

**EMBASSY OF INDIA
RABAT**

INDIA-MOROCCO BILATERAL RELATIONS

20 July 2021

1. POLITICAL

1.1 Introduction

Relations between India and Morocco go back to the 14th century when the famous traveler and writer from Tangier, Ibn Batuta travelled to India. In modern history, India was active in the UN supporting the Moroccan freedom movement and recognised Morocco on 20 June 1956 immediately after its independence. Diplomatic relations were established in 1957. Over the years, India and Morocco have enjoyed cordial and friendly relations.

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. It is reflected in 22 Ministerial visits since October 2015 and signing of more than 36 MoUs/Agreements in the areas including counter-terrorism, cyber security, space, agriculture, vocational training, etc.

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 5th 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. Mr. Mehdi Abdelkrim, MP and Chairman of India-Morocco Parliamentary Friendship Group in Moroccan Upper House and Dr. Abdellatif Assarajm, MP from 14-16 January 2020 visited India.

Recent initiatives

- A virtual meeting between EAM Shri S. Jaishankar and his counterpart Foreign Minister Nasser Bourita was held on 22 October 2020 to discuss bilateral relations and exchange of views on regional and global issues.
- The first edition of the Arab-India Energy Forum (AIEF) was held in a virtual format on 8-9 June 2021 under the co-chairship of India and the Kingdom of Morocco. The inaugural session of the Forum was addressed by H. E. Shri R. K. Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power, New & Renewable Energy of India; H. E. Mr. Aziz Rabbah, Minister of Energy, Mines and Environment of Morocco; and H.E. Dr. Kamal Hasan Ali, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs of the LAS.
- Moroccan Health Minister Prof. Khalid Ait Taleb participated in the UBUNTU International Yoga Conference organized by ICCR and Ministry of AYUSH on the occasion of the Seventh International Day of Yoga on 21-22 June 2021. In his message on the occasion, Health Minister Taleb said that Yoga was an effective

way to boost immunity and combat isolation and depression and a lifestyle, that integrated Yoga completely, could lead to the prevention of some diseases and improve the health & living conditions.

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 under the co-chairmanship of Shri Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce.

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:

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
India's Export	587.2	517	615	500	398	634.0	637	701.8	1160	682
India's Import	1,455	1,212	796	855	873	758.5	683.6	1100.1	856	1202
Total	2042	1729	1411	1356	1271	1392.5	1320.6	1801.9	2016	1884

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

(iii) 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., IM Gears, and the Oberoi Group have also entered the Moroccan market over the last two year. 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). CEIT has imparted training to approx. 700 Moroccan students/professionals till date. As per the MoU, the CEIT was handed over to the Moroccan side in January 2020.

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. Scientists both from India and Morocco have visited each others' countries under the work plan.

2.5 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.
- Second meeting of India-Morocco Joint Working Group under MoU on Cooperation in the field of Water Resources was held in Morocco from 18-21 June 2019.
- Inaugural meeting of experts from Indian Maritime University and National Ports Agency (Port Training Institute) was held in India from 23-28 June 2019.
- First Meeting of the India-Morocco Joint Working Group under MoU on Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy was held in New Delhi on 26 July 2019.
- First meeting of the Joint Committee under Cooperation Agreement between Indian Railways and the Moroccan National Railways Office (ONCF) held in New Delhi on 22 November 2019.

- A delegation from National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) visited Morocco from 18-20 December 2019 with a view to identify areas of collaboration with Office of Vocational Training and Employment Promotion (OFPPT)

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.

(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, renowned Moroccan singer Mr. Aziz Ozouss and his group represented Morocco in the 8th International Jazz Festival in New Delhi and 8 member cultural troupe 'Abidat Rma' participated in the 6th International Folk Music and Dance Competition in New Delhi from 01-08 December 2019.

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. Events such as Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, India Day, Festival of India, Namaste India (in association with ANAMA) are regularly organized by the Embassy. The Embassy is organising the celebrations of International Yoga Day every year from 2014.

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

4. Training & Capacity Building

4.1 ITEC

More than 250 officials from various Ministries and institutes in Morocco have undergone training under ITEC programmes. During the visit of EAM to Morocco in February 2019, the allocation of ITEC slots for Morocco was raised from 40 to 75. 27 Moroccan students and professionals participated in an online training programme on Data Analytics, conducted by IIT Madras at CEIT Casablanca under e-ITEC initiative. A virtual special programme on “Cyber Security and Malware Analytics” for 33 officials from Ministry of Finance, Economics and Administrative Reforms was organized under eITEC. Senior officials from various Ministries of Government of Morocco participated in training programmes exclusively designed for officers at level of Director/Director General under ITEC Executive Initiative.

4.2 ICCR Africa Scholarship

Morocco has been allotted 4 scholarship slots under ICCR Africa Scholarship Schemes.

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. In 2019, 5 students from Morocco have Hindi at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan Agra under Promotion of Hindi Language Abroad Scheme. In 2020, one Moroccan student’s application under the scheme has been accepted by KHS, Agra.

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.

(ii) The expatriate community of Indians in Morocco represent the top Indian enterprises such as TATA, Birla (in collaboration as IMACID), TATA Motors, Sun Pharma, CIPLA, L&T, etc. There is also a growing presence of expats working with top multinational firms located in Morocco like Arcelor Mittal, Unilever, Jacob Engg, and Ericsson.

6. USEFUL RESOURCES

- (i) Website: www.indianembassy rabat.gov.in
- (ii) Twitter: @indembrabat
- (iii) Facebook: IndiaInMorocco (Embassy of India, Rabat)
- (iv) Instagram: IndianembassyMorocco
