

**Embassy of India
Khartoum**

India-Eritrea – Bilateral Relations

Indian traders were familiar with the Eritrean port of Massawa since the 17th century. During World War II, there were around 5000 casualties among Indian soldiers at the battle of Keren in Eritrea in 1941 against Italians. India formally recognized Eritrea soon after its de jure independence on 24 May 1993 from Ethiopia.

2. Over the years, India has offered capacity building assistance in several fields to Eritrea including legislative drafting, technical scholarships (agriculture, education, health, handicrafts etc.), and also food aid. In 2009 Indian Government extended a Line of Credit of US\$ 20 million to the Eritrean government. India is a destination for Eritreans going abroad for higher studies and medical treatment.

3. An MoU on starting Foreign Office Consultations between India and Eritrea was signed in April 2018 in New Delhi. Subsequently, the first session of FOC was held in Asmara on 29 October 2018 at the level of Joint Secretary (WANA) and Director General, Asia Pacific Department in the Eritrean Foreign Ministry

4. Eritrea has been included in the list of countries to whom unilateral Duty Free Tariff Preferential (DFTP) market access and e-Visa facility has been extended.

Bilateral Exchanges

5. In January 1995, former Chief Justice of India, Justice P N Bhagwati participated in a Workshop on legislative drafting in Eritrea. In December 2000, a MoU on Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Education was signed by Minister of Agriculture H. E. Arefaine Berhe and Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education. Minister of Transport and Communication of Eritrea visited India in 2000.

6. In June 2001, Agriculture Minister of Eritrea visited India. In the same year in August, Minister of Transport and Communications of Eritrea visited India. Minister of Education, H. E. Mr. Osman Saleh Mohammed and Minister of Agriculture, H. E. Mr. Arefaine Berhe visited India in June 2006. An MoU on Cooperation in Agriculture was signed during the visit. In September 2006, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri met Minister of Health of Eritrea H. E. Mr. Saleh Maky on the sidelines of the 61st Session of the UNGA in New York. In April 2007, Minister for Agriculture of Eritrea, H. E. Mr. Arefaine Berhe, visited India as the Special Envoy of his Government. Minister for Agriculture of Eritrea, H.E. Mr. Arefaine Berhe, visited India in September 2008. Hon'ble Minister of State for

External Affairs Smt. Preneet Kaur met Foreign Minister of Eritrea in Nairobi on the margins of South-South Cooperation meeting in December 2009.

7. In August 2010, Minister of External Affairs Shri S.M. Krishna inaugurated in New Delhi the Pan African e-Network project with Eritrea, while interacting over video conferencing with Agriculture Minister of Eritrea. Foreign Minister of Eritrea, H. E. Mr. Oman Saleh Mohammed visited India in February 2011 for LDC Conference. He again visited India in June 2011 India and met with Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Smt. Preneet Kaur. Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh visited Eritrea in September 2015 and handed over an invitation from the Prime Minister to the President Isais Afwerki of Eritrea to attend the 3rd India Africa Forum Summit. Foreign Minister of Eritrea Mr. Osman Saleh led the Eritrean delegation for the 3rd India Africa Forum Summit held from 26-29 October, 2015. Finance minister with a delegation participated in the annual African Development Bank Board meeting held in Ahmedabad in May 2017.

India in UN Peacekeeping in Eritrea

8. More than 1500 Indian troops served in the UN Mission for Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), deployed in both countries until February 2007. Thereafter, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution No.1741, strength of UNMEE was brought down to 1700. The Indian contingent was also downsized from 850 to 600 personnel. Maj Gen Rajender Singh led the UNMEE as its Force Commander from 2004-2006. Over the life of the mission, the Indian medical battalion with UNMEE attended to some 17,000 medical cases. The Indian contingent also assisted in drilling of wells and construction of roads and dams. Most of the remaining peacekeepers were withdrawn in February 2009 and later that year the UN Security Council voted unanimously to end its peacekeeping Mission to Ethiopia and Eritrea.

Cooperation in Capacity Building

9. Shortly after Eritrea's independence, India offered assistance in its legislative drafting process. Assistance in form of scholarships through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme has evolved over the years. India has offered capacity building assistance in several fields to Eritrea including in agriculture, health and education, handicrafts etc. At the request of the Eritrean Government, India provided a legal expert, under the ITEC scheme, to Eritrea for two years. Pursuant to the 2nd Africa-India Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa in May 2011, the ITEC training slots availability during 2011-12 was enhanced to 35. The following chart indicates slots offered under various schemes:

Scheme	2014-15		2015-16		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
	Slots given	Slots utilized	Slots given	Slots utilized	Slots given	Slots utilized	Slots given	Slots utilized	Slots given	Slots utilized

ICCR	8	3	8	3	8	0	8	0	8	2
ITEC	20		20		20	3	20	4	47	25
IAFS								4		6

10. There are 47 slots for ITEC courses for Eritrea for 2018-19. On request from the Eritrean Government, a special customized training programme of eight weeks on promotion of Basket and Mat Weaving Artisan Enterprises was conducted at the National Institute of Mirco, Small and Medium Enterprises, Hyderabad under ITEC from May to July 2018.

11. In 2003 India donated 5,000 metric tonnes of wheat to Eritrea. Earlier, India had provided 1,500 metric tonnes of wheat and 200 metric tonnes of sugar to Eritrea as relief assistance.

12. In November 2010, Embassy of Eritrea requested MEA for a grant of US\$ 2 million for a project to enhance the capacity of the newly established Institutes of Higher Education (IHEs) through procurement laboratory equipments and chemicals, computers, and books etc.

13. Government of India's Pan-African e-network project for Eritrea was inaugurated in August 2010. All three nodes (VVIP, medical and education) were functional. Two screenings of special lectures under the Pan African E-Network project have been done at the Orotta National Referral Hospital in Asmara in May and July 2012. **For the second phase of the network project, Eritrean Government has identified three colleges and a hospital for e-VBAB projects.**

14. An Eritrean delegation visited several Indian educational institutes in 2010 including Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), Jawaharlal Nehru University, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, Delhi University and Hamdard University. An agreement was concluded for cooperation with IGNOU. Three doctors from Eritrea visited India for mid-career specialised training courses at Apollo Hospital in New Delhi from 21 August 2017 to 20 September 2017.

15. Eritrean officials attended the Conference on Government of India Lines of Credit held in New Delhi on November 22-23, 2011. One Eritrean official visited India to participate at the 4th International Civil Aviation Negotiations Conference (India-ICAN) held in Mumbai during October 17-22, 2011.

16. A 3 member expert technical team from MEA & HMT(I), India visited Asmara in October, 2014 and finalised the detailed project report and project parameters for setting up of a Vocational Training Centre offered under IAFS-II. A draft MoU for setting up VTC is under submission to the Eritrean side since June 2017.

Economic & Commercial

17. During 2017-18 India-Eritrea bilateral trade was US\$ 9.39 million. Exports from India in the past mainly included electrical and miscellaneous engineering equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, cotton yarn and fabrics. During 2017-18, the main export items were bulk drug formulations (\$2.6 mln), moulded and extruded products of plastic (\$1.8Mln), fertilizers (\$0.65Mln), rubber products (\$0.31mln), non ferrous metal products (\$0.30Mln), books and publications (\$0.23Mln). India was among the largest exporters to Eritrea along with China Saudi Arabia and Egypt. India was importing large quantity of copper ore and other concentrates, which have declined substantially in the recent past. Our main imports in 2017-18 were uncut precious and semi precious stones such as emeralds, ruby, sapphire, topaz, etc. Trade balance which was largely in favour of Eritrea till 2016-17 has turned positive since then.

India-Eritrea Trade (US\$ million)

Year	Indian Exports	Indian Imports	Total Trade
2013-14	16.45	4.85	21.30
2014-15	14.06	230.68	244.73
2015-16	6.45	167.45	173.90
2016-17	3.22	36.41	39.63
2017-18	7.43	1.96	9.39
2018-19 April-Sep	6.18	Almost Nil	6.01

Source: DGFT, India

18. A few private sector Indian companies are working in the Mining sectors in Eritrea as it is rich in minerals like Copper, Zinc, Potash, Gold, Silver, granite, marble, salt, etc. Indian company VPR Mining Infrastructure Pvt. Ltd., has participated in tender to supply mining equipments for Colluli Potash Mines Danakil Depression which is a 50:50 JV between Danakil Mining Corporation of Australia and the Eritrean National Mining Corporation (ENAMCO). Essel Groups Middle East has acquired exploration license for Bada Potash Mines in Danakil Depression, in Eritrea through its subsidiary Interu Mining and Trading. There is a proposal by the Eritrean Government to purchase fix and rotary wing aircrafts from HAL for civilian applications through a UAE based company.

19 Eritrea qualifies for India's offer of unilateral duty free tariff preferential market access for export of goods and services to India. The scheme, introduced in 2008, offers duty free access to exports from LDCs on 84% of India's tariff lines and preferential access for another 9%.

20. India extended a line of credit US\$ 20 million (US\$ 10 Million each for education and agriculture projects) to Eritrea in July 2009.

Cultural

21. ICCR sponsored 7-member Rajasthani Folk Dance & Music Troupe hosted by Government of Eritrea, visited Asmara Eritrea from December 12-14, 2018. Stage performance by the troupe was organized during the period.

Indian Community and Diaspora in Eritrea

22. The Indian community in Eritrea, comprising mostly of school teachers and businessmen, number around 1200. Most Indians live and work in and around Asmara as also in Anseba, Debub, Northern Red Sea region and the Dahlak islands. Indians work as teaching staff at secondary schools and technical colleges such as the Eritrean Institute of Technology. There are also medical doctors and construction workers. There are only a few PIO Gujarati businessmen.

23. India has an Honorary Consul in Asmara (Mr. Semere Petros, email: semere@gemel.com.er, Tel: +291-1-186742) since November 2008. Eritrea has an embassy in New Delhi.

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