

India-Mauritania Relations

Political

Mauritania has undergone a series of 11 military coups since gaining independence from France in 1960. In March 2007, Sidi Ould Abdallahi assumed charge as Mauritania's first democratically-elected President. However, there was another change of the Govt. in August 2008 and the military under Gen. Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz came into power. One year later, Gen. Abdel Aziz won the Presidential elections in July 2009. In spite of the protests by opposition leaders, the election was considered fair and democratic by the outside world.

Mauritania is a member 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. Dr. Didi Ould Tah, Minister for Economy and Development attended the CII Africa Conclave in 2009. President Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz attended the Second India Africa Forum Summit at Addis Ababa on 24-25th May 2011. President Abdel Aziz also met with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh during the Summit.

Till the establishment of the Indian Embassy in Bamako, Mali the Indian Embassy in Dakar, Senegal was looking after Mauritania. Now Mauritania is looked after by the Indian Embassy in Bamako. India has also a Hon. Consul in Nouakchott.

Commercial

Majority of the population 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 predictions-declining from 75,000 barrels/day in early 2006 to less than 20,000 barrels/day today.

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.

In November 2010, for the first time, an Indian company called Archean Group has 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 taken mining concessions in Mauritania.

Bilateral Trade

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India-Mauritania Trade Figures (2005-2011)

(In US\$ Millions)

Year	India's Exp	India's Imports	Total Trade	Growth in %
2005-06	45.14	1.02	46.16	
2006-07	21.73	0.63	22.36	-51.58
2007-08	28.74	1.19	29.93	33.88
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

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

Indian Community

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

January 2013