

India-Somalia Bilateral Relations

India and Somalia relations are age old, with strong connect established by traders who sailed through the Indian ocean to buy and sell goods in the Horn of Africa. The connection still continues with presence of a small Indian business community in Somalia. The diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1960, this is the year Somalia became independent. The Commissioner of India to Mauritius was accredited as Ambassador of India to Somalia and presented Credentials in 1961. Later, a resident Mission was opened in Mogadishu. After the outbreak of civil war in 1991, the Indian Embassy in Mogadishu was closed. High Commission of India, Nairobi is concurrently accredited to Somalia.

In the past few years, both countries have witnessed a number of high-level visits from both sides which have helped further strengthening the bilateral relations.

2.1 Visits from Somalia: President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud led the Somali delegation for the 3rd India Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi from 26-29 October 2015. He held a bilateral meeting with PM Narendra Modi. He also visited Bhopal, at the invitation of GOI. During the visit, he was conferred an Honorary Doctorate degree by the Barkatullah University, Bhopal of which he is an alumnus. Earlier, the then Prime Minister of Somalia Dr. Abdirashid Ali Sharmarke accompanied by Minister of Information visited India in 1963. Dr. Sharmarke visited India again in 1968 as President of Somalia.

H.E Hussein Ali HajiAbdulle, Deputy Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Federal Republic of Somalia on 16 June 2025 attended the First Assembly of International Big Cat Alliance in Delhi, India. The Deputy Minister of Somalia met the Government of India officials on the sidelines of the event.

Mr. Mohamed Abdullahi Farah, State Minister, Ministry of Energy and Water Resources, Federal Republic of Somalia visited India in November 2024 to participate in 7th Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly.

Mr. Ahmed Osman Dirie, State Minister, Ministry of Communications and Technology, Federal Republic of Somalia visited India in October 2024 to participate in World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly organized by Government of India.

Mr. Abdilahi Bidhan, Minister for Energy and Water Resources, Federal Republic of Somalia visited India in September 2024 to participate in 8th India Water Week 2024, organized by Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Mr. Abdisalam Sharif Hussein, State Minister of Commerce & Industry, Federal Republic of Somalia visited India in August 2024 to participate in 19th CII India Africa Business Conclave in New Delhi.

There was active participation from Somalia in all sessions of Voice of Global South Summit. Minister of Health Mr. Ali Haji Adam Abubakar visited India to attend the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November, 2023. He conveyed his remarks on the theme of discussion - 'Solutions from the Global South for One Health'. He also participated in One Earth One Health (6th Edition of Advantage Healthcare India) from 26-28 April 2023. During the visit he held a meeting with India's Minister of Health.

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Mr. Mohamed Hassan Bullale, visited India in August 2023 to participate in One Earth One Health-Advantage Healthcare India, a G-20 co-branded event of G20 Ministerial meetings.

Mr. Jama Taqal, Minister of Energy, Somalia sent a video message for the Energy Ministers' Session of Voice of Global South Summit in January 2023. H.E. Mohamed Abdullahi Farah, State Minister of Energy and Water Resources participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 August 2024.

Defence Minister of Somalia, Mr. Hassan Ali Mohamed Amardambe visited India to participate in DefExpo India 2020 in India Africa Defence Ministers' meet during 5-7 February 2020.

In March 2018, Deputy Prime Minister Mahdi Mohammed Gulaid accompanied by Minister of Energy and Water Resources Salim Alio Ibro and State Minister for Foreign Affairs Abdulkadir Ahmed-Kheyr Abdi visited India to attend Founding Conference of

International Solar Alliance (ISA) in New Delhi. He called on Rashtrapati and Prime Minister during the visit.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Somalia, Mr. Yusuf-Garaad Omar paid his first official visit to India during 31 July-4 August 2017. He held meetings with EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj and MoS for External Affairs Shri M. J. Akbar. An Agreement for Transfer of Sentenced Persons between India and Somalia was signed during the visit.

Somali State Minister of Finance Mr. Mohamoud Hayir Ibrahim also visited Gandhinagar for the 52nd Annual Meeting of African Development Bank Group in May 2017. During his visit, Somalia signed the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement.

In 2011, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Planning and International Cooperation Dr. Abdiweli Mohamed Ali visited India to attend the 7th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership. During the visit, he met EAM S.M. Krishna and CIM Anand Sharma.

2.2 Visits from India:

On the side lines of 79th UNGA High Level Week in New York, External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar met Ahmed Moalim Fiqi, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somalia in September, 2024. Further in September 2025, EAM met Mr. Abdisalam Abdi Ali, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Somalia on the side lines of 80th UNGA High Level Week in New York.

Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, the Hon'ble Minister of State for Ministry of External Affairs met Mr. Ali Mohamed Omar, The State Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Somalia on 15 October 2025 on the sidelines of the 19th Mid-Term Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement in Uganda.

Minister of State for External Affairs and Education, Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh met State Minister of Foreign Affairs, Somalia, Mr. Ali Mohamed Omar on the sidelines of the 22nd Cabinet Meeting of the IORA in Dhaka in November 2022.

Former High Commissioner Dr. Virander Paul represented GOI at the inauguration ceremony of President H.E. Hassan Sheikh Mohamud in June 2022. During his visit, HC paid courtesy calls on the Speaker of the Somali Parliament Sheikh Adan M. Nur and Acting Foreign Minister Mr. Balal Mohamed Cusman. Somalia's Special Envoy for Humanitarian Affairs and Drought Response, Mr. Abdirahman Abdishakur Warsame held a meeting with the High Commissioner in July 2022. The talks focused on Somalia's drought crisis and Indian government's humanitarian assistance on that. Mr. Warsame also requested the Indian Government to help in raising the drought crisis in Somalia at the next G20 summit and other international forums.

In November 2019, External Affairs Minister of India Mr. S. Jaishankar met the Prime Minister of Somalia Mr. Hassan Ali Khayre on the sidelines of Paris Peace Forum in Paris.

In July 2015, MoS for External Affairs, Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Singh visited Somalia as Prime Minister's Special Envoy and handed over the invitation from the Prime Minister to the President of Somalia, for attending the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) in New Delhi in October 2015.

In February 2012, The Indian delegation to the London Somalia Conference was led by MoS for External Affairs Shri E. Ahamed. The Minister met TFG President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed; President of Puntland Abdirahman Mohamed Farole and President of Galmudug Mohamed Ahmed Alin. President Farole said that he would be happy to see Indian companies getting involved with oil exploration and production in Puntland.

3. Grants in Aid & Developmental Assistance :

3.1 Grants : Government of India donated 10 tonnes of medical aid to the Government of Somalia in September, 2025 which includes essential medicines, surgical items, hospital essentials and bio medical equipment.

At the request of the Government of Somalia, Government of India gifted 27 mini-buses to Somalia in February, 2021. Former High Commissioner handed over the consignment of essential medicines worth US\$ One million to Dr. Fawziya Abikar Nur,

Minister of Health of Somalia on 19 July 2018 in Mogadishu. During the visit, High Commissioner called on Mr. Hassan Ali Khaire, Prime Minister of Somalia.

Following PM Dr. Manmohan Singh's announcement at the 2nd India Africa Forum Summit held in Addis Ababa in May 2011, India provided US\$ 2 million to the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM). India has further contributed a sum of US\$ 1 million to the United Nations Trust Fund in support of the African Union in Somalia (AMISOM) in 2012, 2017 and 2021.

In September 2011, India announced a contribution of US\$ 8 million towards humanitarian assistance for countries in the Horn of Africa region (Somalia, Kenya and Djibouti) to be distributed through WFP.

In 1992, India provided relief supplies (medicines, food) worth Rs. 20 lakh to Somalia during the visit of Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Eduardo Faleiro. In 1985, Somalia was among the recipient countries of 100,000 tonnes of wheat offered by Government of India to countries in the region.

3.2 Scholarships : India remained one of the preferred destinations for Somali students. Every year Somalia is allotted 15 slots each under Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Program. This year, in 2025 the ITEC slots have been increased to 30. Somalia was also allocated slots under India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS III) scholarship schemes. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, India continued its assistance to Somalia through capacity building on virtual platform through e-ITEC programme, this has seen participation of 71 Somali candidates.

Somalia is among the partner countries of Pan African e-Network project. The project was inaugurated by EAM S. M. Krishna in August 2010 along with the Vice Minister of Education of the State of Puntland. Somalis is now a partner country in the e-VBAB Network Project, a successor to Pan African e-Network project. 364 Somali students are currently enrolled through the e-VBAB project.

At the request of Foreign Minister of Somalia, 20 diplomats from Somali Foreign Ministry were trained at SSFSI, New Delhi in September-October 2015. The second special course for young Somali diplomats was held from 9 May-8 June 2018 at FSI, New Delhi. An MoU between FSI and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Somalia was signed on 5 June 2018. A Special course for Foreign Diplomats were organized at SSFSI from 04 -13 August, 2025 where 10 Somali diplomats attended the course.

4. Indian Community: Indian traders have been trading with the Horn of Africa since ancient times. In the 1940s and 1950s, many Indians were recruited by Italians to work on their plantations, mainly around Qoryoley, South West. Others established businesses in Somalia. It is estimated that there were around 200 Indian families in Somalia, mainly engaged in textile dyeing in Mogadishu and Merka. Indian families, who at one time were living in Kismayo, left for Mogadishu in early 1980s. At one time, the Indian embassy used to run a popular international school in Mogadishu. After 1991, most Indians left Somalia, and many relocated to Mombasa in Kenya. Presently, it is estimated that there are around 150 Indian nationals working in different parts of Somalia including the UN and around 500 persons of Indian origin in Somalia.

5. Consular Services: Mission in collaboration with UN Organizations in Somalia has been organizing celebrations of International Day of Yoga in Mogadishu since 2019. Mission organized the first-ever consular camp in Mogadishu on 1 October 2017, followed by in 2018. In 2019 & 2020, consular camps were organized in Garowe, Puntland.

India is one of the preferred destinations for Education and Medical Services for Somalis. In 2024 Mission issued 5252 visas to Somali nationals for visiting India.

6. Bilateral Trade: Somalia, being an LDC country, qualifies for India's offer of unilateral Duty-Free Tariff Preferential (DFTP) market access for export of goods and services to India. According to data from TradeMap, India is one of Somalia's top trading partners with the trade relations encompassing various sectors of the economy. Department of Commerce, Government of India data shows that the the value of trade in FY 2024-25 stood at US\$ 800.86 million. Of this, the value of Indian exports to Somalia was US\$ 765.66 million while that of imports from Somalia to India was US\$ 35.20 million. Main Indian exports to Somalia in the period includes cereals, sugars

& confectionery, vehicles & parts, clothing & articles, electrical machinery & equipment, ceramic products, machinery and plastics. Main Somalian exports to India on the other hand were iron & steel, oil seeds & fruits, electrical machinery & equipment, aluminium & articles, petroleum products, lead & articles and raw hides & skins. The following table summarizes the bilateral trade figures.

| Year | 2019-20 | 2020-21 | 2021-22 | 2022-23 | 2023-24 | 2024-25 |
|---------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| EXPORT | 583.87 | 554.45 | 744.58 | 946.37 | 819.58 | 765.66 |
| %Growth | 8.68 | -5.04 | 34.29 | 27.10 | -13.40 | -6.58 |
| % Share of India's Export | 0.1863 | 0.1900 | 0.1764 | 0.2098 | 0.1875 | 0.1750 |
| IMPORT | 15.05 | 5.67 | 18.06 | 17.90 | 28.21 | 35.20 |
| %Growth | -17.90 | -62.31 | 218.40 | -0.93 | 57.61 | 24.81 |
| %Share of India's Import | 0.0032 | 0.0014 | 0.0029 | 0.0025 | 0.0042 | 0.0049 |
| TOTAL TRADE | 598.92 | 560.12 | 762.64 | 964.27 | 847.79 | 800.86 |
| %Growth | 7.80 | -6.48 | 36.16 | 26.44 | -12.08 | -5.54 |
| TRADE BALANCE | 568.82 | 548.78 | 726.52 | 928.47 | 791.37 | 730.46 |

(Source: Department of Commerce, India, Figures in USD million)

7. Indian Participation in UN Peacekeeping in Somalia: 4,600 Indian peacekeepers participated in UNOSOM II during 1993-94. The troops also engaged in reconstruction and humanitarian work. 12 Indian soldiers laid down their lives during the deployment. The Indian Navy played a major part in India's contribution to the UN task force in Somalia. The Indian Navy has been involved in anti-piracy patrolling in the Gulf of

Aden since 2008. India is a member of the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the coast of Somalia.

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