneva Conventions of 1949 along with the two optional protocols, constitute the body of international humanitarian law. These provisions are suited to human rights protection in times of armed conflict. Under these conventions the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is given access to all international conflicts. In non-international armed conflicts, the ICRC can only offer its services.

The ICRC’s mandate in the context of non-international armed struggle is based on Protocol II to the Geneva Conventions. However, India has not signed either protocol to the Geneva Conventions. Nevertheless, the ICRC can offer its services in such a conflict based on Article 3, paragraph 2, common to the four Geneva Conventions of 1949 (“an impartial humanitarian body, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, may offer its services to the Parties to the conflict”). When the ICRC offers its services in such a situation, a state does not have to accept them, or consider it an interference in its internal affairs. However, “in situations of internal disturbance, the rules of international humanitarian law can only be invoked by analogy.”

C) COMPARATIVE LAW STANDARDS

The British armed forces presence in Northern Ireland is an apt comparison to the Indian military presence in the North East. The British carry out arrests under the Northern Ireland (Emergency Provisions) Act or the Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act. When detainees were held for seven days without charge the European Court of Human Rights found this to be in violation of the European Human Rights Covenant.

5. CONCLUSIONS

The Supreme Court of India reached a low for its lack of enforcement of fundamental rights in the Jabalpur case of 1975. The country was in a state of emergency and the high courts had concluded that although the executive could restrict certain rights, people could still file habeas corpus claims. The Supreme Court rejected this conclusion and said the high court judges had substituted their suspicion of the executive for “frank and unreserved acception of the proclamation of emergency.” Noted Legal luminary, H M Seervai notes that this shows the lack of judicial detachment. Indeed, it exemplifies a deference to the executive which leaves the people with no enforcement of their constitutional rights. Jabalpur has since been deemed an incorrect decision, but it remains an apt example of the judiciary’s submission to the executive.

The Supreme Court has avoided a Constitutional review for over 9 years, the amount of time the principal case has been pending. The Court is not displaying any judicial activism on this Act. The Lok Sabha in the 1958 debate acknowledged that if the AFSPA were unconstitutional, it would be for the Supreme Court to determine. The deference of the Delhi High Court to the legislature in the Indrajit case also demonstrates a lack of judicial independence.

The Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary

was adopted by the seventh UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and was also adopted by the UN General Assembly. Principle 2 of this document says, “The judiciary shall decide matters before them impartially, on the basis of facts and in accordance with the law, without any restrictions, improper influences, inducements, pressure, threats or interferences, direct or indirect, from any quarter or for any reason.” The Indian judicial system is not subject to direct interference. It seems to function independently, but under the surface it is possible to discern indirect pressure. For example, the practice of appointing retired judges to commissions may well influence judges while they are on the bench. There may not be direct pressure to render decisions favorable to the executive, but certainly a judge who has “towed the government line” is more likely to be appointed by that same government to a position of prominence upon retirement.

Moreover, there is an absence of creative legal thinking. When the Guwahati High Court was presented with international law argument in People’s Union for Democratic Rights, the court ignored it. Justice Raghuvir said in a personal interview that the court could not use international law. If the government has signed an international convention like the ICCPR which requires the government to guarantee rights to its citizens, how can these be enforced if the judiciary does not turn to the text of the convention in its rendering of decisions? The courts are not turning to the spirit of the law which guarantees the fundamental right to life to all people and as a result violations of human rights go unchecked.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the Independence and Impartiality of the Judiciary, Jurors and Assessors and the Independence of Lawyers, Mr Param Kumaraswamy, stated in the 51st Session of the Commission on Human Rights on 10 February 1995, at the United Nations in Geneva that, “The power of judicial review is vital for the protection of the rule of law.” He also quoted from Mr L M Singhvi’s 1985 report that “the strength of legal institutions is a form of insurance for the rule of law and for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms and for preventing the denial and miscarriage of justice.”

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The only way to guarantee that the human rights abuses perpetrated by the armed forces in the North East cease is to both repeal the AFSPA and remove the military from playing a civil role in the area. Indeed with 50% of the military forces in India acting in a domestic role, through internal security duties, there is a serious question as to whether the civil authority’s role is being usurped. As long as the local police are not relied on they will not be able to assume their proper role in law enforcement. The continued presence of the military forces prevents the police force from carrying out its functions. This also perpetuates the justification for the AFSPA.

Among the recommendations made by the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention, from 1994 was the statement that “Governments which have been

maintaining states of emergency in force for many years should lift them, limit their effects or review the custodial measures that affect many persons, and in particular should apply the principle of proportionality rigorously.”

The National Human Rights Commission is now reviewing the AFSPA. Hopefully, the NHRC will find that the AFSPA is unconstitutional and will submit this finding to the Supreme Court to influence its review of the pending cases. However, the NHRC has a very limited role. In past cases, the Supreme Court has not welcomed such intervention by the NHRC. This was evident when the NHRC attempted to intervene in the hearing against the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA).

If the AFSPA is not repealed, it must at a bare minimum comply with international law and Indian law standards. This means the powers to shoot to kill under section 4(a) must be unequivocally revoked. Arrests must be made with warrants and no force should be allowed in the search and seizure procedures. Section 5 should clearly state that persons arrested under the Act are to be handed over to the police within twenty-four hours. Section 6 should be completely repealed so that individuals who suffer abuses at the hands of the security forces may prosecute their abusers.

Moreover, the definition of key phrases, especially “disturbed area” must be clarified. The declaration that an area is disturbed should not be left to the subjective opinion of the Central or State Government. It should have an objective standard which is judicially reviewable. Moreover, the declaration that an area is disturbed should be for a specified amount of time, no longer than six months. Such a declaration should not persist without legislative review.

Armed forces should not be allowed to arrest or carry out any procedure on suspicion alone. All their actions should have an objective basis so that they are judicially reviewable. This will also assist those who file suit against the security forces.

All personnel acting in a law enforcement capacity should be trained according to the UN Code of Conduct for law enforcement personnel. The instructions and training given to the armed forces should be available to the public. Complete transparency should be established so that a public accountability is rendered possible.

Having the armed forces comply with the Indian CrPC would also be a bare minimum. The CrPC itself does not fully comply with international human rights standards, so making the AFSPA comply on its face with the CrPC provisions for the use of minimal force, arrest, search and seizure would only be a rudimentary step in reducing the abuses committed under the AFSPA.

If the Indian Government truly believes that the only way to handle the governance of the North Eastern states is through force, then it must allow the ICRC to intervene. This can only have a calming influence. Acceptance of ICRC services would demonstrate that the fighting parties want to bring an end to the violence. The ICRC’s involvement could help protect the residents of the North East who are currently trapped in the middle between insurgents and the military.

E-payments

Chitra Singh Rajput

E-payments or Electronic funds transfer (EFT) refers to the computer-based systems used to perform financial transactions electronically. According to consulting firm McKinsey estimate an estimated annual savings of around Rs. 1,00,000 crore makes a compelling case for the government to make a one-time investment of Rs. 60,000-70,000 crore to build an electronic payment platform for all its transactions with individual households, says consulting firm McKinsey. Such a platform could help the government save Rs. 71,000 crore a year, while benefiting individual beneficiaries to the tune of Rs. 26,200 crore. The saving of Rs. 1,00,000 crore is equivalent to about 10% of the total payment flow between the government and households, considering that in 2008-09, such payments in form of direct cash transactions, subsidies and public services such as education and healthcare amounted to Rs. 13,30,000 crore. The most significant gain from an e-payment platform in a country of 80-100 million poor households would be in the form of financial inclusion.

At a rapid pace, the Indian payments system is transforming from paper to electronic. The retail e-payments market is likely to grow nearly 70 percent in the next two years. The value of retail e-payments should reach US\$150 billion to \$180 billion by 2010.

Methods and Types of Electronic Payment

1. An electronic payment is any kind of non-cash payment that doesn't involve a paper check. Methods of electronic payments include credit cards, debit cards and the ACH (Automated Clearing House)

network. The ACH system comprises direct deposit, direct debit and electronic checks (e-checks).

2. A one-time customer-to-vendor payment is commonly used when you shop online at an e-commerce site, such as Amazon. You click on the shopping cart icon, type in your credit card information and click on the checkout button. The site processes your credit card information and sends you an e-mail notifying you that your payment was received. On some Web sites, you can use an e-check instead of a credit card. To pay by e-check, you type in your account number and your bank's routing number. The vendor authorizes payment through the customer's bank, which then either initiates an electronic funds transfer (EFT) or prints a check and mails it to the vendor.

3. You make a recurring customer-to-vendor payment when you pay a bill through a regularly scheduled direct debit from your checking account or an automatic charge to your credit card. This type of payment plan is commonly offered by car insurance companies, phone companies and loan management companies. Some long-term contracts (like those at gyms or fitness centers) require this type of automated payment schedule.

4. To use automatic bank-to-vendor payment, your bank must offer a service called online bill pay. You log on to your bank's Web site, enter the vendor's information and authorize your bank to electronically transfer money from your account to pay your bill. In most cases, you can choose whether to do this

manually for each billing cycle or have your bills automatically paid on the same day each month.

Benefits of Electronic Payment

Electronic payment is very convenient for the consumer. In most cases, you only need to enter your account information -- such as your credit card number and shipping address -- once. The information is then stored in a database on the retailer's Web server. When you come back to the Web site, you just log in with your username and password. Completing a transaction is as simple as clicking your mouse: All you have to do is confirm your purchase and you're done. Electronic payment lowers costs for businesses. The more payments they can process electronically, the less they spend on paper and postage. Offering electronic payment can also help businesses improve customer retention. A customer is more likely to return to the same e-commerce site where his or her information has already been entered and stored.

With all the benefits of electronic payment, it's no wonder that its use is on the rise. More than 12 billion ACH payments were made in 2004, a 20 percent increase from 2003. The 2004 Federal Reserve Payments Study noted that from 2000 to 2003, electronic payments grew as payment by check declined, which suggests that electronic payments are replacing checks.

In order to better serve their customers, banks are swiftly moving to offer online bill pay services. Grant Thornton's 2005 survey of bank executives found that 65 percent of community banks and 94

percent of large banks offer 24/7 online bill payment. Most of these services are free to members and coordinate easily with personal software programs such as Quicken or MS Money. Alternatively, consumers can subscribe to online bill pay services such as Paytrust or Yahoo! Bill Pay. These services charge a monthly fee in exchange for the convenience of paperless bill paying.

Concerns about Electronic Payment
The main drawbacks to electronic payments are concerns over privacy and the possibility of identity theft. Fortunately, there are many safeguards available to protect your sensitive personal information from falling into the wrong hands.

You can defend yourself against identity theft by using virus protection software and a firewall on your computer. You should also make sure that you send your credit card information over a secure server. Your Internet browser will notify you when a server is secure by showing a lock or key icon. In addition, the URL on a secure site is usually designated by the prefix "https" instead of "http." Retailers do their part by using data encryption, which codes your information in such a way that only the key holder can decode it. Privacy concerns aside, some people simply dislike making electronic payments. They find the setup too time-consuming and don't want more logons and passwords to remember. Others simply prefer the familiarity of writing checks and dropping envelopes in the mail. Regardless of these concerns, electronic payment will likely continue to rise in popularity.



Julian Paul Assange

Julian Paul Assange is an Australian internet activist, best known as the spokesperson, founder and editor-in-chief for WikiLeaks, a whistleblower website. Before working with the website, he was a physics and mathematics student, hacker, and computer programmer. Assange founded WikiLeaks in 2006. He currently sits on the website's advisory board. His career starting in 1994, Assange lived in Melbourne as a programmer and a developer of free software. On 20 August 2010, an investigation was opened against Assange in Sweden in connection with an allegation that he had raped a woman in Enköping on the weekend of 14 August after a seminar, and two days later had sexually harassed a second woman he had been staying with in Stockholm. On 24 November 2010, Assange lost an appeal against his detention, and thus remains under arrest in absentia and under an arrest warrant.

Nira Radia Tape Scandal

Ratan Tata, the chairman of India's Tata Group, filed a petition in Supreme Court seeking to amend a century-old law and stop phone conversations between him and the founder of a public relations company VCC.

The tapes feature conversations between Ms Radia, Mr Tata and other industrialists, politicians and journalists. The tapes suggest that Ms Radia was lobbying for the continuation of Mr Raja as telecom minister after the 2009 elections.

Niira Radia is a woman of formidable networking and PR skills, so much so that she represents both the Tata and the Mukesh Ambani group. Niira Radia led Vaishnavi Corporate Communications (VCC). VCC is an Integrated Communications Consulting firm with diverse skill sets and wide capability range. Vaishnavi has grown to be one of India's largest Corporate Communication Firms, offering a wide range of advisory services, strategic in nature, turn key from planning to implementation, feedback and review. It helps create differentiators in terms of corporate and brand reputation.

India's award of phone licenses at below-market prices may have cost the state \$31 billion, according to the country's chief auditor. The government collected 123.9 billion rupees (\$2.7 billion) from the sale of second-generation wireless spectrum, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India said in a report to parliament.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni's visit to Somalia

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni paid a brief visit to Mogadishu. With this President Yoweri Museveni becomes the first foreign leader to visit the Somali capital Mogadishu in 20 years.

The Ugandan leader met Somali President Sheikh Sharif Sheikh, Speaker Sharif Hassan Sheikh Aden, Prime Minister Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo and Cabinet members at Mogadishu's International Airport. The Ugandan leader later toured camps of Amisom peacekeepers in Mogadishu and held discussions with mission commanders. The visit was apparently kept secret and the area surrounding the airport was under tight security.

Museveni is the second East African leader to visit the war-torn country after Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi in 2007. At that time, Ethiopia had troops in Somalia lending support to the Transitional Federal Government.

Museveni's visit is considered a moral boost to Ugandan troops who have been facing attacks from Islamist insurgents, namely Al-Shabaab and Hizbu Islam loyalists. Although the media was kept in the dark, sources said the president praised the AU peacekeepers for their courage in helping the Somali government extend its control throughout the country. He was accompanied by First Lady Janet Museveni. So far, no source has disclosed details of the talks between Museveni and Somali government leaders.

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Year 2, Vol. 1, Issue 117, 31October -7 November, 2010

Mohandas Gandhi on the common goals of their respective movements of independence. In 1955, Egypt under Gamal Abdul Nasser and India under Jawaharlal Nehru became the founders of the Non-Aligned Movement. During the 1956 War, Nehru stood supporting Egypt to the point of threatening to withdraw his country from the Commonwealth of Nations. In 1967, following the Arab-Israeli war, India supported Egypt and the Arabs. In 1977, New Delhi described the visit of President Anwar al-Sadat to Jerusalem as a “brave” move and considered the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel a primary step on the path of a just settlement of the Middle East problem. Major Egyptian exports to India include raw cotton, raw and manufactured fertilizers, oil and oil products, organic and non-organic chemicals, leather and iron products. Major imports into Egypt from India are cotton yarn, sesame, coffee, herbs, tobacco, lentils, pharmaceutical products and transport equipment. The Egyptian Ministry of Petroleum is also currently negotiating the establishment of a natural gas-operated fertilizer plant with another Indian company. In 2004 the Gas Authority of India Limited, bought 15% of Egypt Nat Gas distribution and marketing company. In 2008 Egyptian investment in India was worth some 750 million dollars, according to the Egyptian ambassador.

Iran

After the Iranian Revolution of 1979, Iran withdrew from CENTO and dissociated itself from US-friendly countries, including Pakistan, which automatically entailed improved relationship with the Republic of India.

Currently, the two countries have friendly relations in many areas. There are significant trade ties, particularly in crude oil imports into India and diesel exports to Iran. Iran frequently objected to Pakistan’s attempts to draft anti-India resolutions at international organizations such as the OIC. India welcomed Iran’s inclusion as an observer state in the SAARC regional organization. Lucknow continues to be a major centre of Shiite culture and Persian study in the subcontinent.

In the 1990s, India and Iran both supported the Northern Alliance in Afghanistan against the Taliban regime. They continue to collaborate in supporting the broad-based anti-Taliban government led by Hamid Karzai and backed by the United States.

Iraq

Iraq was one of the few countries in the Middle East with which India established diplomatic relations at the embassy level immediately after its independence in 1947. Both nations signed the “Treaty of Perpetual Peace and Friendship” in 1952 and an agreement of cooperation on cultural affairs in 1954. India was amongst the first to recognize the Baath Party-led government, and Iraq remained neutral during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1965. However, Iraq sided alongside other Persian Gulf states in supporting Pakistan against India during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971, which saw the creation of Bangladesh. The eight-year long Iran–Iraq War caused a steep decline in trade and commerce between the two nations.

During the 1991 Persian Gulf War, India remained neutral but permitted refueling for U.S. airplanes. It opposed U.N. sanctions on Iraq, but the period of war and Iraq’s isolation further diminished India’s commercial and diplomatic ties. From 1999 onwards, Iraq and India began to work towards a stronger relationship. Iraq had supported India’s right to conduct nuclear tests following its tests of five nuclear weapons on May 11 and May 13, 1998. In 2000, the then-Vice President of Iraq Taha Yassin Ramadan visited India, and on August 6, 2002 President Saddam Hussein conveyed Iraq’s “unwavering support” to India over the Kashmir dispute with Pakistan. India and Iraq established joint ministerial committees and trade delegations to promote extensive bilateral cooperation. Although initially disrupted during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, diplomatic and commercial ties between India and the new democratic government of Iraq have since been normalized.

Israel

The creation of Israel at the end of World War II was a complex issue. India, along with Iran and Yugoslavia had recommended a single state with Arab and Jewish majority provinces with an aim to prevent partition of historic Palestine and prevent any conflict that might follow based on its own experience during partition. However, the final UN resolution decided to partition historic Palestine into Arab and Jewish states based on religious and ethnic majority which India opposed in the final vote as it did not agree with concept of partition on the basis of religion.

However, due to the security threat from a US aided Pakistan and its nuclear program in the 80s, Israel and India started a clandestine relationship that involved cooperation between their respective intelligence agencies. Israel shared India’s concerns about the growing danger posed by Pakistan and nuclear proliferation to Iran and other Arab states. After the end of the Cold War, formal relations with Israel started improving significantly.

Since the establishment of full diplomatic relations with Israel in 1992, India has improved its relation with the Jewish State. India is regarded as Israel’s strongest ally in Asia, and Israel is India’s second largest arms supplier.

India has entertained Israeli Prime Minister in a visit in 2003, and Israel has entertained Indian dignitaries such as Finance Minister Jaswant Singh in diplomatic visits. India and Israel collaborate in scientific and technological endeavors. Israel’s Minister for Science and Technology has expressed interest in collaborating with the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) towards utilizing satellites for better management of land and other resources. Israel has also expressed interest in participating in ISRO’s Chandrayaan Mission involving an unmanned mission to the moon. On January 21, 2008 India successfully launched an Israeli spy satellite into orbit from Sriharikota space station in southern India.

Israel and India share intelligence on terrorist groups. They have developed close defense and security ties since establishing diplomatic relations in 1992. Israel is India’s second-biggest arms supplier, after Russia. India has bought more than \$5 billion worth of Israeli equipment since 2002. In addition, Israel is training Indian military units and discussing an arrangement to give Indian commandos instruction in counter-terrorist tactics and urban warfare. In December 2008, Israel and India signed a memorandum to set up an Indo-Israel Legal Colloquium to facilitate discussions and exchange programs between judges and jurists of the two countries.

Lebanon

India has a peacekeeping force as part of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). One infantry battalion is deployed in Lebanon and about 900 personnel are stationed in the

Eastern part of South Lebanon. The force also provided non-patrol aid to citizens.

Saudi Arabia

Bilateral relations between India and the Saudi Arabia have strengthened considerably owing to cooperation in regional affairs and trade. Saudi Arabia is the one of largest suppliers of oil to India, who is one of the top seven trading partners and the 5th biggest investor in Saudi Arabia.

India and Saudi Arabia are actively cooperating in the field of science and technology. CSIR and the Saudi Arabian Standards Organisation (SASO) have an ongoing programme of technical cooperation (POC) since June 1993. Under this programme, Indian experts in different scientific areas, particularly in the field of measurement and calibration, are deputed to Saudi Arabia on regular basis. Similarly, several Saudi experts and have undergone advanced training in India. National Physical Laboratory has provided expertise and technology for two important SASO projects related to calibration and teleclock system. CSIR and the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST) signed a MoU for bilateral cooperation in 1997 and have an ongoing programme of cooperation, particularly in the field of space science, remote sensing and installation of Internet. Recently a three-member delegation from CSIR, NPL and CFTRI visited SASO during January 2004 and both sides agreed to renew the POC.

Russia and Central Asia

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) had major repercussions for Indian foreign policy. Substantial trade with the former Soviet Union plummeted after the Soviet collapse and has yet to recover. Longstanding military supply relationships were similarly disrupted due to questions over financing, although Russia continues to be India’s largest supplier of military systems and spare parts.

The relationship with USSR was tested (and proven) during the 1971 war with Pakistan, which led to the subsequent liberation of Bangladesh. Soon after the victory of the Indian Armed Forces, one of the foreign delegates to visit India was Admiral S.G. Gorshkov, Chief of the Soviet Navy. During his visit to Mumbai (Bombay) he came on board INS *Vikrant*. During a conversation with Vice Admiral Swaraj Prakash, Gorshkov asked the Vice Admiral, “Were you worried about a battle against the American carrier?” He answered himself: “Well, you had no reason to be worried, as I had a Soviet nuclear submarine trailing the American task force all the way into the Indian Ocean.”

Russian Federation

India’s ties with the Russian Federation are time-tested and based on continuity, trust and mutual understanding. There is national consensus in both the countries on the need to preserve and strengthen India-Russia relations and further consolidate the strategic partnership between the two countries. A Declaration on Strategic Partnership was signed between former Russian President and current Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and former Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in October 2000.

Russia and India have decided not to renew the 1971 Indo-Soviet Peace and Friendship Treaty and have sought to follow what both describe as a more pragmatic, less ideological relationship. Russian President Yeltsin’s visit to India in January 1993 helped cement this new relationship. Ties have grown stronger with President Vladimir Putin’s 2004 visit. The pace of high-level visits has since increased, as has discussion of major defence purchases. Russia, is working for the development of the Kudankulam nuclear plant, that will be capable of producing 1000 MW of electricity. Gazprom, is working for the development of oil and natural gas, in the Bay of Bengal. India and Russia, have collaborated extensively, on space technology. Other areas of collaboration include software, ayurveda, etc. India and Russia, have set a determination in increasing trade to \$10 billion. Counter-terrorism techniques are also in place between Russia and India. In 2007 President Vladimir Putin was guest of honour at Republic Day celebration on 26 January 2007. 2008, has been declared by both countries as the Russia-India Friendship Year. Bollywood films are quite popular in Russia. The Indian public sector oil company ONGC bought Imperial Energy in 2008. In December 2008, during President Medvedev’s visit, to New Delhi, India and Russia, signed a nuclear energy co-operation agreement. In March, 2010, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin signed an additional 19 pacts with India which included civilian nuclear energy, space and military co-operation and the final sale of Admiral Gorshkov (Aircraft Carrier) along with MiG-29K fighter jets.

Kazakhstan

India is working towards developing strong relations with this resource rich Central Asian country. The Indian oil company, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation, has got oil exploration and petroleum development grants in Kazakhstan. The two countries are collaborating in petrochemicals, information technology, and space technology. Kazakhstan has offered India five blocks for oil and gas exploration. India and Kazakhstan, are to set up joint projects in construction, minerals and metallurgy. India also signed four other pacts, including an extradition treaty, in the presence of President Prathibha Patil and her Kazakh counterpart Nursultan Nazarbayev. Kazakhstan will provide uranium and related products under the MoU between Nuclear Power Corp. of India and KazatomProm. These MoU also opens possibilities of joint exploration of uranium in Kazakhstan, which has the worlds’ second largest reserves, and India building atomic power plants in the Central Asian country.

Mongolia

The relations between India and Mongolia are still at a nascent stage and Indo-Mongolian cooperation is limited to diplomatic visits, provision of soft loans and financial aid and the collaborations in the IT sector. India established diplomatic relations in December 1955. India was the first country outside the Soviet block to establish diplomatic relations with Mongolia. Since then, there have been treaties of mutual friendship and cooperation between the two countries in 1973, 1994, 2001 and 2004.

Tajikistan

Diplomatic relations were established India and Tajikistan following Tajikistan’s independence from the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union, which had been friendly with India. Tajikistan occupies a strategically important position in Central Asia, bordering Afghanistan, the People’s Republic of China and separated by a small strip of Afghan territory

from Pakistan. India’s role in fighting the Taliban and Al-Qaeda and its strategic rivalry with both China and Pakistan have made its ties with Tajikistan important to its strategic and security policies. Despite their common efforts, bilateral trade has been comparatively low, valued at USD 12.09 million in 2005; India’s exports to Tajikistan were valued at USD 6.2 million and its imports at USD 5.89 million. India’s military presence and activities have been significant, beginning with India’s extensive support to the anti-Taliban Afghan North-ern Alliance (ANA). India began renovating the Farkhor Air Base and stationed aircraft of the Indian Air Force there. The Farkhor Air Base became fully operational in 2006, and 12 MiG-29 bombers and trainer aircraft are planned to be stationed there.

Uzbekistan

The countries have some culture in common especially because of deep Turkic and Persian influences in the two countries. India has an embassy in Tashkent. Uzbekistan has an embassy in New Delhi.

Africa

India has had good relationships with most sub-Saharan African nations for most of its history. In the Prime Minister's visit to Mauritius in 1997, the two countries secured a deal to a new Credit Agreement of INR 10.50 crore (US\$3 million) to finance import by Mauritius of capital goods, consultancy services and consumer durable from India. The government of India secured a rice and medicine agreement with the people of Seychelles. India contin-ued to build upon its historically close relations with Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Tanza-nia. Visits from political ministers from Ethiopia provided opportunities for strengthening bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the fields of education and technical training, water resources management and development of small industries. This has al-lowed India to gain benefits from nations that are generally forgotten by other Western Nations. The South African President, Thabo Mbeki has called for a strategic relationship between India and South Africa to avoid imposition by Western Nations. India continued to build upon its close and friendly relations with Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Minister of Foreign Affairs arranged for the sending of Special Envoys to each of these countries during 1996-97 as a reaffirmation of India's assurance to strengthening cooperation with these countries in a spirit of South-South partnership. These relations have created a position of strength with African nations that other nations may not possess.

Côte d'Ivoire

The bilateral relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire have considerably expanded in recent years as India seeks to develop an extensive com-mercial and strategic partnership in the West African region. The Indian diplomatic mission in Abidjan was opened in 1979. Côte d'Ivoire opened its resident mission in New Delhi in September 2004. Both nations are currently fostering efforts to increase trade, investments and economic cooperation.

Liberia

The bilateral relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of Liberia have expanded on growing bilateral trade and strategic cooperation. India is represented in Liberia through its embassy in Abidjan (Ivory Coast) and an active honorary consulate in Monrovia since 1984. Liberia was represented in India through its resident mission in New Delhi which subsequently closed due to budgetary constraints.

Nigeria

India has close relations with this oil rich West African country. Twenty percent of India's crude oil needs are met, by Nigeria. 40,000 barrels per day (6,400 m3/d) of oil, is the amount of oil, that India receives from Nigeria. Trade, between these two countries stands at \$875 million in 2005-2006. Indian companies have also invested in manufacturing, phar-maceuticals, iron ore, steel, information technology, and communications, amongst other things. Both India and Nigeria, are members of the Commonwealth of Nations, G-77, and the Non Aligned Movement. The Nigerian President, Olusegun Obasanjo was the guest of honour, at the Republic Day parade, in 1999, and the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, visited Nigeria in 2007, and addressed the Nigerian Parliament.

South Africa

India and South Africa have always had strong relations even though India revoked diplomatic relations in protest to the apartheid regime in the mid 20th century. The history of British rule connects both lands. There is a large group of South Africans of Indian descent. Mahatma Gandhi, spent many years in South Africa, during which time, he fought for the rights of the ethnic Indians. Nelson Mandela was inspired by Gandhi. After India's independence, India strongly condemned apartheid, and refused diplomatic relations while apartheid was conducted as state policy in South Africa.

The two countries, now have close economic, political, and sports relations. Trade between the two countries grew from \$3 million in 1992-1993 to \$4 billion in 2005-2006, and aim to reach trade of \$12 billion by 2010. One third of India's imports from South Africa is gold bullion. Diamonds, that are mined from South Africa, are polished in India. Nelson Mandela was awarded the Gandhi Peace Prize. The two countries are also members of the IBSA Dialogue Forum, with Brazil. India hopes to get large amounts of uranium, from resource rich South Africa, for India's growing civilian nuclear energy sector.

Sudan

Indo-Sudanese relations have always been characterized as longstanding, close, and friendly, even since the early development stages of their countries. The two nations estab-lished diplomatic relations shortly after India became known as one of the first Asian coun-tries to recognize the newly independent African country. India and Sudan also share geo-graphic and historical similarities, as well as economic interests. Both countries are former British colonies, and remotely border Saudi Arabia by means of a body of water. India and Sudan continue to have cordial relations, despite issues such as India's close relationship with Israel, India's solidarity with Egypt over border issues with Sudan, and Sudan's intima-te bonds with Pakistan and Bangladesh. India had also contributed some troops as United Nations peacekeeping force in Darfur.

International organizations

India participates in the following international organisations:

- " ADB - Asian Development Bank

- " AfDB - African Development Bank (nonregional members)
- " ASEAN Regional Forum
- " ASEAN (dialogue partner)
- " BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multisectoral Technical and Economic

Cooperation

- " BIS - Bank for International Settlements
- " Commonwealth of Nations
- " CERN - European Organization for Nuclear Research (observer)
- " CP - Colombo Plan
- " EAS
- " FAO - Food and Agriculture Organization
- " G-15
- " G-24
- " G-77
- " IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency
- " IBRD - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank)
- " ICAO - International Civil Aviation Organization
- " ICC - International Chamber of Commerce
- " ICRM - International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- " IDA - International Development Association
- " IFAD - International Fund for Agricultural Development
- " IFC - International Finance Corporation
- " IFRCS - International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
- " IHO - International Hydrographic Organization
- " ILO - International Labor Organization
- " IMF - International Monetary Fund
- " IMO - International Maritime Organization
- " IMSO - International Mobile Satellite Organization
- " Interpol - International Criminal Police Organization
- " IOC - International Olympic Committee
- " IOM - International Organization for Migration (observer)
- " IPU - Inter-parliamentary Union
- " ISO - International Organization for Standardization
- " ITSO - International Telecommunications Satellite Organization
- " ITU - International Telecommunication Union
- " ITUC - International Trade Union Confederation (the successor to ICFTU (Inter-national Confederation of Free Trade Unions) and the WCL (World Confederation of La-bor))
- " LAS - League of Arab States (observer)
- " MIGA - Multilateral Investment Geographic Agency
- " MONUC - United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the

Congo

- " NAM - Nonaligned Movement
- " OAS - Organization of American States (observer)
- " OPCW - Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
- " PCA - Permanent Court of Arbitration
- " PIF - Pacific Islands Forum (partner)
- " SAARC - South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
- " SACEP - South Asia Co-opeative Environment Programme
- " SCO - Shanghai Cooperation Organization (observer)
- " UN - United Nations
- " UNCTAD - United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
- " UNDOF - United Nations Disengagement Observer Force
- " UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
- " UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- " UNIDO - United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- " UNIFIL - United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
- " UNMEE - United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea
- " UNMIS
- " UNOCI - United Nations Operation in Cote d'Ivoire
- " UNWTO - World Tourism Organization
- " UPU - Universal Postal Union
- " WCL - World Confederation of Labor
- " WCO - World Customs Organization
- " WFTU - World Federation of Trade Unions
- " WHO - World Health Organization
- " WIPO - World Intellectual Property Organization
- " WMO - World Meteorological Organization
- " WTO - World Trade Organization

Non-Aligned Movement

Nonalignment had its origins in India's colonial experience and the nonviolent Indian independence struggle led by the Congress, which left India determined to be the master of its fate in an international system dominated politically by Cold War alliances and economi-cally by Western capitalism. The principles of nonalignment, as articulated by Nehru and his successors, were preservation of India's freedom of action internationally through re-fusal to align India with any bloc or alliance, particularly those led by the United States or the Soviet Union; nonviolence and international cooperation as a means of settling interna-tional disputes. Nonalignment was a consistent feature of Indian foreign policy by the late 1940s and enjoyed strong, almost unquestioning support among the Indian elite.

The term "Non-Alignment" itself was coined by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru during his speech in 1954 in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

United Nations

As a founder member of the United Nations, India has been a firm supporter of the Purposes and Principles of the United Nations, and has made significant contributions to the furtherance and implementation of these noble aims, and to the evolution and function-

ing of its various specialized programmes. It stood at the forefront during the UN's tumultuous years of struggle against colonialism and apartheid, its struggle towards global disarmament and the ending of the arms race, and towards the creation of a more equitable international economic order. At the very first session of the UN, India had raised its voice against colonialism and apartheid, two issues which have been among the most significant of the UN's successes in the last half century. India exulted in the UN's triumph, and saw in the UN's victory, a vindication of the policy relentlessly pursued by it from its initial days at the world forum. India has been a participant in all its peace-keeping operations including those in Korea, Egypt and Congo in earlier years and in Somalia, Angola and Rwanda in recent years. India has also played an active role in the deliberations of the United Nations on the creation of a more equitable international economic order. It has been an active member of the Group of 77, and later the core group of the G-15 nations. Other issues, such as environmentally sustainable development and the promotion and protection of human rights, have also been an important focus of India's foreign policy in international forums. See more

World Trade Organization

Described by WTO chief Pascal Lamy as one of the organization's "big brothers", India was instrumental in bringing down the Doha round of talks in 2008. It has played an important role of representing as many as 100 developing nations during WTO summits.

SAARC

Certain aspects of India's relations within the subcontinent are conducted through the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Its members are Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. Established in 1985, SAARC encourages cooperation in agriculture, rural development, science and technology, culture, health, population control, narcotics control and anti-terrorism.

SAARC has intentionally stressed these "core issues" and avoided more divisive political issues, although political dialogue is often conducted on the margins of SAARC meetings. In 1993, India and its SAARC partners signed an agreement to gradually lower tariffs within the region. Forward movement in SAARC has come to a standstill because of the tension between India and Pakistan, and the SAARC Summit originally scheduled for, but not held in, November 1999 has not been rescheduled. The Fourteenth SAARC Summit was held during 3-4 April 2007 in New Delhi.

International disputes

India's territorial disputes with neighboring Pakistan and People's Republic of China have played a crucial role in its foreign policy. India is also involved in minor territorial disputes with neighboring Bangladesh, Nepal and Maldives. India currently maintains two manned stations in Antarctica but has made some unofficial territorial claims, this is yet to be clarified.

India is involved in the following international disputes:

Bangladesh

- " 6.5 km of the border between India and Bangladesh remains to be demarcated.
- " Ongoing discussions with Bangladesh to exchange 162 minuscule enclaves between the two.

Nepal

- " Kalapani village of India is claimed by Nepal and Nawalparasi district of Nepal is claimed by India.

The dispute between India and Nepal involves about 75 square km (29 sq mi) of area in Kalapani, where China, India, and Nepal meet. Indian forces occupied the area in 1962 after China and India fought their border war. Three villages are located in the disputed zone: Kuti, Gunji, and Knabe. India and Nepal disagree about how to interpret the 1816 Sugauli treaty between the British East India Company and Nepal, which delimited the boundary along the Maha Kali River (Sarda River in India). The dispute intensified in 1997 as the Nepali parliament considered a treaty on hydro-electric development of the river. India and Nepal differ as to which stream constitutes the source of the river. Nepal regards the Limpiyadhura as the source; India claims the Lipu Lekh. Nepal has reportedly tabled an 1856 map from the British India Office to support its position. The countries have held several meetings about the dispute and discussed jointly surveying to resolve the issue. Although the Indo-Nepali dispute appears to be minor, it was aggravated in 1962 by tensions between China and India. Because the disputed area lies near the Sino-Indian frontier, it gains strategic value.

British Indian Ocean Territories

" Dispute over the British Indian Ocean Territories and the Cocos (Keeling) Islands with the former colonial powers. India regards these islands as part of its Lakshadweep Indosphere strategy as part of its oceanic vicinity of its sovereignty and a threat to its integrity of its emerging geo-political might, and does not recognise the crown's rule over these "Indian" islands.

Maldives

- " Dispute over Minicoy Island with Maldives.
- " India prevented Maldives destabilization by armed rebels by executing Operation Cactus and restored law and order in Maldives.

Pakistan

- " The unresolved Kashmir dispute and the status of Kashmir with Pakistan, involving the Siachen Glacier, India claims the disputed territory from Pakistan administered Kashmir.
- " Boundary issues of the Ferozepur and Pathankot with the Government of Pakistan.
- " Dispute over Kori Creek and the maritime boundary regarding the Rann of Kachchh area of India.
- " Water-sharing problems with Pakistan over the Indus River (Wular Barrage). (Indus Water Treaty)
- " Pakistani sponsorship of terrorism in India

People's Republic of China

- " India claims Aksai Chin and Trans-Karakoram Tract, as part of Jammu and Kashmir.
- " China claims most of Arunachal Pradesh, a contested disputed territory of north-east India by not recognising the McMahon Line. The McMahon Line however, had originally stretched farther southward into Indian Territory than India's current territorial claims

north of the line. The boundary claim itself is therefore still in dispute as it could give more territorial advantage to either nation. In a sense, the line might not serve as an advantage to India's claim, as a more southward boundary could give China more territorial claim.

Two regions are claimed by both India and China. Aksai Chin is in the disputed territory of Kashmir, at the junction of India, Tibet and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir. India claims the 38,000-square-kilometre territory, currently administered by China. India also considers the cessation of Shaksam Valley to China by Pakistan as illegal and a part of its territory. Arunachal Pradesh is a state of India in the country's northeast, bordering on Bhutan, Myanmar and China. Though it is under Indian administration, China calls the 90,000-square-kilometre area as South Tibet. Also the boundary between the North Indian states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttaranchal with China's Tibet is not properly demarcated with some portions under de-facto administration of India.

Look East Policy

In the post cold war era, a significant aspect of India's foreign policy is the Look East Policy. During the cold war, India's relations with its South East Asian neighbours were not very strong. After the end of the cold war, the government of India particularly realised the importance of redressing this imbalance in India's foreign policy. Consequently, the Narsimha Rao government in the early nineties of the last century unveiled the look east policy. Initially it focused on renewing political and economic contacts with the countries of East and South-East Asia.

At present, under the Look East Policy, the Government of India is giving special emphasis on the economic development of backward north eastern region of India taking advantage of huge market of ASEAN as well as of the energy resources available in some of the member countries of ASEAN like Myanmar. Look-east policy was launched in 1992 just after the end of the cold war, following the collapse of the Soviet Union. After the start of liberalization, it was a very strategic policy decision taken by the government in the foreign policy. To quote Prime Minister Dr. Man Mohan Singh "it was also a strategic shift in India's vision of the world and India's place in the evolving global economy".

The policy was given an initial thrust with the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao visiting China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Singapore and India becoming a important dialogue partner with ASEAN in 1992. Since the beginning of this century, India has given a big push to this policy by becoming a summit level partner of ASEAN (2002) and getting involved in some regional initiatives such as the BIMSTEC and the Ganga Mekong Cooperation and now becoming a member of the East Asia Summit (EAS) in December, 2005.

India - ASEAN

India's interaction with ASEAN in the cold war era was very limited. India declined to get associated with ASEAN in the 1960s when full membership was offered even before the grouping was formed.

It is only with the formulation of the Look-East policy in the last decade (1992), India had started giving this region due importance in the foreign policy. India became a sectoral dialogue partner with ASEAN in 1992, a full dialogue partner in 1995, a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in 1996, and a summit level partner (on par with China, Japan and Korea) in 2002.

The first India-ASEAN Business Summit was held at New Delhi in October 2002. The then Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee addressed this meet and since then this business summit has become an annual feature before the India-ASEAN Summits, as a forum for networking and exchange of business experiences between policy makers and business leaders from ASEAN and India.

Four India-ASEAN Summits, first in 2002 at Phnom Penh (Cambodia), second in 2003 at Bali (Indonesia), third in 2004 at Vientiane (Laos) and the fourth in 2005 at Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), have taken place till date.

The following agreements have been entered into with ASEAN:

- " Framework Agreement on Comprehensive Economic Cooperation (for establishing a FTA in a time frame of 10 years) was concluded in Bali in 2003.
- " An ASEAN-India Joint Declaration for Cooperation to Combat International Terrorism has been adopted.
- " India has acceded to the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC) in 2003, on which ASEAN was formed initially (in 1967).
- " Agreement on "India-ASEAN Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity" was signed at the 3rd ASEAN-India Summit in Nov 2004.
- " Setting up of Entrepreneurship Development Centres in ASEAN member states - Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam. (The one in Laos is already functional)

The following proposals were announced by the Prime Minister at the 4th ASEAN-India Summit:

- " Setting up centres for English Language Training (ELT) in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam.
- " Setting up a tele-medicine and tele-education network for Cambodia, Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam.
- " Organising special training courses for diplomats from ASEAN countries.
- " Organising an India-ASEAN Technology Summit in 2006.
- " Organising education fairs and road shows in ASEAN countries.
- " Conducting an India-ASEAN IT Ministerial and Industry Forum in 2006.

The ASEAN region has an abundance of natural resources and significant technological skills. These provide a natural base for the integration between ASEAN and India in both trade and investment. The present level of bilateral trade with ASEAN of nearly US \$ 18 billion is reportedly increasing by about 25 % per year. India hopes to reach the level of US \$ 30 billion by 2007. India is also improving its relations with the help of other policy decisions like offers of lines of credit, better connectivity through air (open skies policy), rail and road links.story end

Editorial & Corporate Office
First floor, D-55, West Vinod
Nagar, Delhi-92
RNI
UPENG/2008/26617
Publisher, Editor & Owner
D.S.Rajput
Year 2, Vol. 1, Issue 117,
31October -7 November, 2010
Place of Publication & Registered
Office
331/240 A, Stainly road
Nayapura,
Allahabad (N.P.)
Printing Press and address
Academy press, Daraganj,
Allahabad (U.P.)
website: developindiagroup.com
E-mails
developindiamediagroup@gmail.com
developindia2011@gmail.com
civilservicesminerva@gmail.com
Editorial No.
9289434990