

Embassy of India

Rabat

India-Morocco Bilateral Relations

17 May 2017

Recent Political Developments

On March 17, 2017, the King of Morocco appointed Saad Eddine El Othmani of the Islamist PJD Party as the new Head of Government. Othmani has previously served as the Foreign Minister between 2011 and 2013.

With support from 39 member countries of the African Union during the 28th Summit of African Heads of State and Government in Addis Ababa, Morocco re-entered the AU after 33 years.

Political 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. Vice President Mohammad Hamid Ansari visited Morocco from 30 May – 02 June 2016 and held delegation-level talks with Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane. Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the two Chairmen of both the Houses of Parliament also called on the VP. 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 cochairmanship 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. Minister of Communications & IT Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad visited Marrakech (Morocco) to attend the High Level Meeting of ICANN-55 from 5-8 March 2016. Minister of Mines & Energy Mr. Abdelkader Amara attended the 4th edition of India Africa Hydrocarbon Conference from 21-22 January 2016 in New Delhi. Minister of State for Transport Mr. Mohamed Najib Boulif also attended Maritime India Summit from April 14-16 in Mumbai.

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 side. 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. Abdel Kader 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. In 2016, bilateral trade between the two countries was \$1392.50 million, which includes India's export to Morocco of \$634 million whereas imports were \$758.50 million. In 2015, trade between the two countries stood at \$1.27 billion i.e. India's exports to Morocco in 2015 stood at \$398.2 million while imports were valued at \$873.2 million. Indian exports to Morocco in the year

2016 increased by 59.2% compared to the previous year while Moroccan exports to India registered a decrease of 13.1%. 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.

Bilateral Trade between India and Morocco (in Million US\$)

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
India's Exports	353.5	396.50	573.5	587.2	517.7	615.0	500.5	398.2	634.0
India's Imports	1,366.2	734.6	1,059.6	1,455.6	1,212	796.3	855.8	873.2	758.5
Total	1,719.7	1,131.1	1,632.5	2,042.8	1,729.7	1411.3	1356.3	1271.4	1392.5

(Source: Statistic Bulletin of Office des Change, Govt. of Morocco)

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. In the year 2016-2017, 18 applicants have participated in the ITEC programme. Also,

07 applicants have applied for scholarships under the Africa Scholarship Scheme of ICCR for the year 2017-2018.

India-Africa Forum

Under the bilateral component of the IAFS-II program, India has offered to set up a Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Morocco to train more than 500 students each year over a period of three years and the Moroccan Government has accepted it. MEA has awarded the work to CDAC, who is setting up CEIT with its Moroccan counterpart, INPT. The CEIT is expected to be inaugurated during the forthcoming Joint Commission Meeting scheduled to be held in Rabat from May 24-26, 2017.

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. India was the guest of honour at the Festival in 2016 where more than 30 Indian classical musicians took part. The Embassy also celebrated Holi in Casablanca in 2016 with the attendance of more than 1000 Moroccans. The Embassy successfully organized the first ever Festival of India in Morocco from 28 July – 08 August 2016. During the Festival, five different dance/singing groups (India Revival Group, Kathak Group, Kalbelia Group, J&K Folk Group and Qawalli Group) performed in Moroccan cities of Rabat, Casablanca, Fes, El Jadida and Marrakech. An exhibition of Islamic Art & Calligraphy from Rampur Raza Library was also organized in Rabat and Casablanca during the Festival. The 14th PBD 2017 was celebrated in the Embassy premises on January 09, 2017. The Embassy hosted a catalogue exhibition for the Bengal Global Business Summit on January 06, 2017 at Hotel Golden Tulip Farah in Casablanca. The 68th Republic Day of India was celebrated by the Mission on January 26 with the flag hoisting in the Embassy premises in the morning, followed by a reception at Theatre Mohamed V in Rabat which was attended by Ambassadors, members of the diplomatic corps, officials of the Government of Morocco and prominent Indians. The evening saw a performance in the theatre by noted Kathak exponent Vaswati Misra and her group Dhvani from the ICCR. The group performed on the following day at Theatre Afifi in El Jadida and on January 28 in Centre Cultural Settat. On January 29th there was a workshop at the Cultural Complex Sidi Belyout in Casablanca.

The Embassy hosted, on February 15, a catalogue exhibiton for the Momentum Jharkhand Global Business Investors Summit, and an informal get together of Indian and Moroccan businessmen. The highlight of the event was a live video conference by Secretary, Government of Jharkhand and an interaction session of Indian businessmen with Mr Taoufik Moucharraf, Director of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Digital Economy. On February 17, the Embassy celebrated the ITEC Day with ITEC alumni from across the Ministries of the Moroccan Government. Under the Cultural Exchange Programme between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco for the years 2016-2019, two MoUs were signed between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), New Delhi and University Mohammed V, Rabat on establishment of (i) an ICCR Chair for Hindi language and (ii) an ICCR Chair of Indian Studies. The signing ceremony of the two MoUs took place on February 27, 2017 in University Mohamed V in Rabat. The MoUs were signed by Dr. Kheya Bhattacharya, Ambassador, on behalf of ICCR, and Dr. Saaid Amzazi, President of University Mohamed V, Rabat. The establishment of the ICCR Chairs will serve as a framework for the promotion of Hindi language and Indology, and further strengthen and deepen the bilateral relations between the two countries. : The second edition of the grand Holi event was organized by the Embassy in collaboration with Association Nationale d’Amitie Maroco-Asiatique (ANAMA), an India-Morocco friendship association, on March 19, 2017 in Casablanca. The event was attended by almost 6000 people including members of the diplomatic community, Indian nationals and local residents. Odissi maestro Janhabhi Behera and her group performed in the cities of Rabat, Tangier, Tetouan and Fnideq from April 17-20, 2017. Shi Javed Akhtar visited Morocco from April 26-30, 2017 for poetry readings in Rabat and Tetouan. Maestro Swapna Datar and Vibhav Khandolkar participated in the 19th Edition of the International Luth Festival in Tetouan from May 12-16, 2017.

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.

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