

India - Morocco Relations

Relations between India and Morocco go back to the 14th century when the famous traveler and writer from Tangier, Ibn Batuta travelled to India. In modern history, India was active in the UN supporting the Moroccan freedom movement and recognized Morocco on June 20, 1956 when it became independent of the protectorate arrangements with France. Diplomatic Missions were established in 1957.

Over the years, India and Morocco have enjoyed cordial and friendly relations and bilateral relations have witnessed significant growth. Vice President Dr. Zakir Hussain visited Morocco in 1967 and King Mohammed VI, when he was Crown Prince, visited India to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in 1983 and, later in 2001 and in 2003, as the King of Morocco. **King Mohammed VI also visited India from 25 October to 4 November 2015 to participate in the "Third India-Africa Forum Summit 2015" held in New Delhi. King Mohammed VI led a huge delegation which included Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation. King Mohammed VI was the first Head of State to arrive in Delhi and last to leave India.** Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee visited Rabat in 1999. Visits at Ministerial and official level have taken place regularly between the two countries.

In June 2012, Shri E. Ahamed, the Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Govt. of India, visited Morocco. Shri Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister (EAM) of India accompanied by an official delegation, paid an official visit to Morocco from 30 January to 1 February, 2014, as part of a three-nation tour to the North African region that included Morocco, Tunisia and Sudan. The visit was historic in nature, being the first by an EAM to Morocco. EAM called on King Mohammed VI and had meetings with the Head of Government (Prime Minister), President/Speaker of House of Representatives (Lower House of Parliament), President/Speaker of House of Councillors (Upper House of Parliament), and Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation. The two sides undertook a comprehensive review of bilateral relations and discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in various fields. The 3rd round of India-Morocco Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was held in Rabat on 10 December, 2014 under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs, Govt. of India and Mr. Nasser Bourita, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Kingdom of Morocco. Sh. Anil Wadhwa, Secretary (East) paid courtesy calls on Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Moroccan Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation, as well as Mr. Moulay Hafid El Alamy, Moroccan Minister of Industry, Trade, Investment and the Digital Economy. Both sides commended the excellent relationship between the two countries, which share values of moderation, dialogue and solidarity. Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, Hon'ble Minister of State for Agriculture visited Morocco, from 5-8 July 2015, as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister to deliver the invitations for IAFS-III which was scheduled to be held in New Delhi on 26-30 October 2015. MOS (A) met with Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation and called on the Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane.

Commercial Relations

The 4th India-Morocco Joint Commission meeting was held on 28-29 April, 2011 in New Delhi. The meeting was co-chaired by Shri Anand Sharma, Hon'ble Minister for Commerce & Industry and the Moroccan Minister for External Trade, Mr. Abdellatif Maazouz. The 5th Joint Commission Meeting will be hosted by Morocco as per convenience to both sides.

In October 2010, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia visited Morocco. During the visit, the Hon'ble MOS(C&I) met with the Moroccan Minister for External Commerce, Mr. Abdellatif Maazouz and discussed various aspects of bilateral trade and commerce.

The Moroccan Minister of Industry, Trade and New Technologies Mr. AbdelKader Amara visited Mumbai on 29-30 May, 2013 to participate in a road show organized jointly by the Moroccan Investment Development Agency and the Financial Times newspaper.

India is one of the major markets for Moroccan phosphate and its derivatives. Other main items of export to India are metallic ores and metal scrap, semi-finished products and inorganic chemicals. The main items of India's exports to Morocco are cotton yarn, synthetic fiber, transport equipment, pharmaceuticals, agricultural implements, chemicals, spices and manufactured metals.

The quantum of bilateral trade, which was US\$ 1.63 billion in 2010, reached to US\$ 2.04 billion in 2011 i.e. India's exports to Morocco stood at US\$ 587.2 million and India's imports from Morocco reached US\$1.45 billion. The trade turnover between the two countries stood at US\$1.73 billion in 2012 i.e. India's exports to Morocco in 2012 stood at US\$ 517.7 million while imports were valued at US\$1,212 million. In 2013, trade between the two countries stood at US\$1.41 billion i.e. India's exports to Morocco in 2013 stood at US\$ 615.0 million while imports were valued at US\$796.3 million. In 2014, trade between the two countries stood at \$ 1.36 billion i.e. India's exports to Morocco in 2014 stood at \$ 500.5 million while imports were valued at \$ 855.8 million. Indian exports to Morocco in the year 2014 decreased by 21.6% compared to the previous year while Moroccan exports to India registered an increase of 10.2% in 2014. Trade volumes are expected to pick up in the coming years. The balance of trade has been in favour of Morocco because of imports of phosphoric acid and rock phosphate by India.

An India-Morocco joint venture in fertilizer sector in Morocco, called IMACID, was set up in November 1999. At present, the JV is producing around 430,000 MT per annum of phosphoric acid, nearly all of which is imported by India. The Moroccan phosphate company, OCP, has invested in Paradip Phosphates Ltd. in India.

Among other business activities, TATA Motors has a plant in Casablanca for manufacturing bus bodies. Ranbaxy has set up its own manufacturing plant for production of medicines in Casablanca. PepsiCo India has acquired the beverage maker's entire franchise bottling operations in Morocco. Indian industry and business associations CII, FICCI and ASSOCHAM have institutional arrangements with Moroccan industry and business associations. A number of trade delegations from various industry and export promotion councils of India, such as ASSOCHAM, CAPEXIL, TEXPROCIL and EEPC have been visiting Morocco periodically. During these visits, a number of trade promotion activities such as expositions, buyer-seller meets, etc., are organized.

Education

Moroccan candidates also regularly participate in training programmes organized in India under the ITEC programme of the Ministry of External Affairs and other specific training programmes such as "Leaders of Future" programme for young Parliamentarians organized by PD Division of Ministry of External Affairs, Training Programme for Parliamentary officials from Arabic-speaking countries organized by the Bureau of Parliamentary Studies and Training (BPST), Lok Sabha Secretariat, C.V.Raman International Fellowship Program for African Researchers' offered jointly by Deptt. of Science & Technology, Govt. of India, with FICCI under the umbrella of IAFS and funded by MEA, etc. Similarly, Moroccan students have been availing annual scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) to meritorious for pursuing higher education in India.

India-Africa Forum

Under the bilateral component of the IAFS-II program, India has offered to set up an Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Morocco to train more than 500 students each year over a period of three years and the Moroccan Government has accepted it. Under the regional component of the IAFS follow-up action plan, India has offered to set up a Materials Testing Laboratory for Highways in Morocco.

Cultural Relations

In Morocco, there is lot of interest in Indian art and culture, especially Hindi cinema. The Marrakesh International Film Festivals (MIFF) regularly screen Hindi movies and invite Indian actors. **On 5 December 2015, Indian film star Madhuri Dixit was honoured for her contribution to Cinema at the 15th Marrakech International Film Festival. The honouring ceremony of the Indian film star was attended by a number of political figures including Moroccan Minister of Communication Mr. Mustapha Khalfi. Madhuri Dixit said that she did not have such a big reception before and she was happy to be in Morocco for the first time where she was surprised to see the great love Moroccans have for Indian film.** Indian musicians participate in the Fez Festival of World Sacred Music on a regular basis.

Indian Community

There are about 200-250 Indian nationals located in the city of Casablanca and a few families live in Marrakesh and Tangier.

There are no direct flights between India and Morocco. However, convenient connections to Casablanca are available via Europe, UAE, and Qatar.

Useful Resources

Embassy of India, Rabat website :

<http://www.indianembassy rabat.com/>

Exclusive interview with H.E. Mr. Krishan Kumar, Ambassador of India to the Kingdom of Morocco: <http://www.indianembassy rabat.com-Home Page-Events-Press Releases>

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