

**Embassy of India
Djibouti**

Bilateral Brief: India-Djibouti

Bilateral relations of India and Djibouti are historic, based on cultural affinities and people-to-people contacts, even before India's independence in 1947 and Djibouti's independence in 1977. The port of Adulis was the hub of maritime trade where Indian seafarers have flocked to trade in spices and silk for gold and ivory. The Honorary Consul of India has been functioning in Djibouti since 1969 and Djibouti was concurrently accredited to Embassy of India, Addis Ababa. The Embassy of India in Djibouti started functioning from April, 2019. Djibouti opened its Embassy in New Delhi in 2004.

2. Djibouti extended extraordinary support during '*Operation Rahat*' in April 2015 to support the evacuation of Indians and other nationals from ongoing conflict in Yemen. Due to the continued unstable political situation in Yemen, Djibouti hosts Embassy of India to Yemen as a camp office.

3. Djibouti hosts the headquarters of Inter-governmental Authority on Development (IGAD). Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Djibouti, Eritrea, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan are the members of IGAD.

Bilateral relations

A. Visits from Djibouti

President Ismael Omar Guelleh accompanied by Foreign Minister and a business delegation of 30 members visited India in May 2003.

President Guelleh led a high level delegation to participate in the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018. President addressed the Conference and also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the side lines of the Conference to discuss issues of mutual interest between the two countries.

President Ismail Omar Guelleh led a 30 member delegation for the IAFS III in October 2015 to New Delhi and he also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

A delegation led by Mr. Rifki Abdoukader Bamakhrama, Minister of Trade and Industry attended the CII-Exim Bank Meeting in New Delhi on 19-21 March 2008.

Minister of Economy, Finance & Industry Mr. Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh attended the India-Africa Trade Ministers Meeting, on the margins of IAFS-III in New Delhi in October 2015.

B. Visits from India

President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a State visit to Djibouti from 4-5 October, 2017. This historic first-ever visit at the level of Head of State has elevated bilateral relations between the two countries. During the visit, various issues of common concerns and interest such as terrorism, renewable energy, Djibouti's support for membership of the International Solar Alliance, maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region; and technical and capacity building assistance by India to enhance employment opportunities for Djibouti's young people were discussed.

General (Retd.) V.K. Singh, MoS (EA) led '*Operation Rahat*' from Djibouti in April 2015 to evacuate Indians and other nationals from the war-torn Yemen.

B. Balabhaskar, JS (WANA) led a delegation to Djibouti on 18-20 December, 2016 to discuss various aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Padma Vibhushan Samman

Government of India has conferred its second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan on the President of the Republic of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh in March 2019.

Visit of Indian Naval ships

To combat the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and in the Red Sea, India has been

regularly sending naval ships since November 2008 for OTRs during counter-piracy patrolling. Indian ships also make regular calls at the Port of Djibouti on transit and for joint exercises with US and French navies. Djibouti remains very hospitable to the visits of Indian ships. Recently Submarine *INS Kalvari* and *INS Trikand* visited the Port of Djibouti and participated in various exercise with French (Varuna) and US Navies (Operation Cutlass).

Bilateral Treaties and Agreements

- a) Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) signed at New Delhi on 19 May, 2003.
- b) Civil Aviation Agreement signed at New Delhi on 19 May 2003.
- c) Cultural Cooperation Agreement signed on 31 January 1989 and Executive Programme of Cultural, Education and Scientific Cooperation for the year 2003-2005 signed at New Delhi on 19 May 2003.
- d) Pan-African e-Network Agreement signed between TCIL and Djibouti in June 2006.
- e) MoU to hold regular Foreign Office Consultation between India and Djibouti at the level of Foreign Office was signed on 4 October 2017.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Government of Djibouti encourages and promotes Indian investment and business. Djibouti is keen to promote economic and development partnership with India especially in the areas of education, health, information technology, agriculture, small scale industries, portable electricity generation, fisheries and water resource development. IRCON has conducted feasibility study for rehabilitation of rural electrification.

The bilateral trade stood at US\$ 806.48 million in FY 2018-19, out of which India's exports to Djibouti were US\$ 790.66 million and imports were US\$ 15.82 million. Exports from India consists mainly of iron & steel products, paper and plastic products, machinery, metals, yarns and fabrics, food items and drugs and pharmaceuticals etc. Bilateral trade is in India's favour. Most of the trade with Djibouti actually serves the growing market in Ethiopia. Iron and steel products, paper and plastic products have registered growth in export.

Lines of Credit

Government of India has extended four Lines of Credit (LOC) aggregating US\$ 50 million to Djibouti for financing the Ali Sabieh Cement project, being constructed at Ali Sabieh, about 120 kms from Djibouti. The Djiboutian Minister of Economy and Finance Mr. Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh visited India from 8-11 March 2015 and signed a LoC Agreement with the Exim Bank of India. Djibouti Government recently sought Government of India's assistance for developing the SME sector in Djibouti, and in the health care sector for deputation/training of medical personnel and supplying specialized medical equipment.

Djibouti has requested support for a 100MW Solar Thermal Power plant in 2018. Djibouti also sought financial aid for extension of electricity capacity in rural Djibouti As-Eyla and Mini Grid (use of renewable energy of 100 KW supplement energy and solar solution energies), financial support for setting up panel at Head of State House, Parliament and Justice Court during the visit of Mr. Upendra Tripathi, Director, International Solar Alliance (ISA) in October 2018.

Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Leadership and Entrepreneurship in Djibouti

Government of India has extended a grant of US\$ 5 million to develop this SME Incubation Centre in October 2016. Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Leadership and Entrepreneurship was inaugurated on 22 November 2018 by the President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh. President Guelleh expressed his gratitude to India for supporting the development of the Centre. He asked India to share its rich experiences in development of Medium and Small Enterprises, and in the promotion of entrepreneurship to create job opportunities for youth. A message from the then Minister of External Affairs Mrs. Sushma Swaraj was also read out by our Ambassador in Ethiopia. There is also a proposal for establishment of a Centre for English Language Training in Djibouti under the framework of IAFS-III.

Cooperation in Capacity Building

Under the ITEC programme, for the year 2017-18, 10 slots were granted to Djibouti. So far about 47 professionals from Djibouti have visited India under this programme. There is a need to consider a few ITEC scholarship in defence field. Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Scholarships are also much appreciated by the Djiboutian and have contributed to capacity

building. So far about 64 Djiboutian students have availed these scholarships.

Cultural Relations

The Embassy has been promoting Indian culture in Djibouti. The 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 19 June 2019 in Djibouti with the participation of around 150 people, including local and foreign Yoga enthusiasts/experts, children & women. Performance of an ICCR-sponsored 10-member Rajasthani folk dance group was organized in Djibouti in December 2015.

Indian Community

The Indian nationals are modest about 750 in number, either settled or employed in Djibouti. The Indian origin community of about 100, consists of Gujarati traders and entrepreneurs from Rajkot and Jamnagar. New Indian arrivals to Djibouti include corporate employees, professionals, including bankers, accountants, IT professionals and skilled workers in the hotel and port expansion projects. The companies engage in Doraleh Port Project and also Free Trade Zone have also employed a sizeable number of workers of Indian origin. Honorary Consul Shri Nalin Kothari (Djiboutian national) was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman in 2017.

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