

India - Yemen Bilateral Relations

1. India was one of the early countries to have actively supported Yemen's independence from the British and was one of the first countries to recognize Yemen Arab Republic (YAR) in 1962 and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) in 1967. In 1990, YAR and PDRY merged to become Republic of Yemen.

Political

2. India's relations with Yemen go back into many centuries. In 19th and 20th century, Aden, Mocha and Kamaran Islands became the transit or transshipment point for Haj pilgrims. Southern Yemen was a British protectorate administered by the Bombay Presidency during which time an Indian garrison was serving whilst rupee was the official tender. During pre-independent India, Aden became a port of call for many prominent Indians when Netaji Bose, Mahatma Gandhi, Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sarojini Naidu among others had visited.

3. India's championship of independence and recognition of Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen laid the foundation for a relationship in the post-colonial era that began to deepen during the 1980s. Yemen is a member of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), among others. Yemen has been steadfast in its support for permanent membership for India in an expanded UN. There has been a series of bilateral meetings at the ministerial/official level :

Visits/Meetings

- Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited India in March 1999 and Indian Vice President Shri Krishan Kant visited Yemen in October 1999 for bilateral exchange and talks.
- In July 2017, Abdulmalik Abdujalil Al-Mekhlafy, the then Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Yemen, visited New Delhi.
- In 2019, on the sidelines of the 18th ministerial meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement held in Baku, Hon'ble External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar (EAM) met with then Yemeni Foreign Minister Mohammed Al-Hadrami.
- In September 2021, on the sidelines of 76th UNGA meeting, EAM met with the then Yemeni Foreign Minister of Yemen Dr. Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak.
- In May 2022, Minister of State for External Affairs, Shri V. Muraleedharan, met with the then Foreign Minister of Yemen Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak in New York.
- In September 2022, on the sidelines of 77th UNGA meeting, EAM met with the then Foreign Minister of Yemen Ahmed Awad Bin Mubarak.
- In January 2023, Yemeni Education Minister participated in the 1st Voice of Global South Summit held virtually.

- In March 2023, Minister of State for External Affairs Shri Rajkumar Ranjan Singh met with the Yemeni Foreign Minister Ahmad bin Mubarak in Doha.

5. A range of bilateral agreement exist, which encompasses cooperation/ agreement in economic and technical cooperation, air services, agriculture and allied sector, cultural, bilateral investment promotion, health and medicine, oil and gas industry and Education Exchange. University of Aden has had collaboration with University of Roorkee, Jawaharlal Nehru and Allahabad Universities. Many Indian professors have set up faculties and have headed different departments in Sana'a and Aden Universities. Two leading think-tanks, the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA) and the Sheba Centre for Strategic Studies entered into a MoU in April 2012 to forge a partnership for encouraging exchange of experts and analysts and participation in seminars and symposium on subjects of mutual interest.

Commercial and Trade

6. The Bank of India had opened a branch in Aden in 1950 which has since been incorporated into then National Bank of Southern Yemen (now National Bank of Yemen) in 1970.

7. The total bilateral trade between India and Yemen for FY 2021-22 is US\$ 1.07 billion, as per statistics of Department of Commerce, GOI. The total export to Yemen during FY 2021-22 is US\$ 847 million (YoY Growth 7.77%) and total import is US\$ 228 million (YoY Growth 873.92%).

8. India exports Rice, Wheat, Sugar, Drug formulations, Ceramics and allied products, Processed fruits and Juices, Textile materials, petroleum products, Yarn and Fabrics etc to Yemen. On the other hand, India Imports Iron and Steel, Petroleum, Telecom instruments, Aluminium and articles thereof, Lead and allied products, Electric machinery and equipment, Copper and articles thereof, Raw hides and skins from Yemen. India ranks among the top in Pharma imports of Yemen with Ranbaxy, Cipla, Sun Pharma, Alkem Laboratory limited, Cadilla, Wockhardt, Glenmarc, Kopran Laboratories Ltd, Orchid, Medley and Biocon among others active in Yemen's market.

9. India has shown keen interest in tapping the main Yemeni industry of petroleum and natural gas. In the past, Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited, Reliance and Mangalore Refineries have imported Yemeni crude oil. Reliance, Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation and Oil India Limited, Indian Oil Corporation in a consortium have been allocated blocks in Yemen.

Defence

10. Cooperation between India and Yemen in the realms of security and defence started with training of Yemeni Republic Guards in 2008. Since 2021, defence engagements have again commenced with the Yemen Armed Forces. The defence ties between the two countries cover variety of fields starting from participating in Joint Exercises like MILAN, training of Yemen officers, cadets and soldiers in Indian Armed Forces Training Establishments at both junior and senior levels including training in specialist fields. Indian Navy and Yemen Coast Guard have collaborated to undertake Anti-Piracy patrols in the Indian ocean. The strategic location of both the countries with historical relations presents optimal opportunities for further strengthening the defence engagements. Anti-piracy, intelligence, defence industries collaboration and medical assistance are some of the fields which will further strengthen the defence cooperation in near future.

11. In 2015, the maritime routes were activated for carrying out evacuation operation from Yemen. This was achieved as a result of close maritime cooperation with the countries of the region. As part of Operation SANKALP which launched in June 2019, 20 Indian Naval ships have been operationally deployed in the region for anti-piracy missions and protecting the sea lanes of communication. Majority of Indian trade passes through the Arabian Sea and also the Red Sea. Coast guard of Yemen regularly take part in the National Pollution Response Exercise (NATPOLREX) conducted by the Indian Coast Guards every year.

12. Yemen is a signatory to IMO established Code of Conduct concerning the Repression of Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in the Western Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Aden (Djibouti Code of Conduct). Since 2020, India is an observer to Djibouti Code of Conduct as part of efforts aimed at enhancing maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. Maritime representatives from Indian agencies participated in the workshop for finalizing the charter of Djibouti Code of Conduct held in August 2023 in Jeddah and close cooperation is currently being carried out in this regard.

ITEC/ICCR Scholarships

13. India offers scholarships under various schemes under the aegis of ICCR for pursuing graduate, post graduate and doctoral programmes. Under ITEC programme, India provides civilian training to Yemen for capacity buildings. In 2021-22, 58 Yemeni students received ICCR scholarship to study in India.

Indian community

14. India and Yemen cherish a rich blend of contacts spanning many centuries. The British rule saw Aden being governed by the Bombay Presidency from 1839 till 1939 during which time a garrison of 2000 Indian soldiers were stationed in Aden and a regular steamer service was operational between Bombay and Aden from 1855.

Since independence, many Indians have taken up Yemeni citizenship – married into Yemeni communities. Sizable populations among them follow Indian customs and traditions.

15. The state (province) of Hadramout in Yemen has had and continues to have strong linkage with the Deccan (India). Sayyid families from Hadramout had established hospices and Arabic organizations and the Nizam of Hyderabad had employed Yemenis from this region as soldiers.

16. The cross border contacts have culminated in nearly 300,000 (approx.) Indians of Yemeni origin prominent in Hyderabad and its contiguous cities in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Karnataka. Likewise there is a strong 200,000 (approx.) Indian origin diaspora in the provinces of Aden, Hadramout, Hodeidah, Taiz and Sana'a. Indian Associations in Sana'a, Aden, Taiz and Hodeidah were active in organizing social and cultural functions. Aden's Indian Association is the oldest, founded during the British rule.

17. Under 'Operation Rahat', the Government of India had evacuated the majority of Indian community from Yemen following an escalation in conflict. Approximately 4000-4500 Indian nationals currently reside in Yemen.

Humanitarian Assistance

19. As a long standing friend of Yemen, India has always prioritized the humanitarian needs of Yemen and has extended humanitarian assistance to Yemen through the supply of medicines and food commodities in the past. As part of India's Vaccine Maitri Initiative, 360,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses via COVAX facility were supplied to Yemen on March 2021. Since April 2022, India has also exported more than 250,000 tons of wheat to Yemen to mitigate the adverse impact of supply changes in the global commodity markets on Yemen.

June 11, 2024