

India-Algeria Relations

Political Relations

The diplomatic relationship between India and Algeria was established in the same year Algeria gained independence i.e. 1962. Since the beginning, the relations between the two countries have been warm and cordial. Both countries have been consistently supporting each other on vital issues at bilateral and multilateral levels. Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi visited Algeria in 1973, Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited in June 1985 and the President of Algeria Chadli Bendjedid visited India in 1982, 1983 and 1987. President Bouteflika visited India on 24-29 January 2001 as the Chief Guest at the Republic Day Celebrations. Besides these visits many Minister-level and official-level visits were undertaken by both the countries. The latest visit by an Indian Minister was by Minister of State for Road Transport & Highways, Shri Nitin Prasad from 4-6 May 2011 as a Special Envoy of Prime Minister to deliver an invitation to the President of Algeria for the Second India Africa Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa in May 2011.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Bilateral trade is showing a positive trend; it grew from US\$ 55 million in 2001 to US\$ 3.4 billion in 2011 before coming down to US\$2.17 billion during 2012. However, India's exports maintained an upward trend increasing from US\$1.084 billion to US\$1.102 billion.

Bilateral trade figures for the last ten years are given below:

Value in US\$ millions

	2001	2002	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Indian exports	37	83.00	219.00	288.68	422.00	444.00	755.00	805.00	763.75	1084.75	1102
Algerian exports	18	67.00	37.41	140.00	651.00	1550.00	1287.00	265.00	1443.74	2307.05	1067
Total	55	150.00	256.41	428.68	1073.00	1994.00	2042.00	1070.00	2207.49	3391.80	2169

Note: Indian goods in fairly substantial quantities are also known to enter the Algerian market after being repacked/re-routed in a third country (UAE, France, Tunisia etc.), figures of which are not available.

Algerian Customs Statistics for 2012 indicate a slight increase of 1.66% in India's exports to Algeria from US\$1.084 billion to US\$ 1.102 billion whereas our imports from Algeria have gone down by almost 86% from US\$2.307 billion to US\$1.067 billion. Major categories of our exports were vehicles (US\$272 mn), frozen meat (US\$165.3 mn), agricultural tractors (US\$29.4 mn), pharmaceuticals (US\$28 mn), mobile phones and accessories (US\$11.3 mn) and rice (US\$11.2 mn). Algeria's exports to India comprised mainly of crude oil (US\$663.2 mn), LNG (US\$122.1 mn) and phosphates (US\$3.3 mn).

India's PSUs Telecommunications Consultations India Ltd., Engineers India Ltd., and IRCON International Ltd., have been in Algeria and executing their project works. Engineers India Limited has been working as a consultant for Algerian national oil company SONATRACH for more than 25 years. IRCON International is carrying out a US\$230 million railway project. The other Indian companies KEC International, Kalpataru, Gammon India Ltd., and Gulf Jyoti International, a subsidiary of Jyoti Structures Ltd. have secured new projects in power transmission during 2010. Another Indian company Dodsal Engineering and Construction FZE is executing an LNG train project worth US\$ 250 million as a sub-contractor. A construction company Shapoorji Pallonji has established its office in Algeria and is executing a construction project in Setif. The Indian Pharmaceutical companies Sun Pharmaceuticals, Mission Viva Care, Zydus Cadila and Famy Care also have their presence in Algeria. Projects and Development India Ltd., is providing consultancy in project management and engineering services for Sonatrach-Oman joint venture for production of urea. An Indian Business Forum in Algeria (IBFA) was set up in July 2010. The Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd. and the Indian Oil Corporation signed term contracts with Sonatrach, the national oil company of Algeria, for supply of Saharan crude oil to the tune of US\$ 1.5 billion during 2010. An Indian pharmaceutical company "Hetero Drugs" signed a partnership agreement with an Algerian company in December 2010 for manufacture of oncology medicines in Algeria. The GAIL India Ltd. made spot purchases of LNG from Algeria during 2011 and is negotiating with Sonatrach for supply of natural gas on term contract basis. A business seminar "Doing business with India" was organised by the embassy in November 2011 in which large number of Algerian and Indian businessmen participated. Embassy also organised a commodity promotion show in February 2012 in a commercial mall showcasing various Indian products. Engineers India Ltd. delegations visited Algeria on 4 April, 2012 and signed an MOU with Algerian National Oil Company, SONATRACH for setting up a Joint Venture engineering consultancy. A week long 45th Algiers International Fair was inaugurated by President Bouteflika on 30 May, 2012 in which 30 Indian companies participated, including Spice Board of India, with their products under the aegis of ASSOCHAM. A team from Larsen & Toubro (India) also visited Algeria to explore possibility of Joint Ventures with Sonatrach/Sonelgaz in late 2012. Engineering Export Promotion Council and PHARMEXCIL held BSMs in Algiers in January and March, 2013 respectively. Both the BSMs were very successful and attracted Algerian businessmen in large numbers.

Bilateral Agreements

India has signed the following agreements with Algeria:

1. **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement** in January 2001 to avoid double taxation and prevent fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income and on capital with a view to promote economic cooperation between the countries. It is yet to be ratified by the Algerian side.

2. **Phytosanitary Agreement** signed in January 2001 to establish cooperation in the field of quarantine and protection of natural vegetation, to protect the cultures of their respective countries against diseases and destructive agents susceptible of being transported by products for consumption or re-production.
3. **Veterinary Sanitation Protocol** signed in January 2001 to enhance cooperation between the veterinary authorities of the two countries to facilitate commercial exchanges (import, export and transit) of the animals and animal based products and to preserve their respective territories from eventual epizootie, parasitic diseases of animals and zoonosis infections for human beings.
4. **Air Service Agreement** signed in 2000 to improve connectivity between the two countries.
5. **Agreement between Press Trust of India and Algerian Press Service** signed in October 2003 to promote cooperation and professional interaction between the two countries.
6. **Agreement on Cooperation in Small and Medium-scale Enterprises** signed in October 2003.
7. **Cultural Exchange Programme** signed in October 2003 to strengthen the cultural relations between the two countries.
8. **MoU of Foreign Office Consultations** was signed in October 2000.
9. A **Parliamentary Friendship Group** with India in Algerian Parliament was formed in April 2008.

Bilateral Assistance/Cooperation

Government of India had committed an assistance of US\$ 1 million as humanitarian assistance for the victims of the earthquake, which struck Algeria in May 2003. Medicines worth half a million US dollars were handed over in April 2004 and the balance in the form of construction steel for the houses for the victims was handed over in October 2006. Indian Space Agency launched the Algerian Satellite Alsat 2A into the orbit in July 2010.

Government of Algeria appreciated in writing, the support of India to remove Tipaza (a historical site about 100 kms from Algiers) from the danger list of the World Heritage Committee during UNESCO meeting in August 2006.

Algeria supported the non-permanent membership of UNSC for India during 2010.

ITEC and Other Trainings

Algerian Government officials in service have been regularly utilising the ITEC training programme. Around 200 Algerian officials have undergone trainings in various Institutes in India under this programme since 1999. The Algerian Government has found the ITEC trainings imparted to their officials very useful. The Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats offered by the Foreign Service Institute of Ministry of External Affairs is also utilised by the Diplomats of the Government of Algeria.

Algerian Government also shows interest in sending their Defence personnel to the courses organized by the Centre for UN Peace Keeping in India. The Algerian defence personnel regularly participate in the courses every year.

Algerian students have also shown interest in joining Indian Universities under the Africa Scholarship scheme and Cultural Exchange Programme scheme. Three Algerian students are studying in the Indian Universities under this scheme.

Cultural

Under the Cultural Exchange Programme between the two countries cultural troupes of both countries exchange their visits. Algeria sent their cultural troupe 'Djemawi Africa' to India during the India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in April 2008. Algeria sent another 32-member ballet troupe to India in December 2010. A 9-member Algerian classical music group participated in the India-Africa Forum summit held in Addis Ababa in May 2011.

An Indian Painting Exhibition 'Women by Women' was sent to Algeria by ICCR in 2009. The Algerian Government assisted in organising this painting exhibition in more than 10 provinces including Algiers. The exhibition toured around 2 years and was well received by the people of Algeria.

A Rajasthani Folk Dance Group 'Meera Kala Mandir' visited Algeria in December 2009 to participate in the Deserts People Festival.

Indian Films are very popular among the Algerian people. Indian films are also lent by the Embassy. The Algerian Embassy in New Delhi, the Directorate of Film Festival and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting jointly organised the first ever film festival of Algerian films in New Delhi in September 2006. An Indian Film Festival was held in Algeria in September 2010. El Youm a local Arabic daily carried an article on 8 May, 2012 on Indian cinema titled "The Indian cinema celebrates 100th anniversary : The Magic of Bollywood". It mentioned that the course of 100 years of Indian cinema was wonderful despite differences in religions, social class and languages and it entertains everyone.

An India show was organised in Algiers to show case Indian food and spices in February 2011, where a large number of Algerians participated. Cooked Indian food and spices and Basmati rice were distributed.

A 10-member Bharatnatyam classical dance troupe visited Algeria in March 2011 and gave performances in Skikda and Algiers. Another 14-member Rajasthani folk dance troupe

visited Algeria from 10-18 July 2011 and gave their scintillating dance performances in Skikda, Tlemcen, Sidi Bel Abbes and Oran.

India participated in the “Tlemcen Cultural Capital of the Islamic World”. In this festival, India week was held from 23 to 26 November 2011. Besides a photographic exhibition on Islamic heritage of India and bollywood film shows on Islamic themes, a seven-member Sufi Kathak group, a Koran reciter and an Arabic Calligrapher displayed their performances.

A 14-member Bhangra Dance troupe visited Algeria from 22 January 2012 to 4th February 2012 coinciding with India’s Republic Day and gave nine performances in different parts of the country.

Algeria is celebrating 50th Anniversary of its independence. Coinciding with this, the Mission is also celebrating 50th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations with Algeria. As India is one of the nine participating countries, this Mission is bringing cultural troupes from India in collaboration with the Algerian Ministry of Culture to perform in various parts of Algeria during the celebrations. A Manipur Dance Troupe and Thang-ta cultural group performed to packed audiences in various cities, including Algiers, in Algeria in November, 2012. Another ICCR sponsored Bollywood troupe enthralled audiences in various cities, including Algiers, from 26 January, 2013 to 10 February, 2013. A week-long Indian Food Festival was also held at hotel Sofitel in Algeria on the occasion to coincide with the Bollywood Troupe’s visit.

Indian Community

Indian Diaspora in Algeria is very small. There are approximately 2500 Indians working in various projects and establishments in the country, most of them are technically skilled persons working on projects in remote areas. Only a handful of Indians live in the city of Algiers including mainly the partnership owners and workers of two very popular Indian restaurants Taj Mahal and Maharaja.

March 2013