

Brief on India-Mauritania Bilateral Relations

Political Relations

Mauritania gained its independence on November 28, 1960 from colonial ruler France. Both the countries - India and Mauritania- have a democratic form of governance and enjoy cordial and friendly relations since its independence. Both the countries established diplomatic relations on 22 October 1965. India opened its Resident Mission in Nouakchott on 21 June 2021. Mauritania was originally concurrently accredited to Embassy of India in Dakar, Senegal. The accreditation was transferred to the Embassy of India in Bamako, Mali, following its opening in May 2009. Mauritania also opened its Mission in New Delhi in July, 2025.

Visits from India

HOS/HOG Level:

Hon'ble President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu paid the first-ever historic State to visit to Nouakchott, Mauritania on 16 October 2024 and held delegation level talks with the President of the Republic of Mauritania. The President of Mauritania hosted a banquet dinner in honour of the Hon'ble President. The Foreign Minister of Mauritania paid a courtesy call on the Hon'ble President. Four bilateral agreements listed below were signed during the visit.

Others:

A three-member delegation led by Secretary (ER) paid an official visit to Nouakchott on 21- 22 March, 2024. During the visit Secretary (ER) called on the President H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani; Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Mauritanians Abroad; Minister of Agriculture and jointly addressed the Inaugural session of the first bilateral Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs). This was the first ever visit by an Indian official at the Secretary level since establishment of diplomatic relations in October, 1965. During the visit, issues of mutual interests, including close engagement in the fields of economic cooperation, trade & investment and capacity building were discussed.

Visits from Mauritania:

HOS/HOG Level: At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, the President of Mauritania, accompanied by a high level Ministerial/official delegation attended the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in New Delhi in October 2015.

Ministerial Level Visits: On the invitation of our Hon'ble Defence Minister, the Defense Minister of Mauritania participated at the India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD) on the sidelines of Def Expo from 18-22 October 2022 in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Both the Ministers held bilateral discussions.

Other Visits/meetings/Engagements:

1. Foreign Office Consultations (FOC):

The first ever FOCs held on 22 March 2024 in Nouakchott, jointly led by AS (C&WA) and his counterpart Director General Mohamed El Hanchi Kettab in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations, particularly in the areas of economic cooperation and exchanged views on multilateral issues and developments in the Sahel region.

2. Global South Cooperation:

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Mauritania joined the 1st virtual Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India on 13 January 2023;

The then Mauritanian Minister of Health, Ms. Naha Mint Hamdi Ould Mouknass also participated in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit hosted by India in virtual mode on 17 November 2023.

Dr. Yacoub Moine, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research participated in the 3rd VOGSS 3.0 Education Session held virtually by India. The Hon'ble Minister shared his video message for the Session on 17 August 2024.

3. Other visits:

- (i) Familiarization visit of media editors / journalists from Mauritania to India from 10-18 June, 2025:** Mr. Jemal Bah, Director of Publication & Editor - Alwiam Agency and a Senior Mauritanian Journalist, (Hindi/English-speaking); and Mr. Cherif El Yamani, President of the Journalists' Association and Senior Journalist in TV Mauritania (French/Arabic speaking) participated in the Familiarization visit.

- (ii) **2nd Policymakers' visit to India from 16 - 19 June 2025:** Mr. Cheikh Baye Mkhaitiratt, Advisor to the Minister of Health; and Mr. Hamahoullah Cheikh Ahmed Vall, Director General, Central Purchasing Office for Essential Medicine and Medical Consumables participated in the 2nd Policymakers' visit to India, on full hospitality sponsored by India.
- (iii) Seventh Meeting of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Regional Committee (RCM) for the Africa Region, 2-4 September, 2025, Accra, Ghana: Mr. Zakeriyaou Soumare, Director of Renewable Energy, Ministry of Energy and Petroleum attended the RCM meeting organized by ISA.
- (iv) International Conference on '50 Years of BWC: Strengthening Biosecurity in the Global South'- 1-2 December, 2025: Mr. Ishagh Mohamed Moussa, President of the National Authority for Radiation Protection, Safety and Nuclear Security (ARSN), Prime Minister Office, Islamic Republic of Mauritania participated in the event, organized by Ministry of External Affairs, India.
- (v) **Familiarization visit of media editors / journalists from Mauritania to India from 13-22 January, 2026:** Mr. Ahmed Salem Abderrahmane (Media Producer, Mauritanian Television and Editorial Director of Mewkie.com, a popular Arabic news portal in Mauritania; and Mr. Hamoud Dah Yahdih, Reporter and Producer in Al Oussara, TV Channel, a popular current affairs Arabic Channel in Mauritania participated in the Familiarization visit.
- (vi) A three member delegation led by H.E. Houssein DEH, Ambassador of Mauritania to Cairo and Permanent delegate to the League of Arab States participated in the 2nd India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in Delhi on 31 January, 2026.

Bilateral Agreements

The following bilateral agreements have been signed between India and Mauritania:

1. Bilateral visa waiver agreements for holders of diplomatic and official passports.
This agreement has come into effect from 18 August 2025;
2. Protocol on Foreign Office Consultations;
3. MoU between SSIFS and Mauritanian FSI and
4. Cultural Exchange Programme 2024-2028.

Economic and Commercial Relations

There is vast potential for Indian investors in Mauritania, especially in the fields of hydrogen, solar and wind energy, hydrocarbons, oil exploration, fishing, mining,

phosphate, gold, iron ore, lithium, uranium, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, machinery, human resource development and power generation.

In mining, Mauritania has potential with more than 900 mining and mineral indices listed, particularly for iron, copper, gold, phosphate, quartz, diamond, chromium, gypsum, manganese, lithium, lead, zinc, uranium, platinum group elements, rare earths, black sands, salts and peats.

Recently, immediately after the visit of Hon'ble Rashtrapati in October 2024, an Agreement on phosphate mine development in Mauritania was signed between an Indian entity and a Mauritanian entity on 16 October 2024. The entire phosphate mine development deal is estimated at approximately US\$2 billion and the development could run to decades. M/s. Essar Group was also awarded the Askaf iron ore mining project, in March 2025. The project envisages a total investment of nearly USD 800 million by the Essar group.

Mauritania's major exports are Iron ore, fish & fish products, gold and copper. Its major imports are machinery and equipment, petroleum products, capital goods, foodstuffs, consumer goods, etc.

India's main exports to Mauritania are cereals (and related products), pharma, plastic products, cotton, ceramic, Iron and steel articles, boilers and related mechanical appliances, electrical, chemical products, and non-railway vehicles etc. Mauritania's main exports to India include iron and steel, copper, aluminum, electrical machinery etc.

(In US\$ Millions)

Year	India's Exports	India's Imports	Total Trade
2017-18	83.16	5.45	88.61
2018-19	115.59	15.77	131.36
2019-20	83.83	10.70	94.53
2020-21	88.92	5.49	94.41
2021-22	96.90	12.02	108.91
2022-23	146.57	231.68	378.24
2023-24	96.38	19.16	115.54
2024-25	114.83	22.63	137.46
2025-26 (Apr-Dec 2025)*	117.46 (Apr-Dec 2025)	62.07 (Apr-Dec 2025)	179.53 (Apr-Dec 2025)

* Source: <https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in>

Indian companies have presence in mining, vehicles, fishing, iron and steel in the country. Some Indian companies are also involved in projects executions under international organizations. Indian origin commodities are commonly seen at market places. Indian fabric is particularly used for a popular traditional dress worn by Mauritanian women. Mauritania has no known investment enterprises in India. It is a least developed country (LDC) heavily reliant on foreign aid.

Development Partnership

India has extended a Line of Credit (LOC) of value aggregating US\$ 21.8 million to Mauritania towards agro-industries (milk processing plant) and drinking water projects, out of which USD16.1 million was disbursed and project got completed in 2016-17.

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme

The number of ITEC slots offered to Mauritania for 2025-26 is 7, two for defence and five civilian slots. One ICCR scholarship is offered to Mauritania every year. During the FY 2025-2026, three Mauritanian candidates attended the ITEC courses. Two candidates also attended the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) conducted by Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in 2024 and 2025. One candidate also attended the 4th Global South Young Diplomats Forum, organized by SSIFS from 16-27 February 2026.

Cultural Relations

The culture of Mauritania is a confluence of many influences, both indigenous (the ancient Berber people, the Moors) and external (the French), especially visible in music and cuisine. Mauritanian music is a tradition carried down by the Moors. In the earlier times, musicians formed the lowest rung of society and performed for anyone who paid them. Today, the music arena is more refined, but the use of Moor instruments such as the four-stringed lute and the kettle drum continue. A 10 member cultural troupe, comprising of artisans and performers from Mauritania visited India to participate in the 39th edition of Surajkund Handicraft Mela, Haryana from February 4 - 15, 2026.

One strong feature of Mauritanian society is that it is composed of a community of diverse ethnic groups that are hierarchical in social structure and strongly differentiated. Islam as a religion is shared by all ethnic groups in the country and has served as a centripetal force in creating a national culture.

Similarly, Mauritanian cuisine is an amalgamation of several influences. While many dishes and ingredients like dried meats, grilled goat, sheep and couscous clearly point at Berber and Moorish origins, there are also more modern formulations like baked goods and French pastries.

Indian Films/TV serials and Indian dresses are popular in Mauritania. Some Indophiles from Mauritania follow Bollywood stars and their films. There are many similarities between Mauritanian and Indian culture. Like women's dress '*Malafa*' is very similar to saree; ancestors are honored; cemeteries are respected and feared; strong family ties; Joint families; institution of marriage is strong; the entire community engages in teaching social values to children as they grow up. Respect for the elders, maintenance of the family honor, good hospitality, patience, virtue, belief in God, are some of the values taught to the children.

Indian Community

While the registered Indians with the Embassy is less than 100 and local government has not shared any data in this regard. The number of Indians in Mauritania currently estimated to be around 150 (mostly expatriates). Indian presence is evident in the mining, power, pharmaceuticals, oil and gas exploration, and agro-industrial sectors. Majority are expats working in Indian and foreign companies in Mauritania. Some Indians are also working in UN and other multilateral bodies.

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