

High Commission of India Nairobi

Visit of High Commissioner to Somalia

High Commissioner of India Mr. Rahul Chhabra went on a 4-day visit to Somalia from 29 June to 02 July, 2019 to celebrate 5th International Day of Yoga in two cities- Garowe of Puntland region and the capital city of Mogadishu. He was warmly received in Garowe by President of Puntland H.E Said Abdullahi Dani, with whom he held bilateral meetings and discussed areas of mutual cooperation.



For the **first time ever**, IDY was celebrated in Garowe, which was attended by the *President* of Puntland, along with a large number of other Somali participants. Additionally, a separate Yoga session was organized for women and girls in which more than 100 Yoga enthusiasts participated including Minister for Women empowerment and Family welfare Ms Maryam Ahmed Ali. At a separate event, High Commissioner interacted with Indian diaspora and Somali alumni who had studied in India. Meeting with the diaspora was highly emotional since it was the first occasion that they had interactions with the High Commissioner.



IDY was also celebrated in the capital city of Mogadishu at the UN compound, which was attended by *Chief Justice* of Somalia Bashe Yusuf Ahmed, UNSOS Director Amadu Kamara along with other officials from UN and Government of Somalia.



During the visit, High Commissioner called on Foreign Minister H.E Ahmed Isse Awad and discussed impending issues of bilateral importance. He also interacted with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs H.E Abdul Kadir Ahmed-Kheir Abdi, Chief Justice Bashe Yusuf Ahmed and other dignitaries.

High Commissioner attended the 59th commemoration of Independence and unification of Somalia, hosted by President of Somalia Mohamed Abdullahi ‘Farmaajo’ at Villa Somalia. He also attended the reception to welcome **new** Special Representative of Secretary General (*SRS*G) for Somalia Mr. James Swan, who joined office last week.



A year after the independence of Somalia in 1960, the Commissioner of India to Mauritius was accredited as Ambassador of India to Somalia and presented Credentials in 1961. Later, a resident Mission was opened in Mogadishu. After the outbreak of civil war in 1991, the Indian **Embassy in Mogadishu was closed.**

India and Somalia are maritime neighbours and the people of both countries have been trading with each other for over two millennia. The contemporary relations between the two countries are strong and marked by several high level visits. The then President of Somalia visited India in October 2015 for 3rd India-Africa forum summit. Later, the State Minister of Finance visited India and signed International Solar Alliance Framework, followed by visit of Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. MoS for External Affairs of India, Gen. (Retd) V.K.Singh also visited Somalia in 2015.

India has been supporting Somalia in multiple areas. Every year, a number of Somalis are sent on fully paid **scholarships** to study in various institutes across India. Several Somali diplomats have been trained at **Foreign Service Institute** in New Delhi. A large number of Somalis also visit India for *medical purposes*. Government of India has provided *USD 2 million* to African Union Mission to Somalia in 2011, *USD 1 million* in 2012 and a further amount of *USD 1 million* in 2017. Last year, consignment of *essential medicines worth USD 1 million* was handed over to Ministry of Health of Somalia. As the security situation in Somalia improves, India is looking forward to increase bilateral trade, which currently stands at more than *USD 450 million*. Being an LDC country, Somalia qualifies for India's offer of unilateral Duty-Free Tariff Preferential (*DFTP*) market access for export of goods and services to India.

Government of India has already announced to open its embassy in Somalia. India is committed to the peace process and reconstruction of Somalia and looks forward to further strengthening its relations with the country.

[Nairobi, 4 July 2019]