

India-Mauritania Relations

Political

Till the establishment of the Indian Embassy in Bamako, Mali the Indian Embassy in Dakar, Senegal was looking after Mauritania. Now the concurrent jurisdiction of the Indian Embassy in Bamako, Mali concurrently extends to Mauritania. India has a Honorary Consul in Nouakchott.

In July 2009, Gen. Abdel Aziz won the Presidential elections and continues to be the Head of State of the country. Next Presidential elections are due in 2014. President Aziz had also attended the Second India Africa Forum Summit in Addis Ababa on 24-25th May 2011. He met Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh during the Summit. Mauritanian President has already accepted an invitation from Dr. Singh to visit India, the logistics of which would be processed through Diplomatic channels. Mauritania and India have commonality of membership of various International organizations including that of NAM. Both India and Mauritania are aware of the potential for mutually beneficial bilateral co-operation in various fields including the mining sector and are working towards formulating specific projects for implementation.

Lines of credit

In January 2010, India, for the first time, extended two lines of credit to Mauritania. US\$ 15 million towards agro-industries and US\$6.8 million towards a drinking water project. The projects are expected to take off shortly. Recently, Mauritanian Ministers of Economic Development and Rural Development had participated in the 9th CII EXIM-Bank Conclave which was held in New Delhi on 17-19 March, 2013. The visit of the Ministers helped in expediting matters related to the scope of projects under the first US\$ 21.8 million Line of Credit to Mauritania extended by the Government of India in 2010.

Scholarships and Training

The Government of India offers various short term training programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme to Mauritania. Trainees from Mauritania benefit from the programme every year. The courses are of short and medium durations, in diversified fields and are conducted by renowned institutions in India, from April through March of the following year. Under the ITEC programme, trainees have been sent to attend courses in entrepreneurship, IT, audit, management, education, banking, biotechnology, journalism, communication, power transmission and distribution management and technologies, design of jigs and fixtures, advanced computer aided manufacturing, geo-informatics, instrumentation and data acquisition system in fluid process, human resource planning and development, government accounts and financing, legislative drafting, parliamentary procedures, standardization and quality assurance, advanced finger print science & computers, information technology in law enforcement, etc. From time to time, the Indian institutions also devise special courses, which meet the specific needs of the beneficiary countries. Under ITEC/SCAAP, Mauritania has been allotted 30 slots during the current year (2013-14).

Scholarships under the India Africa Forum Summit initiatives (IAFS):

Apart from the ITEC / SCAAP courses, a number of other training courses are also being offered under the initiatives of the India-Africa Forum Summits.

Other Scholarships:

Under the IAFS initiative, India has offered a Center for English Language Training to Mauritania.

Commercial

Majority of the population in Mauritania depends on agriculture, livestock and fisheries for livelihood. Southern part of Mauritania along river Senegal has good supply of water and is suitable for agriculture and raising livestock. Mauritania has large reserves of iron ore which is being mined by the national mining company SNIM and sold mainly to European and Chinese companies. Mauritania became an oil-producing country in early 2006. However, the production of oil has not lived up to the initial potential. It has declined from 75,000 barrels / day in early 2006 to less than 20,000 barrels / day. There exists considerable potential for economic cooperation with Mauritania. Mauritania has large reserves of iron ore which are being mined by the national mining company SNIM and sold mainly to European and Chinese companies. The Mauritanian government has conveyed its eagerness to increase bilateral cooperation with India. In this connection, a high-level team from Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) visited Nouakchott from September 14-16, 2012 to explore the possibilities of iron ore extraction in Mauritania.

The Council for Leather Exports is also planning to bring a delegation to Mauritania later in 2013 to hold business meetings and explore the possibility of enhancing bilateral trade in leather and skins between the two countries.

Earlier, in November 2010, for the first time, an Indian company called Archean Group formed a joint venture called M/s Bofal Indo Mining Company S.A along with the Govt. of Mauritania to commence commercial mining of phosphates in Mauritania. Tata Group is exploring the possibility of starting a dealership for their vehicles in Mauritania. Few other private Indian groups have also been able to secure mining concessions in Mauritania.

The main items imported from India are cotton textiles, dyes, plastic and linoleum products, marine and metal products, drugs, pharmaceuticals and fine chemicals, primary and semi-finished iron and steel, and transport equipment. In 2010-11 the Indian exports to Mauritania stood at US\$ 32.56 million. In the same period the total value of imports by India was US\$ 1.95 million. It mainly consisted of metal scrap, pulp & waste paper. The Mauritanian government has conveyed its eagerness to increase bilateral cooperation with India. Govt. has renewed its invitation to Indian companies for exploration of minerals in Mauritania. In this connection, a high-level team from Kudremukh Iron Ore Company Ltd (KIOCL) visited Nouakchott from September 14-16, 2012 to explore the possibilities of iron ore extraction in Mauritania.

India-Mauritania Trade Figures (2008-2011)

(In US\$ Millions)

Year	India's Exp	India's Imports	Total Trade	Growth in %
2008-09	35.81	4.53	40.34	34.78
2009-10	30.64	1.60	32.24	-20.08
2010-11	32.56	1.95	34.51	7.05

Indian Community in Mauritania:

With increased mining activity in the country, the **number of Indians in Mauritania** has considerably gone up during the last few months. There are estimated to be around 200 Indians in the country. There is also a group of about ten catholic sisters belonging to the Mangalore-based congregation called Bethany Sisters. They are engaged in running a school and a hospital.

July 2013