

India - Yemen Relations

India had actively supported Yemen's independence from the British. India 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.

Arab spring in Yemen in 2011 led to relinquishing of charge by former President and a GCC-sponsored agreement culminated in the formation of a two year transitional government, under a new President Abdo-Rabbu Mansour Hadi. The President's tenure was extended till the completion of the transition period. A new Constitution was under preparation based on the outcomes of the National Dialogue Conference or NDC formed to deliberate on new Yemen. However, in January 2015 after some internal clashes, the President resigned, and soon after, the entire Government headed by the Prime Minister also resigned, throwing the Government and country into uncertainty. With the assistance of UN, as envisaged in the various agreements between political parties and groups, a new Government has been attempted to be formed, which still has not happened. After about a month of his resignation, President Hadi left for Aden from Sana'a, where he retracted his resignation. This further exacerbated the fragile political situation. Stalemate was continuing till aerial bombings into Yemen by a group of coalition forces started on 26.03.2015 in order to restore the Presidency of Hadi. The operation continues.

Yemen and its people are favorably disposed to India and have supported it in international fora.

Upon invitation, India joined the "Friends of Yemen Group" in April 2012 in order to assist the country in the transition phase.

2. Political:

India's relations with Yemen go back into centuries when Yemenis' were the link with the Romans. In 19th and 20th centuries, 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.

India's championship of independence and recognition of Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic Republic of Yemen laid the foundation for 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 official level in the recent past. In 2013, the 8th session of Joint Commission Meeting was held in New Delhi, the Yemeni side was led by the Deputy Minister of Planning and International Cooperation Mr. Abdulaziz Abdul Ghani and the Indian side was led by Mr. Sanjay Singh, formerly Secretary (East) from 11-12 March 2013. Mr. Mridul Kumar, Joint Secretary (Gulf) visited Yemen 21-22 November 2013 and handed over Indian wheat worth US\$ 2 million to Dr Abdulqawi A Noman, First Deputy Minister and held talks with Mr. Mohammed al-Saeed Al-Saadi, Minister of Planning and Internal Cooperation, Dr Ali Hassan Muthanna, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Iqbal Bahader, First Deputy Minister for Trade, among others. Mr. V.S. Sampath, Chief Election Commissioner of India, visited and signed an MoU with his counterpart Judge Mr. Mohammed Hussian Al-Hakimi, President of Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum and also called on Yemeni President Hadi. The then Minister of Electricity and Energy Salih Hasan Sumiya visited Hyderabad and Delhi in May 2013. BHEL, India is putting up a power plant in Yemen. Minister of Public Health and Population Dr Ahmed al-Ansi paid a visit to India 4-7 July 2013 to discuss bilateral cooperation with India in health.

Earlier, the then Foreign Minister of Yemen, Dr Abu Bakr Al-Qirbi, had visited India to take part in IORA Ministerial meeting in Bengaluru, Nov 11-15, 2011. Nobel Laureate Tawakkol Karman visited India in April 2012 under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors' Programme. The last high visit took place in 1999 – when President Ali Abdullah Saleh visited in March 1999 and Vice President Mr. Krishan Kant in Oct 1999 for bilateral exchange and talks.

There has been good Yemen participation in the following Indian Ocean Rim events in India in 2014, namely (i) IORA Workshop on Women Empowerment and Poverty Alleviation held on 17-19 September 2014 at Hyderabad; (ii) Indian Ocean Dialogue meeting held on 5-7 September 2014 in Cochin; and (iii) IORA Meeting of Experts on Maritime Safety and Security held on 13-14 October 2015 in New Delhi.

A range of bilateral agreement exists encompassing 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 symposia on subjects of mutual interest.

India has offered to set up an IT centre in Yemen, which the Yemen side has accepted.

Any further development in bilateral relations can happen after stability returns in Yemen.

3 Commercial:

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.

India is the third largest importer of Yemeni goods, after China and Thailand while India is the fifth largest exporter to Yemen after UAE, Switzerland, Netherlands and China (Statistics 2012). The total bilateral trade for FY 2014-15 is US\$ 1.53 billion, as per statistics of Department of Commerce, GOI.

India exports mineral oils and products of their distillation, cereals, sugars and sugar confectionery, pharmaceutical products, articles of apparel and clothing accessories, tea, rice, wheat, cereals, spices, tobacco, meat and meat products, hand tools, chemicals etc to Yemen. On the other hand, India imports mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation, lead and articles thereof, raw hides and skins (other than fur skins), leather and limestone 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 the country's market.

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.

A CII delegation headed by Dr. Walid M Al-Bakili, Head of MENA and Gulf, Apollo Hospitals accompanied by four other members visited Yemen from 9-12 March, 2014. The delegation held seminars in Sana'a, Aden and Mukalla, in addition to bilateral meetings with Eng. Fareed Ahmed Mujawar, Minister of Agriculture and Irrigation, Dr. Muttahar al-Abbasi, Vice Minister of Planning and International Cooperation among others. In February 2013, a 3 member delegation from Nagarjuna Group visited for setting up of a fertilizer plant; a 2-member delegation from Waaree Group visited for setting up solar water pumping station. On the occasion of hosting a Seminar, representatives from TATA, BHEL, Sun Pharma and Waaree Group, spoke among others. Yemen India Business Council Chairman led a delegation for the Indian Engineering Sourcing Show in March 2013 to Mumbai. BHEL Chairman and Managing Director visited Sana'a on 8-10 December 2013. Duty Free Tariff Preference scheme (DFTP) of India for Least Developed Countries was notified on 2 April 2013. Two persons, viz. Mr. Ahmed Salem Shammakh, Chairman of Yemeni-Indian Business

Council & Eamar Cement and Sales Company and Mr. Aiman Erab, Deputy Manager of the company, went to India for participation in the 4th India-Arab Partnership Summit held in New Delhi on 26-27 November 2014.

The Embassy, in collaboration with the Federation of the Yemeni Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FYCCI) organized a well-attended seminar to present the Indian Government's 'Make in India' programme, on 28 October 2014 in Sana'a. 43 entrepreneurs and executives from different companies of Yemen attended the event. BHEL also gave a presentation of 7 minutes on its global activities.

In early September, three eminent specialists from the Fortis Hospital, Bangalore, visited Al-Thawra Hospital in Sana'a (Government-owned) and carried out medical investigations and operations on a large number of Yemeni patients. The three doctors were Urologist, gastroenterologist and neurologist.

WAPCOS Ltd, a Government of India Undertaking, under the aegis of Ministry of Water Resources has been awarded following projects in Yemen:

- a) Consultancy service for road construction supervision for Abdulla Gharib Road section in Hadramout Governorate (with Ministry of Public Works and Highways of Yemen).
- b) Consultancy services for supervision of reconstruction of Hanad Weir and Hanad Left Main Canal in Abyan Governorate (with the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of Yemen).

The growing economic and commercial activities have got a setback due to the internal developments in Yemen in 2015. Two projects, one construction of Amran-Aden highway worth US\$ 211.41 million to be funded by Saudi fund and another of power transmission line to be executed by Gammon India, worth US\$ 62 million between Dhamar and Aden, where part Abu Dhabi fund was to be involved, have got affected.

4. ITEC/ICCR Scholarships

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 trainings to Yemen for capacity buildings.

Ministry had sanctioned 108 slots for 2013-2014 against 110 slots requested. In 2013-2014, 103 ITEC slots were utilized by Yemeni nationals; five applicants could not travel due to personal and family reasons.. For 2014-2015, Ministry has sanctioned 80 slots for Yemen. In addition, ICCR had allotted 52 slots for the Yemeni students for the year 2014-2015 and 50 candidates have utilized the scholarship scheme.

ICCR scholarships have been extended for the year 2015-16. Out of 58 slots allotted to this Mission, 43 slots were utilized despite difficult ongoing security situation in Yemen, and Mission's relocation to Djibouti with reduced staff in April 2015.

On account of the situation prevailing in Yemen in 2015-16, no scholarships under ITEC have been offered so far.

5. Cultural:

A new Cultural Exchange Programme is under consideration. ICCR-sponsored cultural troops have been regularly performing in different parts of Yemen with the last Rajasthani folk cultural troupe performing in Sana'a, Aden and Taiz. Two special exhibitions were organized in Sana'a, in Nov 2011 and Jan 2012, to mark Tagore's 150th Birth Anniversary.

6. Indian community:

India and Yemen cherish a rich blend of pulsating 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. Till the mid 1950's many Indians viz. Hindus, Muslims and Parsis had taken residence in Aden. This has led to establishment of rich Indian heritage temples built to serve Hindu, Jain and Parsi communities – out of 10 such temples one is still being actively patronized. Since independence, many Indians have taken up Yemeni citizenship – married into Yemeni communities. Sizable populations among them follow Indian customs and traditions.

Sisters from *Missionaries of Charity* have opened up centers in Hodeidah, Sana'a, Taiz and Aden. The first one, a Leprosy Centre, was inaugurated by Mother Teresa in Hodeidah in 1973.

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 who were known for their extreme valor and staunch loyalty.

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.

After the air strikes started by the coalition forces in March 2015, the political and security situation in Yemen has become uncertain. The situation is likely to improve only after the various parties in Yemen enter into some sort of understanding. Hence under 'Operation Rahat', the Government of India has evacuated the overwhelming majority of Indian community from Yemen.

The Embassy of India, Sana'a, itself has temporarily relocated to Djibouti with effect from 14.04.2015.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Sana'a website:

www.eoisanaa.org

Embassy of India, Sana'a Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/EmbassyofIndiainSanaaYemen/>

Embassy of India, Sana'a Twitter:

<https://twitter.com/indiainyemen>

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