India-Morocco Relations

Political Relations

Relations between India and Morocco go back to the 14th century when Ibn Batuta traveled to India. His writings on medieval Indian society are as much an important source of historical information about India to the Indians as to the Moroccans. In modern times, India and Morocco have enjoyed cordial and friendly relations and, over the years, bilateral relations have witnessed significant depth and growth. India was active in the United Nations in supporting 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. Our interaction in multilateral fora, particularly under UN's framework has fostered better understanding of mutual concerns and priorities.

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. 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.

The Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Taieb Fassi Fihri, visited India in April 2011 and met with Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Shri S. M. Krishna. A number of bilateral and international issues of mutual interest were discussed during the meeting.

The Secretary General of the Moroccan Foreign Ministry, Mr. Nasser Bourita traveled to India in the first week of April 2012. During the visit, he held wide ranging talks with senior officials of the Ministry of External Affairs.

In June 2012, Shri E. Ahamed, the Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Govt. of India, visited Morocco. During the visit, Hon'ble MOS(EA) met separately with Mr. Youssef Amrani, Minister-Delegate to the Foreign Minister of Morocco, Mr. Saad edine El Otmani, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Mr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Industry, Trade and New Technologies and Mr. Mohamed El Ouafa, Minister of National Education. A number of measures to strengthen and deepen the bilateral relationship between India and Morocco as well as issues of bilateral, regional and international importance were discussed during these meetings.

Commercial Relations

The 4th India-Morocco Joint Commission 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. During this visit, Mr. Abdellatif Maazouz also met Shri Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture & Shri Virbhadra Singh, Minister for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises. The meeting of India-Morocco Joint Economic Council chaired by CII of India and the CGEM (Confederation General of Moroccan Enterprises) also took place in New Delhi on 29 April, 2011.
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 Hon’ble MOS(C&I) also participated in the World Economic Forum for Middle East and North Africa held in the city of Marrakech.

Bilateral trade is registering steady growth although balance of trade has been in favour of Morocco because of imports of phosphoric acid and rock phosphate by India. 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. During 2011, the total volume of India-Morocco bilateral trade stood at US $ 2.04 billion including India’s exports to Morocco at US$ 587.2 million and India’s imports from Morocco at US$1.45 billion.

An India-Morocco joint venture in fertilizer sector in Morocco, called IMACID, located at Jorf Lasfar, about 150 Kms south of Casablanca, was set up in November 1999 between M/s Chambal Chemicals & Fertilizers Ltd. of the Birla Group and Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP) on the Moroccan side to produce phosphoric acid. In 2005, Tata Chemicals Ltd. joined as a third equal partner in this joint venture. 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 organization, OCP, has invested in Paradip Phosphates Ltd. in India.

Among other business activities, Tata Motors is producing bus bodies in Casablanca. Indian pharmaceutical company Ranbaxy, in collaboration with Afric-Phar, has incorporated a wholly-owned subsidiary in Morocco. PepsiCo India has acquired the beverage maker’s entire franchise bottling operations in Morocco.

Indian exporters participate in trade fairs and industry exhibitions in Morocco regularly. 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 led by ASSOCHAM, CAPEXIL and TEXPROCIL, has been visiting Morocco periodically. During these visits, a number of trade promotion activities such as expositions, buyer-seller meets, etc., are organized. A delegation from the Govt. of Gujarat visited Morocco from 19-23 September, 2012 to promote interest for the forthcoming “Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2013”. EEPC India, Kolkata organized its 26th Indian Engineering Exhibition (INDEE) as part of the 4th edition of Le Salon International DE L’INDUSTRIE exhibition in Casablanca, Morocco from 13 to 15 December, 2012. About 90 Indian engineering companies participated in the event.

Moroccan candidates regularly participate in training programmes organized in India under the ITEC programme of the Ministry of External Affairs.

Cultural Relations
There is a lot of interest in Morocco in Indian art and culture. The 12th Marrakech International Film Festival (MIFF) which was held from 30th November to 8th December, 2012 in the city of Marrakech paid a special tribute to Indian Cinema, celebrating its centenary in 2013. A number of Hindi films were screened during the Festival. The jury of MIFF included, amongst others, Sharmila Tagore (India).

Indian Community

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

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

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