

## India-Sudan Bilateral Relations

### Historical Background

India-Sudan relations go back in history to the time of the Nilotic and Indus Valley Civilizations (about 5000 years ago). The pastoral Beja, some 5% of Sudan's population, are a Hamitic people, claiming their origin from India.

### Bilateral Relations – 1900-1947

The two famous steel suspension rail bridges in Khartoum and Atbara, still in use, were imported from India in the first decade of the last century. Indian experts, starting in 1900, developed Sudan's forestry sector. In 1935, Mahatma Gandhi stopped over in Port Sudan (on his way to England through sea) and was welcomed by the Indian community there. In 1938, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru stopped over in Port Sudan on his way to Britain and was hosted through a function at the home of Chhotalal Samji Virani. British Indian troops fought alongside Sudanese in Eritrea in 1941 winning the decisive battle of Keren (Bengal Sappers won a Victoria Cross for mine clearance in Metemma, now on the Sudan-Ethiopia border). The Sudan Block at India's National Defence Academy was partly funded with a gift of one hundred thousand pounds from the Sudanese Government in recognition of the sacrifices of Indian troops in the liberation of Sudan in the North African Campaign during World War II.

### Bilateral Relations – Post 1947

The first Sudanese Parliamentary elections in 1953 were conducted by Shri Sukumar Sen, India's Chief Election Commissioner (the Sudanese Election Commission, formed in 1957, drew heavily on Indian election literature and laws). A Sudanization Committee, established in February 1954 with budgetary support from India for compensation payments finished its work in April 1955. India opened a diplomatic representation in Khartoum in March 1955. At the 1955 Bandung Conference, the delegation from a still not independent Sudan did not have a flag to mark its place. Taking out his handkerchief, Jawaharlal Nehru wrote "Sudan" on it, thus reserving a place for Sudan in the international community. In 1958, India offered a six-acre plot (for a nominal price) in the Chanakyapuri area of New Delhi for the construction of Sudan Embassy. In 1993 and 1994 India voted against UN resolutions critical of Sudan and opposed moves in 1994 to expel Sudan from the IMF. Since Sudan gained independence, there have been regular exchanges of bilateral visits at all levels. Some recent visits are:

### From India to Sudan:

S. No.	Name of the visitor	Date/Remarks
1.	Dr. Arvind Gupta, Deputy National Security Advisor	July 2015.
2.	Shri Gen.V. K. Singh, State Minister of External Affairs as Special Envoy	September 2015; he met President Bashir and delivered the formal invitation for IAFS-III held in New Delhi.

## From Sudan to India

S. No.	Name of the visitor	Date/Remarks
1	President Omar Hassan Ahmed Al Bashir	October, 2015; to participate in 3 <sup>rd</sup> India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi.
2	Mr. Elsadig M Ali H. Al Rasoul, State Minister for Trade	January 2016; to attend the 22 <sup>nd</sup> CII Partnership Summit in Vishakhapatnam.
3	Mr. Mohd Zayad Awad, Minister of Oil and Gas	January 2016: to attend the 4 <sup>th</sup> India-Africa Hydrocarbons Conference in New Delhi.
4	Mr. Ahmed Awad Ibn Auf, Minister of Defense	March 2016; to attend the 'Defexpo-2016' in Goa.
5	Mr. Mohd Makawi Awad, Minister of Roads, Bridges and Transportation	April 2016; to attend the 'Maritime India-2016' in Mumbai.
6	Mr. Mohd Zayad Awad, Minister of Oil and Gas	5-7 December 2016: to attend the 'Petrotech-2016' New Delhi.
7	Mr. Elsadig M Ali H. Al Rasoul, State Minister for Trade	January 2017; to attend the 23 <sup>rd</sup> CII Partnership Summit in Vishakhapatnam.
8	Prof. Ibrahim A. Ghandour, Foreign Minister	February 2017; to co-chair the Joint Committee Meeting in New Delhi.
9	Dr. Awad Ahmed Mohamed Aljaz, Assistant to the President and Deputy Chairman of the National Committee on Sudan's relations with BRICS's countries	25-27 March 2018; to attend CII-EXIM Bank Conclave in New Delhi.
10	Eng. Saad Al-din Hussein Elbushra Abdelmagid, Minister of State for Oil and Gas	10-12 April 2018; to participate in the 16 <sup>th</sup> Ministerial meeting of the International Energy Forum in New Delhi.
11	Dr. Mohamed Osman Al-Rikabi, Minister of Finance and Economic Planning	25-26 June 2018; to participate in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Asian Bank for Infrastructure Investment (AIIB) in Mumbai
12	Dr. Awad Ahmed Al-Jazz, Assistant to the President and Deputy Chairman of the National Committee on Sudan's relations with BRICS's countries accompanied by Minister, Oil & Gas and MOSs for Finance and Foreign Ministry	6-10 August, 2018 to hold bilateral discussions on restructuring of payment of EXIM Bank's LOCs, further extension of LOCs payment of pending dues of OVL, bilateral cooperation in hydrocarbons, mining, agriculture, finance, solar energy etc
13	Minister of Health Dr. Mohamed Abuzaid Mustafa Mohamed Gameel	29 Sept – 2 October 2018 to participate in the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention on in New Delhi.
14	Minister of Water Resources, Irrigation and Electricity Mr. Khider Mohamed Gasmelseed Ahmad	2-5 October 2018 to participate in the General Assembly of ISA in New Delhi and 2 <sup>nd</sup> Re-Invest.

15	Mr. Saadeldin Hussein Al Bushra Abdelmajid, MOS, for Petroleum, Gas and Minerals	10-12 February 2019 to attend 'Petrotech 2019' at Greater Noida.
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### **Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) and Foreign Office Consultations (FOC)**

The India-Sudan Joint Committee (formed in January 1995) was upgraded to a Joint Commission at Ministerial level in June 1997 during the visit of then Foreign Minister Ali Osman Taha to India when the first Joint Committee at Ministerial level was held in New Delhi. The third round of India Sudan JMC was held in New Delhi on 20-21 February, 2017. Foreign Office Consultations between India and Sudan have been held regularly with the first taking place in September 2000 in Khartoum and the 8<sup>th</sup> round of FOC in New Delhi on 3 December 2018 at the level of Joint Secretary (WANA) from the Indian side and Director General, Asia and Arab Affairs in the Sudanese Foreign Ministry.

### **Joint Working Group on Oil and Gas**

The first meeting of the India-Sudan Joint Working Group on cooperation on the Oil and Gas sector was held in Khartoum in November 2010.

**Bilateral Trade:** A snapshot of bilateral trade in US\$ million is given below:

<b>Year (Jan- Dec)</b>	<b>India's Exports</b>	<b>India's Imports</b>	<b>Total Bilateral Trade</b>
2016	753.23	166.21	919.44
2017	840.85	440.57	1,281.42
2018	795.45	707.12	1,502.57

Source: DGCIIS, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India

As per Central Bank of Sudan, India is the third largest exporter to Sudan primarily exporting food stuffs, petroleum products, manufactured goods, machinery and equipment, chemicals, pharmaceuticals and textiles to Sudan. Sudan mainly exports sesame seed, gum Arabic, cotton, hides and skins and ground nuts to India. India was one of the few countries that has unilaterally declared Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) including Sudan.

### **Projects and Lines of Credit**

In April 2006, India's Ministry of Non-conventional Energy Sources funded a solar electrification system (implemented by Central Electronics Ltd) for Khadarab village about two hours road journey from Khartoum, bringing light for the first time into the lives of some 1,500 villagers. The project has been replicated in several other villages. In January 2007, former President Omer Al-Bashir inaugurated Sudan's first solar photo- voltaic module manufacturing plant built with Indian technology and equipment (supplied by CEL) at the Energy Research Institute in Khartoum. A number of Lines of Credit have been extended to the Government of Sudan beginning with Rs. 20 million Line of Credit from India in 1980. As on date, India has extended USD 617.12 million for various projects including two restructuring for nonpayment of pending interest dues.

## **Indian Investments**

Indian public sector undertakings, ONGC (V) has invested over 2.3 billion in undivided Sudan. Currently, it has share in productive Block 1, 2 & 4 in Sudan. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas of India and the then Ministry of Energy and Mining of Sudan signed a Memorandum of Understanding on promoting Cooperation in the Oil and Gas Sector on 8 December 2009 in India.

## **Other Indian companies and their investments in Sudan**

As per Sudanese Ministry of Industry figures, the total Indian investment in various sectors upto 2015 is around US\$450 million in steel units, packaging industry, beverage, food, agro commodities, pharmaceutical industry etc. Indian manufacturers of pharmaceutical machinery, vegetable oil machinery and other machineries have put up a number of manufacturing lines in Sudan. Orient Fan which has a major share and is a market leader in Sudan. Major Indian brands in Pharma have representations here and so do major automotives companies like Tata, Mahindra, and Bajaj.

## **Capacity Building**

Sudan benefitted from the Pan-African E-Network a satellite and fibre-optic network which provided effective communication and connectivity among the 53 members of the African Union, and tele-education and tele-medicine. The second phase of this project is called e- Vidya Bharati (tele-education) and Arogya Bharati (tele-medicine) [e-VBAB]. This project will be set up in educational institutions and hospitals in Sudan soon. The number of ITEC slots for Sudan has been increased to 200 from the year 2016-17. Sudanese officials avail of training programmes and higher education scholarships under various programme like IAFS-III, CV Raman Fellowship Programme, Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD), Indian Council for Cultural Relations. Recently, 46 young Sudanese diplomats sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs attended a special customized training course at Foreign Service Institute, New Delhi from February 25 to March 9, 2019. The below chart shows the slots offered to Sudan under ICCR and ITEC in recent years:

## **Humanitarian Assistance**

India donated tents and medicines for flood victims in Gezira state in 1978 and gifted medicines to control the leishmaniasis (kala-azar) epidemic in South Sudan in 1983. India gifted 22,560 tonnes of wheat in 1985 and another 6,000 tonnes in 1987. Following floods in Khartoum in late 1996, India airlifted urgently needed medicines. In October 2003, India announced a grant of US\$ 50,000 of medicines for the victims of the floods in Kassala region. In response to the Sudanese government's request, India donated 20,000 tons of wheat as humanitarian assistance to the people of Darfur in March 2005. ONGC Videsh Ltd donated generously for a school for special children, sports equipment, prostheses etc. In July 2007, at the request of elders of the Shilluk community, and with the endorsement of the Embassy, OVL donated a powerful generator to Kodok town in Fashdoda County of Upper Nile State. In early 2008, India donated tents and medicines worth US\$ 100,000 for flood relief in north and south Sudan. In the year 2016, OVL donated Solar street lights to a village in Ombadda area of Khartoum State. Under CSR, OVL has been undertaking projects of social relevance in Sudan as per Ministry's advice every year. On 15 August 2007, the private sector Indian company Angelique International Ltd gifted US\$ 5,000 to renovate the Indian school in Kassala

town, while OVL helped to refurbish the Indian Club in Port Sudan. Several Indian companies in Sudan contributed generously for repairs of a school in Kadugli done by the Indian army battalion posted there.

### **Cooperation in Health and Educational Sectors**

Besides training courses to Sudanese officials under Indian capacity building programmes, India has become the major destination for Sudanese patients to avail medical treatment in India. The Embassy issued more than 4000 Medical visas in 2018 and the trend is on the upswing. India has one of the largest share in Pharma products (formulations and APIs) imports in Sudan. In addition, Pharma manufacturing companies in Sudan also source machinery from India for pharma manufacturing units. Annually about 3-4 thousand students travel to India for higher studies under self financing scheme, mainly to Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore.

### **Cultural Relations**

ICCR sponsored cultural troupes regularly visit Sudan. The last visit was by 7- member Rajasthani Folk Dance & Music Troupe from December 07-12, 2018. On 16 May 2016, ICCR and Alzaeim Al Azhari University in Khartoum signed a MoU to open a Hindi Language Chair at the University which became operational in February 2017 when the first Hindi Teacher joined the Chair for a tenure of two years. Mission has been organizing International Day of Yoga since 2015 with significant participation of the local populace and Yoga enthusiasts. In order to commemorate 142<sup>nd</sup> Birth Anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (Rashtriya Ekta Divas), Mission organized various events on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2017 and 2018. Mission is organizing various events to celebrate Gandhiji's 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary.

### **Indian Community**

Out of about 2700 Indians in Sudan, the settled Indian community in Sudan is now about 1500, which is about 150 years young. Other expatriate Indian community members are working as professionals in key sectors of the Sudanese economy, and some officials for United Nations missions in Sudan.

The Mission maintains a website ([www.eoikhartoum.in](http://www.eoikhartoum.in)), a Facebook Page (India in Sudan), Twitter handle (@EoI\_Khartoum) and Instagram (India in Sudan) as social media tools and disseminates information pertaining to all aspects of Mission's activities (Press release, Advertisement, ITEC and ICCR related information, visa and consular information, advisories, commercial queries etc.), MEA's publicity contents, fair and festival of India, and so on.

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**25<sup>th</sup> September 2019**