

BILATERAL BRIEF – LIBYA

Background

Though separated by geography, India and Libya enjoy strong bilateral ties. India established its Diplomatic Mission in Tripoli in 1969. The high water mark of Indo-Libya relations was the visit of Late Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi to Libya in 1984. India has supported Libya in international fora. India welcomed the United Nations Security Council resolution 1506 adopted on September 12, 2003, lifting sanctions imposed on Libya. However in the wake of 17 February revolution India's vote at the UNSC led to an image deficit and negative public perception that took a while to correct. The former President of the General National Congress (Parliament) Dr. Mohammed Yousef Magarief had in late 1970s served as Ambassador of Libya to India and the former PM Dr. Zeidan had served under him. Libyan leadership today is following a pragmatic foreign policy.

Liberation of Libya

Following Gaddafi's killing on 20 October, 2011 Libya was formally declared 'liberated' on 23 October. In late November, 2011 the interim government was formed.

India recognized the NTC

Following the Revolution when the National Transitional Council was formed the Government of India from the very beginning interacted with the National Transitional Council (NTC) in London, Istanbul, Paris and in New York and had conveyed its support to the NTC during the course of revolution. The Government of India provided humanitarian assistance of US\$ 1 million in cash through the United Nation's Office of Commissioner of Humanitarian Aid. Government of India's formal recognition to the NTC was conveyed on 16 November 2011. At the request of Libya another supply of humanitarian assistance, consisting of mainly life saving drugs and medical equipment worth US\$ 1 million, was also delivered to the NTC in Tripoli in January 2012.

Libya is currently passing through a fragile political and security situation. In view of the deteriorating security situation, the Embassy issued several advisories for the Indian nationals to leave the country. From August 2014 around 3754 Indian nationals were evacuated from Libya. The Mission has been temporarily relocated in D'jerba (Tunisia) with skeleton staff deployed on rotation to Tripoli.

Bilateral Interactions during the last few years

There have been several high-level visits between India and Libya in the last few years. Shri EVKS Elangovan, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry visited Libya in November 2004 to attend the 9th Session of Indo-Libya Joint Commission. In the same month, Shri GulamNabi Azad, Hon'ble Minister for Parliamentary Affairs & Urban Development also visited Libya at the invitation of the Libyan side.

In May 2005 Shri E. Ahamed, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs visited Libya. In July 2005, Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs visited Libya. In January 2007 Shri Murli Deora, Hon'ble Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, visited Libya. In May 2007 Shri Pranab Mukherjee, External Affairs Minister, visited

Libya. In September 2009, Shri K. Rehman Khan, Deputy Speaker of Rajya Sabha visited Libya. In September 2010 Shri Jayant Prasad, Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, paid a short visit to Libya. Shri. E Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Libya from 14th to 16th April 2013 when he called on Libyan President, PM and held discussions with Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Economy, Oil & Gas and Housing & Utilities. Also the Libyan Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Mohamed Abdelaziz met Hon. EAM on the sidelines of 68th UNGA September 2013 in New York. A high level security delegation visited Tripoli from December 15-18, 2013 to discuss issues related to explore areas of possible bilateral cooperation in the field of security primarily through capacity building.

From the Libyan side, in March 2007 Mr. Burrani, Minister for Asian Affairs, visited India. In July 2007 Mr. Al Isawi, Minister for Economy, Trade & Investment, visited India on the occasion of 10th session of Indo-Libya Joint Commission. In April 2008, Dr. Abdussalam Treki, Minister for African Affairs, led the Libyan Delegation to New Delhi to participate in the India-Africa Forum Summit. In March 2009 Captain Ramadan, Secretary, Administration Committee of Harbours Authority (Minister of State), visited India to negotiate the bilateral Shipping Agreement. In 2010 Dr Treki, President of the 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly visited India. In July 2011 Mr. Abdelati Al-Obeidi, Foreign Minister of Libya, paid a short visit to India. In September 2012 a 5-member delegation led by Ambassador Ramadan Rahim, Director General (Asia) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, visited India and held consultations with WANA Division and Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs, for enhancing cooperation between Diplomatic Academy of Libya and Foreign Service Institute. In November 2012 a four-member delegation, led by the Deputy Chairman of the High National Election Commission of Libya, visited India and an MOU was signed between the two Election Commissions. A high level Libyan delegation headed by DG (Asia & Australia) visited India for the DG level FOC held in Delhi in the month of February 2014.

A Libyan Defence delegation visited India to attend the Air Defence Show held in February 2013 in Bangalore. An 11-member Parliamentary delegation from the General National Congress of Libya to interact with the Indian Parliament made a study visit to India in April 2013. A Libyan delegation led by Deputy Minister of Health visited India to attend International Summit on Health & Wellness Tourism held on 26-28 April, 2013 in New Delhi. In October 2013, a 27-member strong business delegation headed by the, Chairman of Tripoli Chamber of Commerce and Vice Chairman, Libya Business Council (LBC) participated in 'I for Afrika' event organized by the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce in Mumbai from 3-6 October, 2013. In February 2014, a Libyan delegation led by DG (Asia), Libyan Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited India for the DG Level FOC. In March 2014, a 10 member business delegation from Libya visited India to participate in the Marble stone & granite (STONA) expo held in Bangalore, Mr Monem Al Yaser MP participated in the Conference on West Asia organized by ORF in collaboration with MEA from March 19-22, 2014 and the Chairman of the Libyan Privatization and Investment Board (PIB) visited India to attend the CII-EXIM Bank conclave to be held in New Delhi from 9-11 March, 2014. June 2014: A police delegation led by Colonel Reda Abdulhadi Al Jalah, Assistant Director of Training Department in the Ministry of Interior to discuss and explore areas of bilateral cooperation in the field of capacity building through diplomatic security and police training among other things visited India from 5-9 June 2014.

Bilateral Cooperation

Under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program the Government of India has been providing several slots to Libya for many years which were

reduced to 15 slots for 2016-17 due to the disturbed conditions in the country. These are fully funded short term technical and professional courses spread over 280 programs in 50 reputed institutions in India. Apart from ITEC courses, there are various other training courses also for which nominations are called for from time to time. Under the IAFS-II Scheme 5 Libyans attended various capacity building training courses in 2012-13. Under the Africa Scholarship Scheme ICCR allocate 8 slots every year for Libyans for higher studies.

Following the launching of the Pan-African e-governance initiative a Centre in Libya pertaining to tele-medicine, tele-education, e-governance, etc. was set up. Under this initiative all nations in Africa Continent were being connected to India through satellite network. After revolution re-activation of this center was under process and will be taken up on improvement of security situation in Libya.

Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements

The following Agreements/Memorandum of Understandings have been signed between India and Libya:

- Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion (1981);
- Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Health and Medical Sciences (1983);
- Agreement on Economic Cooperation (1985);
- Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) (2007);
- Cultural Exchange Agreement (2007);
- MoU between the two Election Commissions in 26-30 Nov 2012.

Economic and Commercial Relations

India and Libya have enjoyed close economic ties. In 1978, the two countries signed a framework agreement on "Protocol on Industrial, Economic and Scientific Cooperation". This was the beginning of consultations on economic cooperation between the two countries under Indo-Libyan Joint Commission (ILJC). Till now, a total of 10 sessions of ILJC have been held.

The economic cooperation between the two countries spans the entire spectrum of commercial activities. Indian companies have been active in Libya for over 30 years. A number of projects have been executed in Libya by major Indian PSUs like BHEL, NBCC, OVL, IOC, Oil India, and private companies PunjLlyod, Unitech, KEC, SSB, Dastur Engineering, Shapoorji Pallonji, SECON, Global Steel (Ispat Group Company), NIIT, Sun Pharma, Simplex Projects, and DS Construction. These projects included building of hospitals, housing, schools, roads, power plants, airports, dams, transmission lines etc.

Indian companies, especially in oil & gas, power generation, infotech and construction sectors, have several projects in Libya. Indian Oil, Oil India and ONGC Videsh are involved in the Libyan hydrocarbon sector. In April 2014, Punj Lloyd won a contract of US\$ 665 million to set up infrastructure facilities at Zliten city. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has successfully completed execution of prestigious Western Mountain Gas Turbine Power Project. Many Indian IT companies like JMR, DSS Software, I-flex Solutions and others have continued to provide software solutions to various Libyan companies especially in banking sector. Several Indian companies are seeking to resume stalled projects in Libya once the security situation improves.

Economic and Commercial Visits from India

A 14-member Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) delegation visited Libya from 30 October-1 November, 2012. The delegation made several interactive meetings with the Libyan Business Council and Chamber of Commerce and individual meetings with government authorities, like the Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Health, etc. Delegation's meeting with Prime Minister of Libya was also arranged during which the Prime Minister was accompanied by his three Ministers and senior officials.

A 2-member OVL delegation participated in the CWC "Libya Forum on Oil and Gas" held in Tripoli on 17-18 September 2013. A 2 member technical delegation from BHEL headed by the CMD Mr. B.P.Rao visited Libya to finalize completion of their power plant and also attended board meeting of ECCO. Three Indian companies participated in the Pharma Expo which was held from 10-12 September, 2013. Some Indian companies participated in the 11th Tripoli International Book Fair from October 1-10, 2013 that was held for the first time post-revolution of 2011. Furthermore, a 27-member business delegation headed by the, Chairman of Tripoli Chamber of Commerce and Vice Chairman, Libya Business Council (LBC) participated in 'I for Afrika' event organized by the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce in Mumbai from 3-6 October, 2013. Dr. Tamanna Chaturvedi, from the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT) visited Libya on 24-25 March 2014 to discuss Executive Development Programme under the aegis of IAFS with the Libyan Ministry of Economy. An 'India Pavilion' with around 80 participating firms from a range of consumer product sectors (the highest Indian participation in recent times and the largest foreign country participation out of the eight countries participating in the TIF 2014) led by ITPO that marked the return of India to one of Africa's oldest fair after three years post February 2011 revolution was organized successfully. Also an 'India Day' event fully funded by ITPO was organized on 6 April 2014 for B-2-B interaction and BSM. A 16 member CII led CEOs delegation visited Tripoli to scout for business opportunities in 'New Libya' from 5-7 April 2014 and also called on the first Deputy President of the GNC Ezzidine Mohammed Al-Awami among others. Mr. J.K. Pandey, Group General Manager, TCIL, the nodal agency visited Libya from 11-14 May, 2014 as part of the efforts to help revive the Pan-African E-Network Initiative launched in Libya in 2008-09 which was stalled following the February 2011 revolution.

Economic and Commercial Visits from Libya

A 6-member Libyan delegation led by Mr. Saeed Ibrahim Al-Khattali, Assistant Under Secretary of Technical Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs visited India to attend 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership from 17-19 March 2013 in New Delhi. A 5-member delegation from the Libyan Ministry of Health led by Dy. Minister, Ali SaadSaadSaad visited India to attend "Health and Wellness Tourism Meet" from 26-29 April, 2013 in Delhi. A 27-member business delegation headed by the, Chairman of Tripoli Chamber of Commerce and Vice Chairman, Libya Business Council (LBC) participated in 'I for Afrika' event organized by the Indo-African Chamber of Commerce in Mumbai from 3-6 October, 2013 in Mumbai. Two businessmen dealing in agriculture products attended the 33rd India International Trade Fair held on 14-27 November, 2013 at Pragati Maidan, New Delhi. Dr. Abdulbari A. Arousi, Minister of Oil & Gas led a 6-member delegation to India from 12-14 January 2014 to attend the biennial international Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, PETROTECH. A 10-member business delegation from Libya visited India to participate in the Marble stone & granite (STONA) expo held in Bangalore during 12-15 February, 2014. Chairman of the Libyan Privatization and Investment Board (PIB) visited India to attend the CII-EXIM Bank conclave held in New Delhi from 9-11 March, 2014. In April 2015 Mr. Ahmed Nuredin Ali Salem, Minister of Electricity in the rump GNC Tripoli salvation government

visited India on the invitation of BHEL. Dr. Tammana Chaturvedi representative from IIFT visited Libya from 24-25 March 2014 to discuss Foreign Trade and Management training programme with Ministry of Economy under IAFS.: Mr. J.K. Pandey, Group General Manager, TCIL, the nodal agency visited Libya from 11-14 May, 2014 as part of the efforts to help revive the Pan-African E-Network Initiative launched in Libya in 2008-09 but stalled following the February 2011 revolution

Bilateral Trade

Exports by India to Libya during the period 2015-16 stood at US\$ 122.58 million. On the other hand, Imports by India from Libya for 2015-16 were to the tune US \$ 8.86 Million. The bilateral trade went down mainly because of ongoing political and civil strife in Libya since July 2014 and decrease in oil production. The main items of India's exports to Libya are Stone, Plaster, Tobacco, Coffee, Drugs & pharmaceuticals, and other commodities. The main item of India's imports from Libya is petroleum (crude and products) and Aluminum ores.

India-Libya Cultural Relations

India and Libya have signed a Cultural Exchange Agreement in 2007 during the External Affairs Minister's visit to Libya. In the last few years, a number of Indian cultural troupes, sponsored by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR), have visited Libya and staged cultural performances in major cities of Libya. An 8-member Cultural Group of Kathakali, led by ShriKalamandalam Raman Kutty, visited Libya in August 2008 and staged two performances in Tripoli and in Sirte. An 8-member Libyan cultural troupe sponsored by the ICCR had visited India to perform during the first India-Africa Forum Summit, which was held in India in February 2008. A 12-member "Anart" Kathak group visited Libya from 16 November to 22 November, 2009, and performed in three cities of Tripoli, Sirte & Benghazi. Coinciding with Indian Republic Day Reception, an exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi was held on January 26, 2013 at Radisson Hotel, Tripoli in which a number of Libyans including high dignitaries, foreign diplomats, and prominent Indians visited and highly appreciated.

Mission celebrated International Days of Yoga on June 21, 2015 and 2016 in Tripoli despite the civil strife and fragile security situation.

Indian community

Prior to the uprising in Libya the number of Indians engaged in Libya was estimated to be around 18,000. The Indian professionals were mainly engaged in hospitals and other teaching institutions whereas major part of manpower was engaged in the construction projects. During the course of revolution most of them were evacuated to India at Government of India cost in February/March 2011. Few hundred Indians continued to serve in Libya even during the revolution period. The help and assistance rendered by Indian doctors and paramedics in Libya during the revolution was appreciated by the Libyans. Gradually more Indians returned to Libya, and in early 2014 there were about 6000 Indians. Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Smt Sushma Swaraj ordered another evacuation of Indians from Libya, and 3754 till date were evacuated from Libya in view of serious escalation of violence and armed conflicts in Tripoli, Benghazi and other parts of Libya. Out of this, 1324 were evacuated with full GOI cost and 2430 with full facilitation by GOI. (The total 3754 includes 557 nurses, 109 male paramedics and 53 children). There are still around 1500 Indian nationals despite Embassy's advisories for them to leave Libya who have decided to stay back and continue with their jobs. Owing to deteriorating situation, the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs (MOIA) suspended grant of emigration clearance to ECR category till further notice. Indian nationals were further advised not to take up employment in Libya

till the security situation is stabilised. In April,2016 Government of India banned the travel of Indian nationals to Libya irrespective of the purpose.

Air links with India

Presently there is no direct flight from India to Libya. Following the destruction of Tripoli International airport in July 2014 no commercial foreign airline flights operate from Tripoli. Mitiga airbase is now used for limited Libyan airline flights.

For more information and latest updates please visit Embassy of India to Libya and High Commission of India to Malta website : <http://indianembassylibya.in>

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