

**EMBASSY OF INDIA  
RABAT**

**INDIA-MOROCCO BILATERAL RELATIONS**

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**11 September 2019**

**1. POLITICAL**

**1.1 Introduction**

Historically, India was active in the UN supporting the Moroccan freedom movement. India recognized independent Morocco on 20 June 1956 and diplomatic Missions were established in 1957. After enjoying cordial and friendly relations over quarter century, Morocco severed diplomatic relations with India following India's recognition of the SADR in October 1985. However, India, during the period of suspension of diplomatic relations, continued to maintain an Interests Section in Morocco under the banner of the Austrian Embassy. Diplomatic relations were re-established in 1989 at a Moroccan initiative. India de-recognized SADR on June 26, 2000 and announced its support to the UN settlement plan to the Sahara issue.

Desire to build an intensive interaction culminated in the first landmark visit of our Prime Minister to Morocco in February 1999 followed by the visit of Moroccan PM Youssoufi to India in February 2000, After ascending to the throne, King Mohammed VI chose India for his first visit to an Asian country in 2001. Relations have been further intensified since the meeting of King Mohammed VI with our Prime Minister on 29 October 2015, on the sidelines of the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in New Delhi.

**1.2 High level visits**

**1.2.1 From Indian Side**

- Dr. Zakir Hussain, Vice President in 1967, Shir K R Narayanan, Vice President in 1993 and Shri. Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Vice President, from 30 May to 02 June 2016 visited Morocco.
- Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister visited Morocco in 1999, which was the first ever Prime Ministerial visit.
- External Affairs Ministers Shri Salman Khurshid in 2014 and Smt. Sushma Swaraj on 17-18 February 2019.
- Other important Ministerial visits include: Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, Minister of State for Agriculture from 5-8 July 2015, as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister for IAFS-III; Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry from 25 - 26 May 2017 for the 5<sup>th</sup> JCM; Shri Suresh Prabhu, Hon'ble Minister of Commerce and Industry from 09-10 October 2017 to participate in WTO Conference and Shri P. P. Chaudhary, Minister of State (Law and Justice and Corporate Affairs), from 01-05 April 2018 to participate in the International Justice Conference.

## **1.2.2 From Moroccan Side**

- King Mohammed VI paid official visits to India in 2001 and again in 2015 to participate in the India Africa Forum Summit III. King Mohammed VI as Crown Prince in 1983 visited India for NAM Conference.
- Prime Ministerial visits from Morocco include: Mr. Abderrehman Youssoufi in 2000; Mr. Driss Jettou in 2004.
- Other important Ministerial visits include: Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Energy, Mining, Water & Environment from 20-21 January 2016; Mr. Mohamed Najib Boulif, Minister Delegate incharge of Transport, from 14-16 April 2016; Mr. Noureddine Boutayeb, Minister delegate to Ministry of Interior from 29 October to 06 November 2017; Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water from 15-21 December 2017; Dr. Jamila El Mossalli, Secretary of State to Minister for Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy from 02-18 February 2018; Ms. Rakiya Eddarhem, Secretary of State in charge of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy from 24-26 February 2018; Mr. Aziz Rabbah, Minister of Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development from 10-12 April 2018; Mr. Mohammed Sajid, Minister of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicrafts and Social Economy, from 16-19 September 2018; Mr. Abdeltif Loudyi, Minister Delegate to the Head of Government in charge of the National Defence Administration from 24-26 September 2018; Mr. Mohamed Auajjar, Minister of Justice from 11-18 November 2018; Prof. Anass Doukkali, Minister of Health from 10-13 December 2018; Mrs. Rakiya Eddarhem, Secretary of State in charge of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy from 14-20 January 2019; Mr. Khalid Samadi, Secretary of State for Higher Education and Scientific Research from 18-22 January 2019; Mr. Moulay Hafid Elalamy, Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy from 17-19 March 2019 and Mr. Mohamed Rehrass, Secretary of State for Vocational Training from 20-25 May 2019.

## **1.3 Institutional Mechanisms**

### **1.3.1 Joint Commission Meetings**

- (i) On 20 March 2019, the VI India Morocco Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held in New Delhi.

### **1.3.2 Foreign Office Consultations**

- (i) The IV India-Morocco Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) held in New Delhi on 24-25 April 2017 under the co-chairmanship of Secretary (ER), Ministry of External Affairs and Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

## **2. ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL**

### **2.1 Introduction**

For long, India has been one of the major markets for Moroccan phosphates and its derivatives. India's export basket to Morocco has also grown significantly in recent years. The main items of India's exports to Morocco are cotton yarn, synthetic fibre,

chemicals, manufactured metals, machinery and instrument, transport equipments, pharmaceuticals and spices. Main items of Moroccan export to India are phosphoric acid, phosphate, metallic ores and metal spray and inorganic chemicals.

(ii) The figures of bilateral trade between India and Morocco (in million US\$) are as follows:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
<b>India's Export</b>	353.5	396.50	573.5	587.2	517.7	615.0	500.5	398.2	634.0	637	701.8*
<b>India's Import</b>	1,366.2	734.6	1,059.6	1,455.6	1,212	796.3	855.8	873.2	758.5	683.6	1100.1*
<b>Total</b>	1719.7	1131.1	1632.5	2042.8	1729.7	1411.3	1356.3	1271.4	1392.5	1320.6	1801.9*

(\*) Provisional Data

(Source : Statistics Bulletin of Office des Changes, Govt. of Morocco)

(iii) Rock phosphates from Morocco are imported in India mainly by Paradeep Phosphate Ltd (PPL) which is controlled by ZuariMaroc Phosphate Ltd (ZMPL), a JV between Chambal Fertilisers, ZuariFertilisers and Office Cherifien des Phosphates (OCP). GoI 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 MarocPhosphore SA (IMACID) for production of 4.5 lakh MT of phosphoric acid which is entirely imported by PPL and ZMPL.

(iv) The following Indian companies have a presence in Morocco: IMACID (a Birla-Tata joint Venture with OCP-Office Cherifien de Phosphates, Morocco), Onshore Construction, Sunpharma, CIPLA, Varun Beverages (PEPSI), Tata Motors, Sterling and Wilson, Larsen and Toubro, Sumilon, Furnace Fabrica, Satguru Travels, Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd. (GFL), Indore (Optic Fibre), and Tejas Network. Varroc Lighting Systems India Pvt. Ltd. and the Oberoi Group have also entered the Moroccan market over the last year. The following companies are in the process of entering the market namely, IM Gears, AVAADA Welspun, Titagarh Group, Adani Group, HYT Engineering and Apollo Hospital. Companies such as Mahindra & Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Shakti Pump, Fieldking, Kirloskar, Sonalika, NandanJain (a subsidiary of Jain Irrigation), Shaktiman and Varuna are also present through their local representatives in Morocco.

## 2.2 Centre for 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).

## 2.3 Telemedicine

(i) During the visit of Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water to India, an MoU was signed on Telemedicine Collaboration between

Marrakech Mohammed VI University Hospital and Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education & Research, Pondicherry on 14 December 2017. The inauguration of the Telemedicine connectivity was launched on 15 January 2018 simultaneously at both institutions through video conferencing.

## **2.4 Agriculture Work Plan**

(i) The Work Plan for 2018-2020 between Indian Council of Agricultural Research, India and Ministry of Agriculture, Marine Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests of Government of Morocco under the MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education on Agricultural Cooperation was signed on 04 May 2018.

## **2.5 Tourism**

An office of Moroccan National Tourist Office (MNTTO) has been established in New Delhi in accordance with Article X of the 1999 Agreement on Tourism Cooperation between India and Morocco.

## **2.6 Others**

- Inaugural meeting of India-Morocco Joint Working Group under MoU on Cooperation in the field of Water Resources was held in New Delhi on 3 July 2018.
- First Meeting of the India-Morocco Joint Working Group under MoU on Cooperation in the field of Health was held in New Delhi on 19 July 2018.
- Inaugural Meeting of Joint Working Group under MoU on Cooperation in the field of Scientific Research and Technology between CSIR and CNRST was held in India from 7-11 October 2018
- Inaugural meeting of the Joint Committee under the MoU in the field of Mining and Geology was held in New Delhi on 22 February 2019.

## **3. CULTURAL RELATIONS**

### **3.1 Introduction**

(i) There is an abiding 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.

(ii) A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Morocco for the years 2016-19 was signed on 31 May 2016. In the last 3 years, artists representing the diverse facets of Indian classical music and dance, such as Kathak maestro Vaswati Misra, Bharatnatyam maestro Chitra Chandrasekhar Dasarathy, Sitar maestro Surmani Agni Verma, Shri Ihsan Hussain and his Qawwali group, Odissi maestro Janhabi Behera, Poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar, Violin Maestro Swapna Datar, Sarod maestro Abhisek Lahiri and Veena maestro Saraswati Rajagopalan have visited Morocco under the Cultural Exchange

Programme. Conversely, Moroccan calligraphy artists went to New Delhi, Jaipur and Bhopal to exhibit Moroccan calligraphy and renowned Moroccan singer Mr. Aziz Ozouss and his group has represented Morocco in the 8<sup>th</sup> International Jazz Festival in New Delhi.

### **3.2 ICCR Chairs on Hindi Language and Indian Studies in History**

(i) 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.

### **3.3 Cultural Events**

(i) The Embassy in collaboration with Association Nationale d'Amitie Maroc-Asiatique (ANAMA), a cultural group in Casablanca organises Holi every year since 2016.

(ii) The Embassy is organising the celebrations of International Yoga Day every year from 2014.

(iii) The Embassy celebrates the ITEC Day every year.

(iv) To commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the Embassy had organised various events such as conferences, art exhibitions, led projection etc. from 01 October 2018.

(v) Events such as Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, India Day, Festival of India, Namaste India (in association with ANAMA) are regularly organized by the Embassy.

## **4. Training & Capacity Building**

### **4.1 ITEC**

169 officials from various Ministries and institutes in Morocco have undergone training under ITEC programmes. During visit of EAM to Morocco in February 2019, the allocation of ITEC slots for Morocco was raised from 40 to 75.

### **4.2 ICCR Africa Scholarship**

Morocco has been allotted 13 scholarship slots under ICCR Africa Scholarship Schemes. Due to language issues, utilization of slots have been low. In 2018, 5 slots were utilized.

### **4.3 FSI Training**

Morocco has shown keen interest to utilize the FSI training offered for foreign diplomats. Diplomats from Morocco regularly attend PCFD courses at FSI. A Special training of 2 weeks at FSI for 16 Moroccan diplomats was organized from 15-27 April 2019.

### **4.4. Others**

Representatives from the Government of Morocco actively participate in various capacity building programmes under IAFS-III. This year, 4 students from Morocco were accepted to study Hindi at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan Agra under Promotion of Hindi Language Abroad Scheme.

## **5. INDIAN COMMUNITY**

(i) The Indian community in Morocco is made up of two segments - 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.

(ii) 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, Satguru Travels, CIPLA, SunPharma (pharmaceuticals), TATA Motors, Infosys (IT), Varun Beverages (PepsiCo), Indore (optic fibre), Sterling & Wilson, Larsen & Toubro (solar projects), Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd. (fluorine/fluoride mining), Onshore Construction, Varroc Lighting Systems, etc. There is also a growing presence of Indian expats working with top multinational firms located in Morocco like Arcelor Mittal, Unilever, and Ericsson.

## **6. USEFUL RESOURCES**

- (i) Website: [www.indianembassy rabat.gov.in](http://www.indianembassy rabat.gov.in)
- (ii) Twitter: @IndiaInMorocco
- (iii) Facebook: IndiaInMorocco (Embassy of India, Rabat)

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