

## **India-Malta Relations**

India and Malta enjoy friendly and cordial relations. India was one of the first countries to recognize independence of Malta in 1964 and established diplomatic relations with it in 1965. India and Malta share a common heritage, being members of the Commonwealth.

### **Bilateral Visits:**

India-Malta bilateral relations have been friendly with a number of visits having taken place between the two countries in the past. Last few years have seen a large number of high-level visits between the two countries. The visits which have taken place between the two countries are:

#### **From the Indian side:**

- President Shri R. Venkataraman visited Malta in 1990.
- Minister for Commerce & Industry Shri Kamal Nath visited Malta in November 2005 to attend CHOGM Summit.
- Minister of State for External Affairs Mrs. Preneet Kaur visited Malta in April 2013.
- External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Malta on 25-29 November 2015 to attend the CHOGM Summit 2015 as head of the delegation, whereas the Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. (Dr.) V. K. Singh represented India at the Foreign Ministers' segment of CHOGM.
- Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M. J. Akbar visited Malta on 8-10 July 2018. During his visit, Minister of State Shri M. J. Akbar met Foreign Minister of Malta Mr. Carmelo Abela and called on Prime Minister of Malta Dr. Joseph Muscat and President of Malta Ms. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca.
- Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu, accompanied by Minister of State (Finance) Shri Shiv Pratap Shukla, three Members of Parliament from Rajya Sabha and one Member of Parliament from Lok Sabha visited Malta on 16-18 September 2018. During his visit, Vice President met President of Malta Ms. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Speaker of the House of Representatives of Malta Mr. Anglu Farrugia and Acting PM and Minister for the Economy, Investment and 2 Small Businesses of Malta Dr. Christian

Cardona. Three MoUs on (i) Maritime Cooperation between Ministry of Shipping, India and Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure and Capital Projects, Malta; (ii) Mutual cooperation between the Foreign Service Institute, India and The Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta; and (iii) Tourism Cooperation between India and Malta were signed during the visit.

- Hon'ble Speaker, Lok Sabha Smt. Sumitra Mahajan visited Malta on 9-11 January 2019 to participate in the Standing Committee Meeting of the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth.

**From the Maltese side:**

- Prime Minister of Malta Dr. Edward Fenech Adami visited India in 1989.
- President of Malta Dr. Censu Tabone visited India in January 1992.
- Foreign Minister of Malta Dr. Michael Frendo visited India in March 2005.
- Chairman of the Standing Committee on Foreign and European Affairs Mr. Jason Azzopardi led a five-member goodwill Parliamentary delegation to India in March 2007.
- Foreign Minister of Malta Dr. Michael Frendo, in his capacity as the Chairman of the Steering Committee of Commonwealth Connects [on bridging the digital divide], visited India in March 2007 to take part in Commonwealth Connects 2007- e-Partnership Summit held in New Delhi.
- Speaker of the Maltese House of Representatives Mr. Louis Galea visited India in January 2010 for the Commonwealth Speakers meeting.
- Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister of Malta Dr. Tonio Borg visited India in January 2010.
- Minister for Sustainable Development, Environment and Climate Change Mr. Leo Brincat visited India in February 2015 to participate and address the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit 2015 organized by TERI in New Delhi.

- Minister of Finance of Malta Prof. Edward Scicluna visited India in February 2018 to participate in the Global Business Summit organized by the Economic Times and Yes Bank.
- Minister for Energy and Water Management of Malta Mr. Joseph Mizzi visited India in February 2018.
- Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade Promotion of Malta Mr. Carmelo Abela visited India in March 2018 leading a large business delegation. During the visit, Minister Abela participated in the India-Europe Business Forum, hosted by FICCI in New Delhi. He met External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj and Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M.J. Akbar during the visit.
- Prime Minister of Malta Dr. Joseph Muscat accompanied by Minister for the Economy, Investment and Small Business of Malta Dr. Christian Cardona and a large business delegation from Malta attended the Vibrant Gujarat Summit on 18- 20 January 2019. PM Muscat also met Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on the margins of the Summit.
- Minister for Environment, Sustainable Development and Climate Change of Malta Dr. Jose Herrera visited India to participate in the UNCCD COP14 meeting hosted by India from 2-13 September 2019 and addressed the meeting on 09 September 2019.

### **Institutional arrangements**

India and Malta have entered into several bilateral MoUs/Agreements, which include Agreement on Cultural Cooperation, Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation, Protocol for Foreign Office Consultations, Agreement on waiver of visa requirements for holders of Diplomatic and Official passports, MoU on Maritime Cooperation between India and Malta, MoU for Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute (Ministry of External Affairs, India), and Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, Malta and MoU in the field of Tourism Cooperation between India and Malta.

### **Economic relations**

An Indian company, M/s Aurobindo Pharma, which had commenced its operations in Malta in January 2009, is now one of the largest analytical Pharma testing facilities in Europe.

Current items of India's exports to Malta include pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, and ceramic products.

Current items of India's imports from Malta include organic chemicals, electrical machinery and equipment, boilers, mechanical parts, and paperboard recyclables.

Malta being a freight transit shipment point, financial centre and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) & R&D hub, there is scope for Indian companies to enter Malta in these fields to partner with the Maltese companies or to provide exclusive services. Malta is a tourist destination and requires number of related services. Scope for cooperation in sectors like Information and Communication Technology (ICT), health, maritime, financial services, tourism and film production exists.

## **Culture**

A cultural agreement between both countries was signed in 1992 and remains in force. Cultural events like film festival, food festival and performances of Indian cultural troupes are organized by the High Commission. There is a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Malta gifted by Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR). A street has also been named after Mahatma Gandhi in Malta. MaltaPost issued Commemorative Postage Stamps on the occasion of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on 2nd October 2019. Earlier, MaltaPost had issued Commemorative Postage Stamp on the occasion of 100th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in 1969. High Commission also celebrates International Day of Yoga every year, which sees enthusiastic participation by both members of the Indian community as well as Maltese citizens. The Indian naval ships have regularly visited Malta on goodwill visits. This includes visits of INS Darshak in April 2002 and INS Tarangini in February 2007, June 2015, October 2015 and May 2018.

## **Indian Community**

Indian community in Malta is estimated to be around 10,000-12,000, including persons of Indian origin. There are also some Indian students studying in Malta.

\*\*\*

**January 2022**