

## **India-Mali Bilateral Relations – A Brief**

India and Mali have traditionally maintained friendly relations and have no geo-political issues between them.

2. The Government of India established its Embassy in Bamako in May 2009. Mali followed soon by opening its Embassy in New Delhi in August 2009.

3. The Government of India has been supportive of the people and Government of Mali during their ongoing political transition following military interventions in August 2020 and May 2021. Recognizing the multidimensional nature of the challenges that Mali has been facing since 2012, the Government of India has reiterated support for Mali's sovereignty, unity, territorial integrity and the quest for durable peace, stability and prosperity in Mali. India has underlined the need for a Mali-owned and Mali-led process for the success of ongoing political transition leading to the restoration of Constitutional order in early 2024, as agreed between Mali and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS).

4. Earlier, India had strongly supported efforts for restoration of constitutional order in Mali and preservation of Mali's unity and territorial integrity during Mali's political and security crisis and military intervention in 2012. India had contributed US\$ 1 million for strengthening of Malian forces at the Donors Conference held in Addis Ababa in 2013.

5. A key aspect of India-Mali relationship is India's Development assistance in the form of concessional Line of Credit (LOC) which is extended by the government of India under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS) through the EXIM Bank of India. It is reflected in the implementation of infrastructure projects identified by Mali which are financed by India's LOC and fully funded capacity building training programmes for both civilians and defense personnel under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC), scholarships for higher studies (Bachelors,

Masters and PhD degrees) in India offered the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and scholarships for Tele-Education courses under e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project etc.

6. Mali has been supportive of India's various candidatures at the United Nations and multilateral bodies. Both countries have been supportive of each other in regional and multilateral fora and coordinating closely based on the convergence of interests on a range of issues such as terrorism, disarmament, climate change, renewable energy and other sustainable development goals.

7. India and Mali have a growing win-win partnership in numerous areas of economy in which the private sectors of the two countries have been playing an increasingly important role.

8. Many aspects of Indian culture, including Indian films, music, and TV serials are followed with interest in Mali. The historical importance of Timbuktu as a place of Islamic scholarship and learning, culture and commerce from the times of Trans-Saharan trade is known to many in India.

### **Bilateral Agreements between India and Mali**

- Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations (2009)
- Agreement on Political, Economic, Scientific, Technical and Cultural Cooperation (2009)
- MOU on Cooperation in Geology and Mineral Resources (2012)
- Cultural Exchange Programme (September 2016)
- MOU on Standards between the Bureau of Indian Standards and Direction Nationale De Industries, Mali (September 2016)

### **High-Level Exchanges**

#### **A. Incoming Visits from Mali**

- President Amadou Toumani Touré paid a State visit to India in January 2012. President Touré was accompanied by First Lady

Madame Toure Lobbo Traore and a high-level Ministerial and Business delegation. The Ministerial delegation included Dr. Bocary Tereta, Minister of Livestock and Fisheries; Mr. Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation; Mr. Aghatham AG Alhassane, Minister of Agriculture; Mr. Habib Ouane, Minister of Power and Water; Mr. Modibo Ibrahim Toure; Minister of Post and New Technologies; Mr. Sambou Wague, Minister in Charge of Budget.

- The First Lady of Mali Madame Aminata Maïga Keïta visited India in August 2015 to attend the Global 'Call to Action Summit 2015. She also briefly met Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi during that visit.
- President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta attended the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit at New Delhi, October 2015. President Keita was accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Foreign Minister Mr. Abdoulaye Diop and other Ministers and senior officials.
- Minister of Investment Promotion and Private Sector Mr. Konimba Sidibe attended the 12<sup>th</sup> CII Exim Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership in March 2017 in New Delhi.
- Three Members of National Assembly of Mali headed by Mr. Abderhamane Niang, Parliamentarian and President of the High Court of Justice, Mali called on Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in Parliament House on 21 December 2017. The Malian delegation also included Members of Parliament of Mali, Mr. Ousmane Kouyate and Mr. Youssouf Aya. Acknowledging the threat of terrorism to global peace and security, both the Vice-President and the Leader of visiting delegation expressed their mutual concerns about the common challenge of terrorism and radicalization and called for greater international cooperation to deal with this menace.

- President Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta visited India for the Founding Conference of International Solar Alliance (ISA) at New Delhi, March 2018. President Keita was accompanied by a high-level delegation.

- Secretary General Mr. Boubacar Gouro Diall, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali, led an official delegation for the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) in Delhi, 4 November 2019.

## **B. Outgoing Visits from India**

- Vice President of India Shri M. Hamid Ansari visited Mali in September 2016. He called on the President of Mali Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keïta and held delegation levels talks with Prime Minister of Mali Mr. Modibo Keïta. He addressed National Assembly of Mali on 30 September 2016. He was accompanied by Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Arjun Ram Meghwal, four Members of Parliament and senior officials.

- Minister of State for External Affairs Shri M. J. Akbar visited Mali in March 2017. He co-chaired the first ever Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) between India and Mali along with the Foreign Minister of Mali H. E. Mr. Abdoulaye Diop (He is a current FM of Mali).

## **C. Other Exchanges**

- A 2-member cultural delegation visited India for a musical performance during the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in October 2015.

- 'Taj Mahal Meets Timbuktu', an exhibition of the manuscripts of Timbuktu, Mali, held at the National Museum, New Delhi in May-June 2018. It had rare manuscripts of Mali dating back to 11<sup>th</sup> century AD dealing with Sufism, jurisprudence, governance, correspondence between political and religious leaders, and description of social life, labour laws etc.

- Mali's celebrated Singer Habib Koite and his musical troupe "Bamada" participated in the Udaipur World Music Festival 2020 in the State of Rajasthan, India from 7-9 February 2020.
- Ambassador R. Ravindra, India's Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York, visited Mali as part of the UN Security Council delegation to Bamako, 22-23 October 2021 during India's Non-Permanent Membership of the Security Council.
- Mali's cultural troupe Cheickne Sissoko 5Tamans participated in the National Tribal Dance Festival in Raipur, Chhattisgarh from 28-30 October 2021.
- Mali participated in the 2nd edition of India-Africa Defense Dialogue (IADD) on the sidelines of DefExpo2022 at Gandhinagar, Gujarat, India from 18-22 October 2022. Mali was represented by a Major General and a Brigadier.
- Mali sent a 21-member team at the UNESCO-India-Africa (UIA) Hackathon, Greater Noida, India from 23-25 November 2022.
- Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. V Muraleedharan (MoS-VM) had a brief conversation with Foreign Minister of Mali Mr. Abdoulaye Diop on the side lines of Dakar International Forum on Peace and Security in Africa, at Dakar on 25 October 2022.

## **Bilateral Dialogue Mechanisms**

### **• Joint Commission Meeting (JCM)**

9. Minister of State for External Affairs (MoS) Shri M. J. Akbar paid an official visit to Mali from March 2-3, 2017 and, along with the Foreign Minister of Mali Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, co-chaired the **first-ever Joint Commission Meeting** between the two countries. They reviewed the bilateral engagement between the two countries in various sectors like agriculture, energy etc. and laid out areas of future co-operation, particularly in security and technology. Minister Akbar reiterated India's commitment to Mali's geographical and

ideological integrity and assured India's support for its sovereignty and territorial integrity. Minister Diop thanked India for its generous assistance of US\$ 0.5 million for the reconstruction of the world heritage of Timbuktu.

10. Both sides identified terrorism as a grave threat to peace and prosperity and agreed to co-operate at a bilateral, regional and multi-lateral level to combat this menace. Both sides also exchanged views on issues of common interest such as UN reforms, development issues, South-South co-operation and promotion of renewable energy.

• **Foreign Office Consultation (FOC)**

11. The **first-ever India-Mali FOC** were held in New Delhi on 4 November 2019. The Indian delegation was led by Shri T.S Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Relations) and the Malian delegation was led by H. E. Mr. Boubacar Gouro Diall, Secretary General, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Mali. The consultations provided an opportunity to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations and to explore new areas for cooperation including trade and commerce, development partnership (projects funded through India's concessional lines of credit), capacity building training programmes, people to people linkages, defense cooperation and security related issues. The two sides agreed to identify capacity building training programmes related to security and counter terrorism which could be considered for G5 Sahel countries including Mali. The two sides also exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues.

**Bilateral Trade & Economic Relations**

12. As reflected in the chart below, the total bilateral trade was US\$ 230.42 million in 2021-22.

India-Mali Bilateral Trade (in US\$ million)

	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
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India's Exports to Mali	123.60	130.69	146.14	186.97	207.56
Mali's Exports to India	114.14	18.31	38.07	13.97	22.85
Total Trade	237.74	148.99	184.21	200.94	230.42

Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

13. The United Nations has designated Mali as one of the least developed countries (LDCs) entitling them to preferential market access, aid, special technical assistance, and capacity-building on technology among other concessions. Recognizing this, the Government of India has extended Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme to Mali. The DFTP Scheme covers around 98% of the tariff lines as a result of which import of most products from Mali to India attract lower duties.

### **India's Exports to Mali**

14. The main items of India's export to Mali, valued at US\$ 207.56 million in 2021-22, were drugs and pharmaceutical products, cotton fabrics, boilers, commercial vehicles (Tata & Mahindra) and two-wheelers (TVS & Bajaj), transport equipment and accessories, equipment and machinery for electricity transmission, electronics, equipment for bore-wells, cycle parts, machinery for agro-processing industries, tractors and agricultural implements, articles of iron and steel, plastics, rubber and rubber articles, imitation jewellery, rice, tea, biscuits, candy, construction material and processed food items etc.

### **Mali's Exports to India**

15. The main items of import from Mali, valued US\$ 22.85 million in 2021-22, were raw cotton, lac, gums, resins and other vegetable saps and extracts, edible fruit and nuts like the Shea nuts, wood products, lead etc.

### **Potential for Indian Business & Investments in Mali**

16. Mali has one of the largest gold reserves in Africa. It also has

proven reserves of iron ore, phosphates, uranium, bauxite, zinc, manganese, tin and copper, granite, gypsum, kaolin, limestone, lithium, rock salt, silver, etc. which have been under exploited so far.

17. Mali has a liberal and friendly investment and trade policy. There is immense potential for Indian investors and business in Mali for win-win partnership in sectors such as drugs and pharmaceuticals (generic drugs), health infrastructure, agriculture (cotton, food processing industries), automobiles (two-wheeler segment and transport vehicles), mining, power, IT and telecommunications, education, textiles etc. There are also opportunities for Indian investors/business in the fields of infrastructure development such power transmission lines, solar energy projects, railway development and its connectivity with Senegal and Niger etc.

### **Presence of Indian Business & Investments in Mali**

18. Indian business and investments in Mali can be seen in multiple sectors including pharmaceuticals, cement, iron and steel, mining, power transmission lines, solar energy, transport vehicles, tractors, light engineering products, agro-industry, detergent and soaps, cotton oil plant, textiles, plastic products, travel and tourism, scrap business and recycling of lead/battery/aluminium/engine oil, restaurants, Indian grocery, potable water and beverages, white goods etc.

19. FERMALI SA is a successful Joint Venture between TRB Group of India and Mali Câbles of Mali which makes steel and construction materials like iron rods. It was TRB's first investment outside India. Following its success, TRB is keen to further expand its presence in Mali. One of the largest producers of cement in Mali, Diamond Cement Mali SA, has an Indian partner. Mali Tracteurs SA on the outskirts of Bamako which assembles India's Mahindra Tractors for markets in Mali and neighboring countries, is a joint venture between the Government of Mali and India's Angelique International Limited. It was set up as part of India's development partnership through a line of credit from the EXIM Bank of India. A large part of the industry involved in the drilling of bore-wells for potable water in Mali is managed by Indians. In the last 3-4 years, the presence of Indian motorbikes has visibly grown in Bamako and other

parts of Mali.

## **Malian Business & Investments in India**

20. As of date, there is no known Malian investment in India. However, India remains a growing source for a large number of products, including industrial machinery, equipment, technologies and goods, which are being used in several sectors of Malian industry and economy.

## **Development Partnership**

### **• Lines of Credit Projects**

21. 7 projects under Lines of Credit (LoC) totaling US\$ 303.6 million have been completed. A 225 KV double circuit power transmission project connecting Bamako and Sikasso via Bougouni (395 Kms) for which the Government of India extended an LoC of US \$ 100 million, is under construction and expected to be completed in 2023. Other completed projects are in the energy sector (transmission line), agriculture and food processing projects, acquisition of railway coaches and setting up of agro-machinery and tractor assembly plant.

22. During ISA Founding Conference held in New Delhi in March 2018, three solar projects were selected for financing under LOC - two on bilateral basis and one through ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID):

- Setting up a sustainable village and use of solar photo voltaic technology for irrigation of 2500 ha of agricultural land at the value of US\$ 22 million.
- Construction of 50 MW Solar Photo-Voltaic Power Plant in Fana at the value of US\$ 60.65 million.
- Construction of 2 MW Solar Photovoltaic plants in Mopti (EBID) - US\$ 8 million

23. The first two LoC for projects mentioned above had been offered to Mali by the Government of India in 2019. However, the

Government of Mali requested further relaxation of the interest rate which is under consideration.

• **Grants Projects**

• Gifting of IT Equipment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Mali - this was announced during the visit of Vice President of India to Mali on September 29-30 2015. They were handed over to MOFA on 14 April 2017. Amount CFA 10,036,500 (Eq Rs. 10,93,074).

• Cash assistance of US\$500,000 towards revival of World heritage site of Timbuktu - this was announced during the visit of Vice President of India to Mali on September 29-30 2015. The donation cheque was handed over to the Mali's Minister of Culture on 2 March 2017 by the Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. M J. Akbar during his visit to Mali.

• Grant assistance of CFA 8,772,251 for procurement of scanning equipment for digitization of documents of the African House of Photography, Bamako under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Government of Mali. (Eq. Rs. 11,85,263), November 2020.

• Grant assistance of CFA 2,806,500 for procurement of basic equipment in the field of obstetrics for a newly built Community Health Centre in Missirikoro, Sikasso, Mali. (Eq Rs. 3,84,163), December 2020.

• **Professional Training under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme**

24. For the year 2022-2023, 70 ITEC slots have been offered to Mali which are in the process of being utilized.

• **Educational Cooperation & Scholarships for Higher Studies**

25. Under ICCR's Africa Scholarship Scheme for higher studies in India, Mali has been offered 13 slots for the 2022-2023, up from 7 in

the previous year. But based on greater demand, a total of 16 Malian students were given scholarships for higher studies in India in 2022. In addition, one Malian student was provided scholarship for studying Hindi at the Central Institute of Hindi at Agra in 2022.

26. India is becoming one of the favored destinations of Malian students for their higher education. Apart from the scholarships offered by the Government of India, many Malians go to India for their higher studies as self-financed students.

**• e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Project for Tele-Education & Tele-Medicine**

27. Mali has been offered the e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project to provide free tele-education courses in various academic disciplines and free continuing medical education to doctors/nurses/para-medical staff including free medical consultancy. An MoU between Mali and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited [TCIL] was signed on 4 November 2019 in New Delhi for Mali's participation in this project.

28. The tele-education portal **iLearn & iHealth for Africa** provides access to over 500 courses in various disciplines including engineering and technology, education, mathematics and sciences, education, humanities and arts and teacher training. The portal offers 15000 scholarships to African partner countries, including Mali, to pursue undergraduate and postgraduate courses from premier public and private Universities of India. 44 students from Mali have enrolled for the July 2022 academic session under e-VBAB.

**Parliamentary Exchanges / References**

29. Shri Arjun Meghwal, Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, and four Members of Parliament of India, accompanied the Vice President of India Shri Hamid Ansari to Mali on 29- 30 September 2016.

30. Three Members of National Assembly of Mali headed by Mr. Abderhamane Niang, Parliamentarian and President of the High

Court of Justice, Mali called on Vice-President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in Parliament House on 21 December 2017. The Malian delegation also included Members of Parliament of Mali, Mr. Ousmane Kouyate and Mr. Youssouf Aya. Acknowledging the threat of terrorism to global peace and security, both the Vice-President and the Leader of visiting delegation expressed their mutual concerns about the common challenge of terrorism and radicalization and called for greater international cooperation to deal with this menace.

31. The Council of States (Rajya Sabha) of the Parliament of India paid tributes to former President of Mali, Mr. Amadou Toumani Touré following his death in 2020. He had paid a State Visit to India in January 2012. India-Mali relations intensified during his tenure with the opening of Indian Embassy in Bamako and Malian Embassy in Delhi, both in 2009.

### **Cooperation in Health Sector**

32. There is an active and growing win-win collaboration in the pharmaceuticals sector which is driven by private players of both two countries. Of the total bilateral trade of US\$230.42 million in 2021-2022, pharmaceutical products accounted for US\$ 40.64 million.

33. There is enormous scope for India-Mali cooperation in the pharmaceuticals sector with the potential to promote affordable and quality health-care in Mali.

34. On 25 April 2020, External Affairs Minister of India Dr. S. Jaishankar and Foreign Minister of Mali Mr. Tiébilé Dramé held telephonic conversation to discuss various aspects of bilateral relations, including India's support to Mali during COVID-19 pandemic. Consequently, the Government of India gifted consignments of life-saving medicines to the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Government of Mali, in Mali and June 2020.

35. Subsequently, the first Covid-19 vaccines to arrive in Mali were the 396,000 doses of Made-in-India Covishield vaccines which were

supplied to Mali through International COVAX Arrangement in March 2021.

36. Ajanta Pharma Limited (APL), an Indian multinational pharmaceutical company, is engaged in CSR activities in Mali in association with Pharma + Mali S.A., of Mali. Ajanta Pharma reserves 10 CFA for every box of antimalarial ARTEFAN sold in Mali. In 2022, Ajanta Pharma gave 7.5 million CFA for the renovation of the buildings of Association Malienne de Lutte Contre les Deficiences Mentales chez l'Enfant (AMALDEME), a school in Bamako which works with people with learning difficulties and their families.

37. Some Malians have also started going to India for quality and affordable medical treatment.

### **International Solar Alliance**

38. Mali signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement on 2 October 2017.

39. Minister of Mine, Energy and Water of Mali Mr. Lamine Seydou Traoré, participated in the International Solar Alliance's Regional Committee Meeting held online for Africa Region in August 2021.

### **The Community of Malian Indophile**

40. Mali has a thriving community of Malian Indophiles, many of whom are second generation of Indophiles in their families. There are several Indophile cultural groups across Mali led by Malians – Maharaja, Saathiya (in Segou), Bollywood Fans, Yaarana, Dosti (in Bamako), Dostana (in Mopti), Indou Seydou (Kita), Sur-Taal (Koulikoro). They are known for their passion for Indian films and music and their colourful live events. Some of them present weekly programmes on Malian Radio/TV. Most of them are connected to the Mali-India Friendship Association which is also an initiative of Malian Indophiles. The Embassy, in collaboration, with these Indophile cultural groups, has organized several musical-cultural events to strengthen people-to people connections and promote cultural

understanding between the two countries.

41. A major recognition for Malian Indophile community came when the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi spoke for over 3 minutes about Mr. Seydou Dembele (alias 'Hindustan Ka Babu') and his love for India in 'Mann Ki Baat' programme on 27 September 2020. Link of PM's video: <https://youtu.be/GdtLHJ9LBmQ>

42. Indian films and TV serials (dubbed/translated in French and Bambara, Mali's native lingua franca) are very popular across Mali and watched by people of all age-groups. There are several TV/Radio programmes in local languages (French/ Bambara) on Indian music/films presented by members of Malian Indophile community which are widely followed in Mali and parts of neighbouring countries.

### **Indian Diaspora in Mali**

43. About 600 Indians are living peacefully in Mali who play an important role in expanding win-win partnership between the two countries. They are working closely with Malians as professionals, investors importers, traders, retailers and in numerous sectors of Malian economy - iron & steel, cement, gold and iron mining, electricity transmission line projects, solar energy, agriculture and food processing industry, commercial and private vehicles, pharmaceuticals, bore-well industry, plastics, food and beverages, tour, travel, restaurants, and hospitality, scrap and recycling etc. Presently there are two Indian Restaurants in Bamako – Annapurna and Namaste India. Indian grocery and related products are available at the Annapurna Supermarket in Bamako.

44. The vibrant Indian community in Mali is playing a positive role in further strengthening India-Mali relationship by undertaking people-friendly projects in Mali. In 2021-2022, they financed the construction of five Bore-wells/Water Pumps along with elevated Water Tanks and Tap connections at various places in Bamako, including schools/hospitals, in response to requests received from them.

45. In 2020, the members of Indian community living in Mali had collected 10 million CFA and handed it over to the Ministry of Health

of Mali as a gesture of solidarity from the Indian diaspora in support of Mali's fight against COVID-19 pandemic.

46. The Indian community in Mali play an important role in promoting friendship and understanding between the peoples of two countries through its various activities including celebration of various Indian and Malian festivals in association with Malian citizens.

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1 December 2022