

**EMBASSY OF INDIA
RABAT**

INDIA-MOROCCO BILATERAL RELATIONS

20 August 2018

1. POLITICAL RELATIONS

1.1 Historical Background

(i) India and Morocco have interacted in historical terms going back to the XIV 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 20 June 1956 when it became independent of the protectorate arrangements with France and diplomatic Missions were established in 1957. Since the establishment of relations, India and Morocco have enjoyed cordial and friendly ties.

1.2 Bilateral visits

(i) 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.

(ii) Shri Salman Khurshid, External Affairs Minister 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.

(iii) King Mohammed VI participated in the III 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 Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the Summit.

(iv) Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Energy, Mining, Water & Environment, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco attended the IV 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.

(v) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Communications & Information Technology visited Marrakech with a high-level official delegation to attend the III 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).

(vi) Mohamed Najib Boulif, Minister Delegate incharge of Transport, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco 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.

(vii) On the invitation of the then Head of Government of Kingdom of Morocco, 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, Speakers of Parliament; and Minister Delegate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Cooperation.

(viii) Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Commerce and Industry, Government of India visited Morocco for the V India Morocco Joint Commission Meeting held in Rabat on 25 and 26 May 2017. 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 Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water, and Mohamed Boussaid, Minister of Economy and Finance. On 26 May 2017, she met Moulay Hafid El Alamy, Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy.

(ix) Mr Abderrafia Zouitene, CEO of Moroccan National Tourist Office (MNTTO) visited India from 18-22 October 2017 to tie up arrangements for opening up of the MNTTO Office in New Delhi in accordance with Article X of the 1999 Agreement on Tourism Cooperation between India and Morocco

(x) Mr Noureddine Boutayeb, Minister delegate to Ministry of Interior of Government of Kingdom of Morocco led a delegation to India from 29 October to 06 November 2017 to study the Indian experience of Aadhar, Crime, Criminal Tracking Network & System (CCTNS), DBT, Gas Subsidy, Digitised Banking and the AADHAR programme. The delegation comprised on 10 Moroccan officials including the Minister and 5 World Bank officials. On 31 October 2017, the delegation met Sh Kiren Rijiju, MoS Home Affairs, Government of India, who briefed the Moroccan Minister on initiatives like the Crime, Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS) project under National e-Governance Plan.

(xi) Dr Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco led an official delegation to India from 15-21 December 2017. During the visit he called on Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Defence; J.P. Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare; and Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Minister of Coal of Government of India. The delegation also visited Titagarh Group in Kolkata and Tata Motors in Mumbai and Pune. During the visit, 7 agreements were signed in the sectors of water, health and telemedicine, maritime and railways.

(xii) On an invitation from Shri Ram Bilas Sharma, Hon'ble Minister of Tourism, Government of Haryana, Dr Jamila El Mossalli Secretary of State to Minister for Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy, in-charge of artisans and social economy of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco to lead a high-level delegation comprising of 04 senior dignitaries, 02 officials, 05 artisans, 10 technical staff, 05 Gnawa artists and 07 members of India Morocco Friendship Association for the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela (02-18 February 2018).

(xiii) Rakiya Eddarhem, Secretary of State in charge of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco participated in the CII Partnership Summit 2018 in Vishakhapatnam from 24-26 February 2018.

(xiv) P. P. Chaudhary, Hon'ble MoS (Law and Justice and Corporate Affairs), Government of India visited Morocco from 01-05 April 2018 for the I International Justice Conference in Marrakech.

(xv) Aziz Rabbah, Minister of Energy, Mines and Sustainable Development, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco led a high level official delegation to India to attend the XVI International Energy Forum held in New Delhi from 10-12 April 2018.

(xvi) Dr. Trilochan Mohapatra, Secretary (DARE) and DG, ICAR visited Marrakech to receive the Gene Stewardship Award by Borlaug Global Rust Initiative at their Technical Workshop held in Marrakech from 14-17 April, 2018.

(xvii) Observer Research Foundation, Regional Council of Tangier-Tetouan-Al Hoceima and Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco organised the CyFy Africa Conference from 10-12 May in Tangier. Shri Sanjay Kumar Verma, Additional Secretary (Admin and Cyber Diplomacy), Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India delivered the keynote address and also participated in the plenary session on “Human Rights in the Digital Age”.

(xviii) The UN Public Service Forum was organised by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs in association with Ministry of Administration and Civil Services, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco from 21-23 June 2018 in Marrakech on the theme ‘Transforming Governance to realise the sustainable development goals’. Ms Roshni Sen, Principal Secretary to Government of West Bengal, Department of Technical Education Training and Skill Development was invited to participate in the Forum to share experiences about ‘Kanyashree Prakalpa’, a flagship scheme of Government of West Bengal for the girl child, that was awarded the UN Public Service Forum Award at The Hague in 2017.

1.3 Institutional Mechanisms

(i) The IV 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.

(ii) On 26 May 2017, the V 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.

1.4 Symposia

(i) On 23 February 2017, Royal Institute of Strategic Studies, a prominent think tank in Morocco that is closely linked to the Royal Palace, organised a symposium on the ‘State of relations between India and Morocco at bilateral and multilateral levels including issues of common interests, namely, security and social development.’ Ambassador delivered a speech focusing on the growth of India Morocco relations in the spheres of polity, trade, investments, multilateral engagements and soft power exchanges.

(ii) On 10 May 2017, Moroccan Institute for International Relations (IMRI), Casablanca organised a conference on the theme, 'India and India-Morocco Relations'. Ambassador delivered the keynote address and spoke about the intensifying relations between India and Morocco in the recent years. The conference was followed by a Q&A session.

(iii) Jawad Kerdoudi, Honorary Consul General of India in Casablanca and Marrakech and President of Moroccan Institute for International Relations (IMRI), organised a symposium on the theme 'Foreign Experiences as a model of development: What model for Morocco?' on 22-23 June 2018. On 22 June 2018 during the second panel discussion on the theme 'Experiences of the Asian development model', Sh Niravkumar B Sutariya, Second Secretary delivered a lecture on the topic 'Model of Indian Development and Morocco-India Relations' and spoke about the economic schemes and social inclusion programmes of the present Government of India and the new initiatives. He also elaborated on the strengthening bilateral relations between India and Morocco.

(iv) Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, as part of his five-day tour to Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa (for X BRICS Summit in Johannesburg) delivered the Keynote Address to the Parliament of Uganda on 25 July 2018. The Mission organised showcasing of the live telecast of the Hon'ble PM's Address to the Parliament of Uganda followed by a panel discussion on the topic "India-Morocco Relations: Trilateral Cooperation with Africa" at Moroccan Institute for International Relations (IMRI), Casablanca.

2. ECONOMIC & COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

2.1 Introduction

(i) In 2017, trade between the two countries stood at US \$1.32 billion. India's exports to Morocco stood at US \$637.0 million while imports were valued at US \$683.6 million. The US\$ 1.3 billion bilateral trade has transformed from the single commodity composition of import of phosphate by India to a multi-product trade basket, comprising Indian exports of textiles, chemical products, petroleum products, medicinal products, pharmaceuticals, plastics, spices, etc. Following its re-entry into the African Union in January 2017 and in-principle membership of ECOWAS, Morocco has assumed the position of a key player in the African continent and this has opened avenues for trilateral economic cooperation through the mechanism of South South Cooperation.

(ii) The figures of bilateral trade between India and Morocco (in million US\$) sourced from Statistic Bulletin of Office des Change, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco are as follows:

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	Mar 2018
India's Export	353.5	396.50	573.5	587.2	517.7	615.0	500.5	398.2	634.0	637	177
India's Import	1,366.2	734.6	1,059.6	1,455.6	1,212	796.3	855.8	873.2	758.5	683.6	145.1
Total	1719.7	1131.1	1632.5	2042.8	1729.7	1411.3	1356.3	1271.4	1392.5	1320.6	322.1

(iii) 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. 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 Maroc Phosphore SA (IMACID) for production of 4.5 lakh MT of phosphoric acid which is entirely imported by PPL and ZMPL.

(iv) The following Indian enterprises are in Morocco: IMACID (a Birla-Tata joint Venture with OCP-Office Cherifien de Phosphates, Morocco), Onshore Construction, Sunpharma, CIPLA, Varun Beverages (PEPSI), Tata Motors, Mahindra and Mahindra, Ashok Leyland, Sterling and Wilson, Larsen and Toubro, Infosys, Sumilon, Furnace Fabrica, Satguru Travels, Gujarat Fluorochemicals Ltd. (GFL), Shakti Pumps, Kirloskar, Sonalika Tractors, 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, AVAADA Welspun, Titagarh Group, Adani Group, HYT Engineering and Apollo Hospital. India participated in Salon Internationale de l'Agriculture au Maroc (SIAM), one of the world's largest agriculture fairs, in Meknes in April 2018, where the Indian companies in agrimachienry such as (i) Mahindra (Tractors) (ii) Fieldking (Plough machines), (iii) Sonalika (Tractors), (iii) Kirloskar (Green Power Generator/water pumps, and (iv) NandanJain(drippers), a subsidiary of Jain Irrigation, were also present through their representatives in Morocco.

2.2 Centre for Excellence in Information Technology

(i) 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).

(ii) It was inaugurated on 07 May 2018 at 0930 hrs by M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs, Government of India (through video conference) and Rakiya Eddarhem, Hon'ble Secretary of State to the Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy in charge of Foreign Trade on behalf

of Moulay Hafid Elalamy, Hon'ble Minister of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco.

2.3 Commercial projects

(i) During the visit of Dr. Abdelkader Amara, Minister of Equipment, Transport, Logistics and Water of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco 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.

(ii) 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 the Kingdom of Morocco under the MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agricultural Research and Education on Agricultural Cooperation was on 23 April 2018 and 04 May 2018.

2.4 Catalogue exhibitions and B2Bs

(i) The Embassy organised a catalogue exhibition for the Bengal Global Business Summit 2017 on 06 January 2017 at Hotel Golden Tulip Farah in Casablanca. The India Morocco Chamber of Commerce and Industry participated along with CGEM, Maroc Export, and other Government backed business corporations of Morocco.

(ii) On 15 February 2017, the Embassy hosted a catalogue exhibition 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. The website of the India Morocco Chamber of Commerce & Industry was also operationalised.

(iii) The Embassy organised a catalogue exhibition for the XXXII Surajkund International Crafts Mela (02-18 February 2018) and Haryana Tourism on 18 September 2017 at Hotel Kenzi Tower in Casablanca. The highlight of the event was a live video conference with Mr Rajesh Joon, Nodal Officer, Surajkund Mela Authority and Mr Mukesh Rao, Divisional Manager, Haryana Government Tourist Bureau. The duo briefed the audience about the Mela, its aims and objectives, and the facilities being extended to the foreign delegations being invited for participation. The event was attended by officials from the Ministry of Handicrafts of Government of Kingdom of Morocco, Moroccan Federation of Handicrafts Companies, Maroc Export, and Chamber of Handicrafts of Casablanca-Settat.

(iv) Morocco FoodExpo was held from 08-10 December 2017 in Casablanca where an Indian delegation of 57 Indian companies participated, led by Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI). A presentation and B2B session on Indus Food-the Global Food and Beverage Show of India (18-19 January 2018 in Greater Noida) was also organised by the Mission on 09 December 2017 at Hotel Kenzi in Casablanca.

(v) A multi-product business delegation from FIEO visited Morocco from 17-19 January 2018. During the visit, a seminar on Trade Opportunities between Morocco & India and a B2B Meet was organised on 18 January 2018 at Hotel Sheraton in Casablanca.

(vi) The Embassy facilitated the organization of the First India Morocco Tourism Forum on 22 January 2018 at Hotel Grand Mogador City Centre in Casablanca. The event was jointly organised by India Tourism Office, Dubai of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India and Moroccan National Tourist Office (MNTTO), Government of the Kingdom of Morocco. The Forum was a platform to showcase the rich cultural heritage of India and Morocco highlighting the top travel destinations of both countries, and providing information on the scope of opportunities available in the tourism sector. The event was also a platform to bring together top travel and tour operators from both countries to explore opportunities for cooperation in the sector of tourism.

(vii) The Moroccan Ayurveda Week took place from 23 February 2018 to 03 March 2018 in the cities of Tangier, Casablanca and Rabat in Morocco. It was organised by the India Morocco Chamber of Commerce and Industry and facilitated by the Mission. The Event also received the support of Ministry of AYUSH of Government of India through the participation of a 02-member high-level delegation comprising of Dr. Mangalagowri Rao, Head of Department and Associate Professor of Swasth Vritta (Preventive Medicine in Ayurveda), All India Institute of Ayurveda, an apex institute of Ayurveda of Government of India and Dr Sachin Kumar, Research Officer and Central Drug Inspector for Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani (additional charge) in Ministry of Ayush of Government of India.

(viii) The XIII Edition of SIAM was held in Meknes from 24-29 April 2018. A 2-member delegation from Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India comprising of Dr. S.K. Singh, Project Director, Directorate of Knowledge Management in Agriculture and Shri Anil Kumar Sharma, Chief Publicity and Public Relations Officer, Indian Council for Agriculture Research, participated in the SIAM.

(ix) On 31 July 2018, the Embassy organised an interactive session with Delhi Tourism and Transport Development Corporation Ltd, New Delhi to promote Delhi as a tourism destination. A video conferencing session was organised with Sh Sudhir Sobti, Chief Manager, DTTDC who briefed the audience about Delhi Tourism and answered their questions.

2.5 Visits of delegations

(i) A delegation from Rural Electrification Corporation Limited (REC) comprising of Shri Ajit Agrawal, Director (Finance); Shri Sanjay Kulshrestha, Additional General Manager; Shri V. K. Singh, General Manager (Generation); and Shri Bhupendra Gupta, Additional CEO, visited Morocco from 18-21 January 2018 to explore investment opportunities in the energy sector in Morocco.

(ii) The Ministry of Tourism, Air Transport, Handicraft and Social Economy of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco nominated a delegation of 05 Moroccan artisans from the sectors of leather works, traditional clothing, cedar wood, jewellery and brassware; 02 officials; 05 members cultural troupe of Gnawa music artists; and 07-member cultural delegation from India Morocco Friendship Association to participate in the 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela (02-18 February 2018).

(iii) The Embassy hosted the visit of a 03-member delegation from Tata Projects Ltd. to Morocco from 13-17 February 2018. The delegation was led by Shri Anil Khandelwal, Chief Financial Officer. The other members of the delegation included Shri Rajesh Pandey, Deputy Business Head and Shri Sumit Mehta, Lead Project Monitoring Group. The objective of the visit of the delegation was to explore opportunities for investment in the sector of infrastructure and particularly in railways.

(iv) A 3-member delegation comprising of Shri C. P. Ravindranath Menon, Chief General Manager (Legal); Mr. Nadeem Panjetan, Chief General Manager (Lines of Credit); and Ms. Rima Marphatia, Chief General Manager (Corporate Banking) of EXIM Bank of India visited Morocco from 12-14 March 2018 to discuss the financing of projects of Indian companies in Morocco by the EXIM Bank of India.

(v) A 3-member delegation from Government of the Kingdom of Morocco visited India from 23-24 April 2018 to discuss and finalize the Air Services Agreement between India and Morocco.

(vi) India hosted the inaugural meetings of the India-Morocco Expert Committee on Veterinary Sanitation and India-Morocco Joint Committee on Marine Fisheries in order to effect the implementation of the Agreement for Cooperation on Veterinary Sanitation that was signed on 27 February 2001 and MoU on Cooperation on Marine Fisheries that was signed on 01 February 2014 between India and Morocco. A 5-member delegation from Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development and Water and Forests of Government of the Kingdom of Morocco visited India from 01-06 April 2018 for the inaugural meetings with their Indian counterparts.

(vii) From 03-04 May 2018, a 5-member high level delegation visited Morocco to discuss and finalize Mutual Legal Assistance Agreement in Civil and Commercial Matters, Extradition Treaty and Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters between India and Morocco

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. A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between Indian and Morocco for the years 2016-19 was signed May-June 2016.

(ii) 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

3.2 Cultural Events

(i) On 20 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.

(ii) Festival of India was organized from 28 July-04 August 2016 in Rabat, Casablanca, El Jadida, Fes and Meknes.

(iii) With support from the Embassy of India, Rabat, the II Edition of Namaste India was organized by Association Nationale d'Amitie Maroc-Asiatique (ANAMA), at Casablanca on 22 January 2017.

(iv) Republic Day of India was celebrated with performances by a cultural troupe from ICCR led by Kathak maestro Vaswati Misra that Rabat, El Jadida, Settat and Casablanca from 25-30 January 2017.

(v) The second edition of the grand Holi event was organized by the Embassy in collaboration with ANAMA on 19 March 2017 in Casablanca. The event was attended by almost 6000 people including members of the diplomatic community, Indian nationals and local residents.

(vi) Odissi maestro Janhabi Behera and her group visited Morocco from 16-21 April 2017. She performed in Rabat, Tangier, Tetouan and M'Diq.

(vii) Mr Javed Akhtar traveled to Morocco from 26-30 April 2017 for poetry readings in the Royal Institute of Amazigh Culture in Rabat on 27 April 2017 and participation in the first edition of the Moroccan Poets' Festival in Tetouan including poetry reading, on 27-28 April 2017.

(viii) Maestro Swapna Datar and group participated in the XIX Edition of the International Luth Festival of Tetouan from May 12-16, 2017 and also performed in Chefchaouen and Fnideq.

(ix) The III 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.

(x) 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 on 13 July 2018.

(xi) 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.

(xii) The Embassy celebrated the 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 Maroc Asiatique (ANAMA) and India Morocco Friendship Association.

(xiii) On 15 September 2017, the Embassy celebrated the ITEC Day in the Chancery. It was attended by ITEC alumni belonging to different ministries of the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco such as Health, Foreign Affairs, Agriculture, Tourism, Higher Education, Industry, Trade, Investment & Digital Economy, and Energy & Mines, and departments like the Court of Audit and the National Centre for Scientific Research and Technique. The participants shared experiences of their study and stay in India and expressed nostalgia and appreciation for the value addition the courses provided in their professional domain. Most of them expressed a keen desire to participate in another ITEC programme in India. The event was a good occasion to inform the participants about the forthcoming ITEC programmes being held in different institutions in India in order to spread the word for seeking more participation from the Moroccan candidates.

(xiv) VI Edition of FICMEC Nador Film Festival was organised from 07-12 November 2017 in the city of Nador on the theme 'Memory of Oceans'. India was the Guest of Honour country at the event and was represented by Shri Ramkishore Parcha, President, Delhi International Film Festival (DIFF). The inaugural function was held on 07 November 2017 where our Ambassador was the Chief Guest. The Assamese Film, 'The Challenge' by Nipon Dholua was India's entry to the competition section of the Festival.

(xv) The Embassy organized celebrations on occasion of the 69th Republic Day of India from 26-31 January 2018. The Embassy hosted the 08-member cultural delegation led by Bharatnatyam maestro Chitra Chandrasekhar Dasarathy from 21-31 January 2018. The group performed in Rabat, Meknes and Oujda.

(xvi) National Archives of India in collaboration with Indian Council for Cultural Relations has organised for the first time ever, an exhibition of Moroccan calligraphy in India at National Archives of India (12-19 March 2018), NAI Regional Office in Bhopal (02-09 April 2018) and NAI Record Centre in Jaipur (17-24 April 2018).

(xvii) The Mission organised celebrations on occasion of the IV International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2018 in Morocco in the cities of Rabat, Casablanca, Marrakech, Kenitra, Tangier and Agadir. The programme in Rabat started with a Yoga Session at the Faculty of Judicial, Economic and Social Sciences of University Mohammed V in Rabat. A Conference on the theme Holistic treatment and well-being through traditional practices from India and Morocco was organised in the auditorium of the main campus of University Mohammed V in Rabat. The panel of distinguished Speakers included Ambassador, Dr Ismail Kassou, Vice President for Research, Innovation and Partnership, University Mohammed V; Dr Nazih el Kouartey, Head of Coordination and Liaison, Ministry of Health, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco; Ali Ben Hammou, Chargé de Mission, Cabinet of Minister of Equipment, Transport, and Logistics, Government of the Kingdom of Morocco; Dr Soumia Triki, National Professional Officer /DCD/ Emergency, WHO Morocco Country Office; Jihan Doublali, President, Jomana Association for Development; and Colin Nebhwani, President, India-Morocco Chamber of Commerce and Industry. In Casablanca the yoga session was organised at the famous Koram Harmony Yoga Studio located at the iconic Boulevard Ghandi. The Yoga session in Marrakech was organised in Hotel Es Saadi. In Tangier, the yoga session was organised in a private Yoga studio. In Agadir, the Yoga session was organised at the beach. Celebrations of IDY were organised for the first time in the city of Kenitra in a private Yoga studio.

(xviii) Following the Conference on 21 June 2018 at University Mohammed V, the Mission organised the celebrations of 'Bharat in Rabat' as an evening dedicated to the Hindi Language. Dr Himanshu Kumar, Professor to the ICCR Chair for Hindi Language at University Mohammed V spoke on the cultural commonalities between India and Morocco and his experiences as a teacher of Hindi language in Morocco. The first batch of students of Hindi language of the 6 month Beginners' Level I at Mohammed V University in Rabat were awarded certificates by the panel of Speakers.

The students put up a short and solemn cultural performance in which two students recited Hindi poems written by Sh Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Nazir Akbarabadi and two students spoke in eloquent Hindi and shared their experiences of the Hindi classes.

(xix) The Mission organized celebrations on occasion of the 72nd Independence Day of India on 15 August 2018 in Morocco. Three functions were organised on the occasion (i) flag hoisting ceremony at the Chancery on 15 August 2018 from 0930 hrs onwards (ii) Reception at India House from 1830 hrs onwards and (iii) Qawwali performance by Hussain Group from Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) at Bibliotheque Nationale du Royaume du Maroc (BNRM) in Rabat from 2030 hrs onwards.

3.3 Bilateral Visits

(i) Sh Raghvendra Singh, Secretary to Government of India and Director General of National Archives of India and Dr Sanjay Garg, Deputy Director paid an official visit to Morocco from 11-16 September 2017 under Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Morocco for the years 2016-2019 at the invitation of Archives du Maroc.

(ii) Mr Mohammed Tawfik Mouline, Director General of The Royal Institute of Strategic Studies (IRES), Rabat visited India from 08-16 October 2017 under the Academic Visitors' Programme of ICCR. During his visit he met Sh. M J Akbar, Minister of State, for External Affairs, Sh Nalin Surie, Director General, ICWA, Shri Sameer Saran, Vice President, Observer Research Foundation, Lt. Gen. YVK Mohan, SM, VSM, Commandant, National Defence College, Shri Dyaneshwar M Mulay, Secretary (CPV & OIA), MEA, and Sh Anurag Kumar, Director, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore. He also visited Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Asiatic Society Kolkata, and Maulana Azad Institute of Asian Studies, Kolkata.

4. INDIAN COMMUNITY

(i) 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.

(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 and Jacob's Engineering (factory engineering), CIPLA, SunPharma (pharmaceuticals), TATA Motors, Mahindra (bus bodies and LMVs), Kirloskar, Shakti Pumps, and Massey Ferguson (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.

5. USEFUL RESOURCES

- (i) Website: www.indianembassy rabat.com
- (ii) Twitter: @IndiaInMorocco
- (iii) Facebook: IndiaInMorocco (Embassy of India, Rabat)