

**EMBASSY OF INDIA
RABAT**

INDIA-MOROCCO BILATERAL RELATIONS

12 September 2017

POLITICAL RELATIONS

- India and Morocco have interacted in historical terms going back to the 14th century when the famous traveler and writer from Tangier, Ibn Batuta travelled 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 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.
- Since the establishment of relations, India and Morocco enjoyed cordial and friendly ties for nearly three decades. Vice President Dr. Zakir Hussain visited Morocco in 1967 and King Mohammed VI, when he was Crown Prince, visited India for the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit in 1983.
- Former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Rabat in 1999, the first Indian Prime Minister to visit Morocco, thus paving the way for developing closer and intense relations with the political leadership of Morocco. From Morocco, the then Prime Minister Abderrehman Youssoufi visited India in February 2000 and King Mohammed VI in February 2001. King Mohammed VI also paid private visits to India in October 2003, and again in December 2005. Prime Minister Driss Jettou led a large delegation of seven Cabinet Ministers, several senior officials and media persons to India from 6-9 December, 2004.
- 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. During the visit, India and Morocco signed two cooperation agreements in the fields of environment and marine fisheries viz., Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and MoU on Cooperation in Marine Fisheries.
- Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, 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, held in New Delhi from 26-30 October 2015. Dr. Balyan met with Mr. Salaheddine Mezouar, Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation and called on the Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane.
- King Mohammed VI participated in the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit in October 2015 and he was the first Head of State to arrive and the last to leave. He had a bilateral meeting with PM Modi on the sidelines of the Summit.
- Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Moroccan Minister of Energy, Mining, Water & the Environment, attended the 4th India-Africa Hydrocarbon Conference in New Delhi from 20-21 January 2016. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation consisting of Ms. Amina Benkhadra, General Manager, National Office of Hydrocarbons & Mines (ONHYM); Mr. Abderrahim Dinar, Director of Mines & Hydrocarbons; Mr. Mohammed Soulamani, Director of Combustible, Ministry of Energy & Mines; and Mr. AdilDiani, Advisor to the Minister. During the visit, they had the meetings with Mr. Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister of State for Petroleum & Natural Gas.

- Mr. Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Communications & Information Technology visited Marrakech with a high-level official delegation to attend the 3rd ICANN High Level Meeting and ICANN 55 from 5-9 March 2016. He was accompanied by Dr. Arvind Gupta, Dy. NSA; Dr. Gulshan Rai, NCSC, Dr. Ajay Kumar, JS and Shri Rajiv Bansal, JS in the Department of Electronics & Information Technology (DEITY).
- Mr. Mohamed Najib Boulif, Moroccan Minister Delegate incharge of Transport, accompanied by a high-level delegation consisting of Ms. Souad Elomri, Head of Division of Cooperation in the Ministry of Transport & Logistics; Mr. Bouchaib Ajjemami, Inspector of Maritime Shipping, Department of Merchant Shipping; Ms. Najat Farouss, Head of Section of Economic Studies & Planning, Department of Ports & Shipping Public Domain, Ministry of Equipment, Transport & Logistics; and Mr. Cheik Hassan, Head of Department, Direction of Management of Casablanca Ports in Marsa Maroc, visited India on the invitation of Minister of Shipping, New Delhi to attend Maritime India Summit 2016 from 14-16 April 2016, in Mumbai.
- On the invitation of the then Moroccan Head of Government Abdelilah Benkirane, Vice President of India Mr. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, visited Morocco from 30 May to 02 June 2016 where he held bilateral discussions with the Head of Government Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane; Speaker of the both houses of Parliament; Minister Delegate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation Mr. Nasser Bourita.
- On 31 January 31 2017 Morocco re-entered the African Union. We have welcomed Morocco's re-entry to this important multilateral organization.
- After nearly six months of impasse in formation of the new Government since elections were held in October 2016, King Mohammed VI was finally able to appoint members of the new Government headed by Saad Eddine El Othmani, representing Party for Justice and Development (PJD). The 39 Ministers have been drawn from six different parties, with a few being technocrats without any political affiliation.
- The 5th India-Morocco Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was held in New Delhi on 24-25 April 2017 under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Amar Sinha, Secretary (ER), Ministry of External Affairs and Mr. Mohammed Ali Lazreq, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Morocco.
- The 5th India Morocco Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held in Rabat on 25 and 26 May 2017. The JCM was anchored by Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry, Government of India. She visited the Centre for Excellence in Information Technology in Casablanca, a collaboration of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), India and Institut National des Postes et Télécommunications(INPT), Morocco. She called on Dr Saad Eddine El Othmani, Head of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and had bilateral discussions with Mr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water, and Mr. Mohamed Boussaid, Minister of Economy and Finance. On 26 May 2017, she met with Mr. Moulay Hafid El Alamy, Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy. On 26 May 2017, the 5th India Morocco JCM was convened in Rabat during which a Memorandum of Understanding was signed for Cooperation on Broadcasting between Prasar Bharati, India and Société Nationale de Radiodiffusion et de Télévision (SNRT), Morocco. The MoU was signed by Dr Kheya Bhattacharya,

Ambassador of India on behalf of Prasar Bharati and Mr Fayçal Laraichi, Chief Executive Officer of SNRT.

ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

- The 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. The bilateral trade which stood at US\$ 1,271.4 million in 2015 rose to US\$ 1,392.5 million in 2016 including India's exports to Morocco at US\$ 634 million and India's imports from Morocco at US\$ 758.5 million. The following table gives India-Morocco two-way trade since 2008:

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

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017 (Jan-March)
India's Export	353.5	396.50	573.5	587.2	517.7	615.0	500.5	398.2	634.0	171.5
India's Import	1,366.2	734.6	1,059.6	1,455.6	1,212	796.3	855.8	873.2	758.5	129.1
Total	1719.7	1131.1	1632.5	2042.8	1729.7	1411.3	1356.3	1271.4	1392.5	300.6

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

- Morocco has substantial reserves of rock phosphate and potash. Office Cherifian des Phosphates (OCP), owned by the Government of Morocco, is the sole producer and supplier of fertilizers in Morocco. Rock phosphates from Morocco are imported in India mainly by Paradeep Phosphate Ltd (PPL) which is controlled by ZuariMaroc Phosphate Ltd (ZMPL) which is a JV between Chambal Fertilisers, ZuariFertilisers and OCP. Govt holds 19.55% of shares in PPL. PPL has a long term contract with OCP for supply of nearly 1 million metric ton (MMT) of rock phosphate. Chambal Fertilizers and Tata Chemicals have a JV with OCP-Indo Maroc Phosphore SA (IMACID) for production of 4.5 lakh MT of phosphoric acid which is entirely imported by PPL and ZMPL.
- India is committed to sharing its developmental experience with Morocco through capacity building programmes under our Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. In 2016-17, 18 slots out of the 25 were utilized.
- Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) offers 13 annual slots to meritorious Moroccan students for higher education in India. For the year 2017-18, applications for one bachelor, five masters and one PhD courses had been forwarded to ICCR and one approval had been received.
- Establishment of Centre of Excellence in Information Technology: Centre of Excellence in Information Technology has been set up in Technopark, Casablanca under IAFS-II development programme. It is a collaboration of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), India and Institut National des Postes et Télécommunications (INPT).

CULTURAL RELATIONS

- There is a great interest in Morocco for Indian art and culture. Hindi films are very popular in Morocco and Moroccan TV regularly telecasts Indian feature film every week. Indian film actors have also been honoured at the International Film Festivals in Morocco. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between Indian and Morocco for the years 2016-19 was signed May-June 2016.
- In March 2016, Holi was organized by the Embassy in collaboration with Association Nationale d'Amitie Maroc-Asiatique (ANAMA) in Casablanca which was attended by more than 2000 people.
- Festival of India was organized in July-August 2016 in Rabat, Casablanca, El Jadida, Fes and Meknes.
- With support by the Embassy of India, Rabat, the 2nd Edition of Namaste India was organized by Association Nationale d'Amitie Maroc-Asiatique (ANAMA), at Casablanca on 22 January 2017.
- Republic Day of India celebrated at Mohammed V Theatre in Rabat on 26 January 2017. During the celebration, a cultural troupe from ICCR led by Kathak maestro Vaswati Misra performed in Rabat, El Jadida, Settat and Casablanca from 25-30 January 2017.
- ICCR Chairs on Hindi Language and Indian Studies in History have been established at Mohamed V University in Rabat, following signing of MoUs between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Mohammed V University, Rabat, on 27 February 2017.
- The second edition of the grand Holi event was organized by the Embassy in collaboration with ANAMA 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 Janhabi Behera and her group visited Morocco from 16-21 April 2017. She performed in Rabat, Tangier, Tetouan and M'Diq.
- Mr Javed Akhtar traveled to Morocco from 26-30 April 2017 for poetry readings in the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in Rabat in April 27, 2017 and participation in the first edition of the Moroccan Poets' Festival in Tetouan including poetry reading, on April 27 and 28, 2017.
- Maestro Swapna Datar and group participated in the 19th Edition of the International Luth Festival of Tetouan from May 12-16, 2017 and also performed in Chefchaouen and Fnideq.
- The 3rd International day of Yoga was celebrated by the Embassy of India, Rabat and the Embassy organized yoga events on 21 and 23 June 2017 in the Chancery premises in Rabat, on 21 June 2017 in the cities of Agadir and Tangier, and on 24 June 2017 in the city of Casablanca.
- Sarod maestro Abhisek Lahiri and group sponsored by ICCR, New Delhi traveled to Morocco on 14 and 15 July 2017 to participate in the 18th Edition of the Volubilis International Festival of the World Traditional Music, which was held in the city of Meknés from 14 to 17 July 2017. Besides performing in the Festival, the group also performed in the city of Sale under the extant Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Morocco (2016-2019). The 3-member group also comprised of Sh Soumen Nandy playing the tablaa and Sh Sayam Panja playing the tanpura.
- Spiritual guru Sri Sri Ravi Shankar of Art of Living Foundation was on a private visit to Morocco from 27-30 July 2017 on the invitation of the local Art of Living

community. On 28 July 2017 he visited the Embassy and met with Mr Ahmed Toufiq, Minister of Habous and Islamic Affairs, Kingdom of Morocco.

- The Embassy celebrated the 71st Independence Day of India in Morocco on 14 and 15 August 2017 with four events spanned on the two days. On 14 August 2017 the Mission organised a star recital by Surmani Agni Verma and group in the Chancery premises. On 15 August 2017 the Mission organized the flag hoisting functions in the Chancery premises and Ambassador hosted a reception at India House. On 15 August 2017 the Mission organised a cultural event in the auditorium of the Bibliotheque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (National Library of the Kingdom of Morocco) in Rabat. The event comprised of performances by Surmani Agni Verma and his group, followed by song and dance performances on Indian patriotic songs by Bely Gandhara, of Tanjawood Co., Association Nationale d'Amitie Maroco Asiatique (ANAMA) and India Morocco Friendship Association.

INDIAN COMMUNITY

- The Indian community in Morocco is made up of two parts-the diaspora and the expatriate community. The diaspora comprises of about 250-300 families. The demographics of this community have changed significantly over the recent years. Most of them are based out of the city of Casablanca, since it is the commercial and trade hub of Morocco. The major part of the Indian community in Casablanca comprises of the Sindhi community that had migrated during the time of India's partition. Most of them are engaged in businesses of import/export of textiles and electronic goods. There are a few Indians employed as caretakers in the villas of Emirati sheikhs.
- The expatriate community of Indians in Morocco represent the top Indian enterprises namely, TATA, Birla (in collaboration as IMACID), forming a joint venture with OCP for phosphate imports for India. The other top enterprises include Furnace Fabrica and Jacob's Engineering (factory engineering), CIPLA, SunPharma (pharmaceuticals), TATA Motors, Mahindra (bus bodies and LMVs), Kirloskar, Shakti Pumps, and Massey Fergusson (agriculture engineering products including tractors), Infosys (IT), Varun Beverages (PepsiCo), Indore (optic fibre), Sterling and Wilson (solar energy for Noor project), GFL (fluorine/fluoride mining), Arcelor Mittal etc. The other companies that have shown interest and have commenced talks with Moroccan authorities about their forthcoming investments include Strides-Shasun Pharmaceutical Group, AVAADA (Wellspun) Group, and Titagarh Group. There is also a growing presence of Indian expats working with top multinational firms located in Morocco like Arcelor Mittal, Unilever, and Ericsson.

USEFUL RESOURCES

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