

## **India-Djibouti Bilateral Relations**

Historical linkages, cultural affinities and people-to-people contact between Djibouti and India dates back prior to India's independence in 1947 and Djibouti's independence in 1977. Indian seafarers and traders from Gujarat and Kerala frequently visited the port of Adulis for trading in spices & silk for gold & ivory. The Honorary Consul of India started functioning in Djibouti in 1969 before Djibouti's independence in 1977. While Djibouti opened its Embassy in New Delhi in 2004, India opened its resident Mission in Djibouti in 2019.

2. Djibouti extended extraordinary support during Operation Rahat in April 2015 in the evacuation of Indians and other nationals from war-torn Yemen.

### **Padma Vibhushan Samman**

3. The Government of India conferred its second highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan, on the President of the Republic of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh in March 2019.

### **High-Level visits to Djibouti from India**

4. The then President of India Mr. Ram Nath Kovind paid a State visit to Djibouti from 3-4 October 2017. This was the first-ever visit at the level of HOS/HOG from India to Djibouti. The visit gave an impetus to bilateral relations between the two countries. Various issues of mutual interest such as terrorism, renewable energy, maritime cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region, technical and capacity building assistance by India to enhance employment opportunities for Djibouti's youth, cooperation in multilateral fora were discussed during the visit. Both countries also signed an MoU on Foreign Office Consultations (FOC).

5. General (Retd.) V.K. Singh, then MOS (EA) led 'Operation Rahat' from Djibouti in April 2015 to evacuate Indians and other foreign nationals from the war-torn Yemen. In July 2015, he visited Djibouti as the special envoy of PM Narendra Modi to personally invite the President of Djibouti for the IAFS -III Summit held in New Delhi in October 2015.

6. A delegation led by Dr. B. Balabhaskar, Joint Secretary (WANA) visited Djibouti 18-20 December 2016 to discuss various aspects of bilateral relations between the two countries.

7. Shri V. Muraleedharan, MOS (VM) visited Djibouti on 21-22 September 2022. Dr. Pradeep Singh Rajpurohit, JS(WANA) accompanied him. MOS(VM) called on PM Abdoukader Kamil Mohamed and held bilateral discussions with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssouf. He also interacted with the Indian community on 21 Sept 2022. MOS (VM) visited the Mahatma Gandhi Center for Leadership and Entrepreneurship. Two agreements were signed during the visit: (i) Cooperation between SSIFS & the Institute of Diplomatic Studies, Djibouti; and (ii) Mutual exemption from visa requirement for Diplomatic and Official/Service Passport holders. This visa exemption agreement came into force on 1st February 2023.

### **High-Level visits from Djibouti to India**

8. Hon'ble President of Djibouti, H.E. Mr. Ismail Omar Guelleh (IOG) visited India thrice in 2003, 2015 and 2018. During his visit to India from 18-23 May 2003, President Guelleh was accompanied by a large delegation, which included Djibouti's Foreign Minister, Minister of National Defense, Minister of National Education, Minister of Equipment and Transport and several Djiboutian businesspersons. In October 2015, President Guelleh led a 30-member delegation to New Delhi for attending the 3rd India Africa Forum Summit (IAFS III). He led a high level delegation to participate in the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) held in New Delhi on 11 March 2018.

9. As regards Ministerial level visits, Mr. Rifki Abdoukader Bamakhrama, then Minister of Trade & Industry attended the CII-Exim Bank Meeting in New Delhi from 19-21 March 2008. Minister of Economy, Finance & Industry Mr. Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh attended the India-Africa Trade Ministers Meeting, on the margins of IAFS-III in October 2015. Minister of Energy & Natural Resources visited India to participate in the 2nd Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly from 28 October to 2 November 2019; the 6th Session of the ISA Assembly held from 31st October to 2nd November 2023; and the 7th Edition of International Solar Alliance from 3-6 November 2024. He also participated in India Energy Week 2024 held in Goa from 6-9 February 2024. H.E. Mohamed Ahmed Awaleh, Minister of Agriculture, Water, Fisheries, Livestock and Fisheries Resources of Djibouti visited India to attend World Food India 2024 in New Delhi in September 2024. He also met Hon'ble Minister of Food Processing Industries of India on the sidelines of the event. On 31 January 2026, Mr. Ahmed Ali Barreh, Ambassador of Djibouti to Egypt and Permanent Representative to the League of Arab States represented Djibouti at the 2<sup>nd</sup> India-Arab Foreign Ministers' Meeting held in New Delhi. He also attended a joint call by Heads of Delegation on Hon'ble PM during his visit. From 27-30 January 2026, Mr. Wahib Ali Boulo, Director and Mr. Daoud Farah Arreyeh, Director (Operation) at International Hydrocarbon company of Djibouti under Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Djibouti attended the 4th Edition of India Energy Week 2026 held in Goa, India.

## **Defence Cooperation**

10. India joined the Djibouti Code of Conduct/ Jeddah Amendment (DCOC/JA), as Observer, on 26 August 2020. Established in January 2009, DCOC is aimed at repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the Western Indian Ocean Region, the Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. To combat the menace of piracy in the Gulf of Aden and in the Red Sea, India has been regularly sending naval ships since November 2008 for Operation Turn Round (OTRs) during counter-piracy patrolling. Indian Naval Ships (INS) make regular calls at the Port of Djibouti on OTR. 12 INS in the year 2023, 34 INS in 2024, 9 INS in 2025; and 7 INS so far in 2026 visited the Port of Djibouti and Mission rendered all assistance & facilitations. The Government of Djibouti accords prompt clearances.

11. A 3-member Defence delegation led by Col. Moustapha Ali Handouleh, Defence Advisor to the President of Djibouti visited Lucknow to attend the DEFEXPO 2020 followed by their visit to the Goa Shipyard Ltd. He also signed the Lucknow Declaration 2020. Djibouti also participated in Aero India 2021. Col. Wais Omar Bogoreh, Commander-in-Chief of the Djibouti Coast Guard visited India from 03-07 February 2021 to participate in the meeting of the Ministers of Defence of the IOR. He represented Djibouti's Defence Minister in the meeting. During the visit, Col. Bogoreh also met the Chief of India's Naval Staff and the DG of Indian Coast Guard. Djibouti's Ambassador in India represented his country in MILAN 2022. Col. Ahmed Daher Djama, Commander of Djiboutian Navy, accompanied by Lt. Abdoukader Mohamed Gaditto visited Vishakapatnam from 19-25 February 2024 to participate in MILAN 2024. Djibouti's Ambassador in India also attended MILAN 2024. Chief of Djiboutian Navy participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> Africa-India Key Maritime Engagement held in Tanzania in April 2025. Colonel Madhi Daher Miguil, Deputy Commander of Djibouti Navy attended the International Fleet Review- 26 and MILAN-26 of Indian Navy held at Visakhapatnam from 16-20 February 2026 and also visited Agra as part of cultural tour. He also held talks with Vice Adm. Tarun Sobti, Deputy Chief of Naval Staff of Indian Navy.

12. Five Defence ITEC slots have been sanctioned for Djibouti for the very first time in 2022-23. Two Djiboutian Naval Officers have already been trained in India in 2023. The Ministry of Defence of India has allotted course vacancies for training of Djiboutian Defence Personnel at Indian Defence training establishments under ITEC for the year 2026-27.

## **Economic & Commercial Relations**

13. The total bilateral trade increased from 367.22 million in 2020-21 to 1.25 billion in 2022-23 and remained at 1.16 billion in FY 2023-24 and US\$ 695.8 million in FY 2024-25. The exports to Djibouti increased from US\$ 347 million in FY 2020-21 to US\$ 1.19 billion in FY 2022-23 and remained at US\$1.14 billion in FY 2023-24; and US\$ 677 million during FY 2024-25. As regards India's imports from Djibouti, it increased from US\$ 20.16 million in FY 2020-21 to US\$ 55.88 million in FY 2022-23 and remained at US\$ 22.26 million in FY 2023-24 and US\$ 18.56 million in FY 2024-25. Exports from India consist mainly of rice, sugar, engineering goods, fruits & vegetables, paper and plastic products, machinery, metals, yarns &

fabrics, pharmaceuticals and food items. Exports from Djibouti consist mainly of wastes & scraps.

14. Bilateral trade for the year 2025-26 (from April 2025-January 2026) shows an increase by 34% from previous corresponding year. For the same period, export from India to Djibouti grew by 34% and export from Djibouti to India grew by 31 %.

*(source: tradestat.commerce.gov.in)*

### **Grant for Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Leadership and Entrepreneurship**

15. Government of India extended a grant of US\$ 5 million to build Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Leadership and Entrepreneurship (MGCLE) in January 2017. The project was completed and inaugurated on 22 November 2018 by Hon. President of Djibouti. The Centre is now being run by the Govt. of Djibouti and various training courses are conducted in the centre. It is being utilized by the budding entrepreneurs. To mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi was also installed at the Centre in January 2020. The Djiboutian leadership is happy with this Centre and India's assistance in establishing it.

### **Lines of Credit (LOC)**

16. EXIM Bank has extended four GOI supported LOCs aggregating US\$ 46.67 million to the Government of Djibouti in four tranches for the construction of a Cement Plant in Ali Sabieh.

### **ITEC/ICCR Scholarship/Training**

17. Under ITEC programme, India has been extending support to Djibouti for capacity building. Since 2007, 196 officials/professionals from Djibouti have benefitted from it. Similarly, ICCR scholarships are extended to Djiboutian students for pursuing higher education in India. Total 90 Djiboutian students have benefitted from ICCR scholarships over the last five years including the last batch of 15 that left for India in August 2025. 12 Djiboutian diplomats have also been trained so far in FSI/SSIFS (PCFD Course) from June 1997 till March 2025.

### **Food Aid & Donation of medicines**

18. India provided 50 Metric Tons of food aid (Sugar, Rice and Wheat Flour) to Djibouti on 11 November 2020. The shipment was delivered by INS AIRAVAT. (To ensure food security of Djibouti, India makes special exemption, from time to time, from the ban on exports of certain food items, to facilitate commercial exports of rice, sugar, wheat, etc. to Djibouti)

19. A consignment of medicines, consisting of 428 packets weighing 5954 kg, was gifted to the Ministry of Health of the Government of Djibouti on 12th April 2021.

20. India donated 20 units of Haemodialysis machine and one RO plant along with consumables as humanitarian assistance to Djibouti on 7 March 2025. The consignment arrived on board Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS), Sachet on 6 March 2025.

### **Artificial Limbs (Jaipur Foot) Fitment Camp**

21. The Embassy, in collaboration with the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti, Jaipur and ANPH, Djibouti organized an Artificial Limbs Fitment Camp in Djibouti during the month of December 2021. 192 persons benefited from the Camp with 197 artificial limbs fitted by the BMVSS team.

### **Quick Impact Project**

22. The Embassy implemented a QIP for providing vocational training (in the areas of cooking, sewing/tailoring, hairdressing & facial makeup) to underprivileged women at the Center for Social Action & Women's Empowerment (CASAF) at a cost of USD 50,826 during the years 2021 & 2022.

### **Other capacity building and development assistance**

23. Three doctors from the Government hospitals of Djibouti underwent Mid-career training in advanced fields of medical science from 5-24 August 2019 at Fortis Hospital, New Delhi under IAFS-III.

24. Two Indian agriculture scientists visited Djibouti on the invitation of the Government of Djibouti to support the Green Djibouti Plantation drive inaugurated by President Guelleh on 16 October 2019. They provided expert advice on the type of plants suitable to Djibouti's weather, soil and water conditions.

25. Djibouti's Finance Minister Mr. Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh participated in and addressed the virtual Session on Finance of the 'Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS 1.0)' on 12 January 2023. Foreign Minister Mr. Mahmoud Ali Youssef participated in addressed the virtual Session of Foreign Ministers of the VOGSS 2.0 on 17 November 2023. VOGSS 1.0 & 2.0 were organised by India as the Chair of G-20.

26. A 19 member cultural troupe participated in the 39th edition of Surajkund International Crafts Mela-2026 held at Surajkund, Faridabad (Haryana) from 31 January to 15 February 2026.

### **Indian Community**

27. The Indian Diaspora in Djibouti is relatively small with about 1,000 persons. The oldest Indian community consists of Gujarati traders and entrepreneurs from Rajkot and Jamnagar. The community grew after Djibouti's independence when the country started economic & business relations with the rest of the world. Most of the community members are engaged in blue collar jobs, some of them are working in companies engaged in port and shipping activities; some in Free Trade zones, some Indians also work for the US military base. There are 8 PIOs in Djibouti.

28. India's former Honorary Consul Shri Nalin Kothari (Djiboutian national) was awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman in 2017.

29. Two Indian community organisations were started in 2022 – (i) Bharatiya Sanskritik Samagam (BSS) and (ii) Djibouti Indian Women's Association (DIWA). Besides these two diaspora associations, the World Malayali Federation (WMF) has its branch in Djibouti. They complement each other in celebration of Indian festivals, National Days etc. The Djibouti-India Business Forum was simultaneously launched in Djibouti city and New Delhi on 17 October 2023. The 3rd India-Djibouti Business Forum was successfully held in November 2025. India-Djibouti Business Forum serves as a platform dedicated to strengthening economic ties between the two countries.

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