

## • INDIA - NIGERIA BILATERAL RELATIONS

### Political Relations

India and Nigeria enjoy warm, friendly, and deep-rooted bilateral relations. India, with a population of 1.4 billion, and Nigeria, over 220 million, are large developing and democratic countries with multi-religious, multi-ethnic, and multi-lingual societies. India as the largest democracy in the world and Nigeria as the largest in Africa, become natural partners.

India and Nigeria are playing an important role in the South-South Cooperation. In the multilateral organisations particularly United Nations, G77 and NAM, both countries have been articulating the voice of the developing world in a coordinated and effective manner.

India established its Diplomatic House in Lagos in November 1958, two years before Nigeria became independent in 1960. Political contacts at the highest level were maintained during the last 60 years.

In Oct 2007 Dr. Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India visited Nigeria. During this visit both countries raised the status of bilateral relationship to a '**Strategic Partnership**'. Our diplomatic relations have transformed from "Historical Friendship" to "Strategic Partners".

**3<sup>rd</sup> IAFS Participation** In October 2015, Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari visited New Delhi to participate in the Third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III). During this visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Buhari reviewed bilateral engagements and charted a path for further enhancement of ties.

### Bilateral Visits from India

From 16-17 November 2024, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Nigeria, where he held talks with President Bola Ahmed Tinubu and reviewed bilateral relations. Key areas of cooperation discussed included security, health, education, trade, and agriculture. During the visit, MoUs on cultural cooperation, survey collaboration, and customs assistance were signed. The Prime Minister was honored with the Grand Commander of the Order of Niger Award and

also addressed the Indian community.

In September 2016, Indian Vice President Hamid Ansari visited Nigeria and held meetings with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari and Vice President Prof. Yemi Osinbajo, further deepening bilateral cooperation.

In October 2007, during a historic State visit to Nigeria by Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, India and Nigeria adopted the Abuja Declaration for Strategic Partnership, giving a new impetus to bilateral relations.

In December 2003, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Abuja to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Summit.

The foundation of mutual goodwill, respect, and friendship between the two nations was laid during India's first Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru's landmark visit to Nigeria in September 1962, where he interacted with Nigeria's first Prime Minister, Tafawa Balewa.

### **Bilateral Visits from Nigeria**

From 5-10 September 2023, President Bola Ahmed Tinubu of Nigeria visited India to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met President Tinubu on the sidelines of the summit in New Delhi.

Nigerian Vice President Goodluck Jonathan (later President from 2011-2015) visited India in November 2007 and attended the first India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008. President Olusegun Obasanjo visited India in November 2004.

Two Nigerian Presidents have been Chief Guests at India's Republic Day celebrations: President Shehu Shagari in 1983 and President Olusegun Obasanjo in 2000, during India's 50th Republic Day celebrations.

### **Other Visits**

Shri V. Muraleedharan, MoS for External Affairs attended the inaugural event of Nigeria-India Business Council (NIBC) at Abuja from 22-23 Aug 2022. Shri Rajnath Singh, Defence Minister attended the swearing-in ceremony of President of Nigeria Mr Bola Ahmed

Tinubu as a Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India at Abuja from 28-29 May 2023. Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister attended 6th Joint Commission Meeting between India-Nigeria from 21-23 January 2024.

### **Institutional Mechanism**

**Foreign Office Consultations (FoC):** The first round of India-Nigeria Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in Abuja in December 2003 on the sidelines of the Commonwealth Summit. The 2<sup>nd</sup> FoC was held in New Delhi on 29 September 2022.

**Joint Commission Meeting (JCM):** The Joint Commission was established between the two nations in 1979. Since its inception, six JCMs have been convened, taking place in the years 1981, 1989, 2000, 2003, 2011, and most recently, in January 2024.

**Consular Dialogue:** The Consular Dialogue between the two countries commenced with its first meeting held in New Delhi in September 2019, followed by the second meeting in Abuja in February 2023, and the third meeting took place in New Delhi in August 2024.

**Joint Trade Committee (JTC):** India and Nigeria have agreed in 2017 to establish a JTC at the level of Commerce Secretary from Indian side and Permanent Secretary (Trade) from Nigerian side to review the ongoing bilateral trade and commercial relations. The JTC convened its first meeting in New Delhi in December 2019. Subsequently, the second meeting was held in Abuja in April 2024.

### **Defence Cooperation**

The defence cooperation between India and Nigeria has developed significantly since Nigeria's independence in 1960. India assisted in establishing key military institutions such as the Nigerian Defence Academy (NDA) in Kaduna and the Naval College in Port Harcourt.

After signing a bilateral MoU on Defence Cooperation in October 2007, visits at high-level took place and bilateral interaction for defence cooperation has increased over the years. The Armed forces of both the nations have attended military training together, exchange programmes and served in UN Peace Keeping Operations. Other areas of cooperation include counter terrorism and

counterinsurgency (CT/CI), sea piracy and exchange of visits between training institutes.

**Joint Defence Coordination Committee (JDCC)** : The JDCC held its inaugural meeting in New Delhi in April 2013. Subsequently, the second meeting took place in Abuja in May 2014, followed by the third meeting in New Delhi in August 2015. The fourth meeting was convened in Abuja in November 2017, and the fifth meeting was held in New Delhi in January 2019.

**NSA Visit (March 2021)**: Nigerian delegation led by National Security Adviser of Nigeria Major General (Retd.) Babagana Monguno visited New Delhi for the First Strategic and Counter-Terrorism Dialogue between India and Nigeria at the level of NSA from March 4-5, 2021. The 2<sup>nd</sup> CT Dialogue took place on 4<sup>th</sup> -5<sup>th</sup> November 2024 in New Delhi, India.

In September 2022, Indian Naval Ship, INS Tarkash visited Lagos, Nigeria to conduct first ever anti-piracy operation in the Gulf of Guinea. From 13-16 October 2023, INS Sumedha visited Lagos, Nigeria. INS Tushil, Indian Navy's latest guided missile stealth frigate visited Lagos on 12 January 2025.

### **Economic and Commercial Relations**

In 2023, India figured amongst the top 5 trading partners of Nigeria. The Bilateral trade volume between Nigeria and India has fallen from US\$ 14.95 billion in 2021-22 to US\$ 7.89 billion in 2023-24. This is mainly because of decrease in the volume of oil purchased from Nigeria. The fall in quantum of oil purchase is also attributable to non-nomination of cargo from Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) which had signed a G2G term contract for supply with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL). The top export commodities from India to Nigeria are diesel, aviation fuel, pharmaceuticals and two and three wheelers. Top items of import from Nigeria are crude oil, cashew and sesame seeds.

### **India-Nigeria Bilateral Trade Statistics (Value in US\$ million)**

<b>India's</b>	<b>2018-1</b>	<b>2019-2</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>	<b>2023-24</b>
	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>				

<b>Exports</b>	3,005.7 1	3,609.9 1	3,134.89	4,663.1 7	5,159.44	3,663.49
<b>Imports</b>	10,884. 71	10,213. 61	5,672.38	10,291. 58	6,692.65	4,229.81
<b>Trade</b>	13,889. 92	13,823. 52	8,807.27	14,954. 75	11,852.0 9	7,893.30

**Source: DGCIS India**

**Participation in CII-India Africa Business Conclaves:** Nigeria's participation at the annual CII-EXIM Bank Conclaves has been consistent. Dr Enelamah Okechukwu, Minister for Industry, Trade & Investment, led the Nigerian delegation to attend the 11th CII-Exim Bank Conclave from 14-15 March 2016 and again to attend the 14th CII-Exim Bank Conclave from 17-19 March 2019 where he was accompanied by Mr Mustapha Baba Shehuri, MoS of Power Works & Housing and Mr John Olukayode Fayemi, Governor of Ekiti State of Nigeria. While Mr Adeniyi Adebayo, Minister of Industry, Trade and Investment, led the Nigerian delegation to attend the 17th CII-Exim Bank Conclave from 19-20 March 2022, Mr Nura Abba Rimi, Permanent Secretary from Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, attended the 19th CII-Exim Bank conclave from 20-22 August 2024.

### **Development Cooperation**

India has extended five Lines of Credit (LOCs) amounting to US\$ 395.44 million to Nigeria. Of these, only one LOC worth US\$ 100 million has been utilized for three power projects. This includes US\$ 30 million for a gas-fired turbine electricity generation station in Cross River State and US\$ 31.05 million for three sub-projects: a 2x60 MVA transmission substation, solar-powered streetlights, and 50kVA mini-grids in Kaduna State. The remaining LOCs are being repurposed at Nigeria's request.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, India donated 7.8 tons of essential medicines, including HCQS and antibiotics, to Nigeria on 17 July 2020. On 2 March 2021, India supplied 3.92 million doses of the Covishield vaccine under the Covax scheme, followed by 100,000

gifted doses on 26 March 2021. In January 2022, an additional 5.742 million doses of Covishield were exported to Nigeria under the Covax scheme. Both countries also approved an Air Transport/Bubble arrangement in September 2020.

Training Programmes under the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III): Consequent to the third India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III) that was held in New Delhi in October 2015, India has been offering additional training programmes to Nigeria in diverse subjects ranging from agriculture, health, hydropower, water resources, etc. In the year 2018-19, about 74 Nigerians have been trained under IAFS-III Programmes in premier Indian institutions.

Every year, the Indian Council of Cultural relations ICCR offered around 20 fully funded scholarships under the “ICCR Africa Scholarship Scheme” for Nigerian nationals to pursue undergraduate, post-graduate and higher courses in India.

Nigerian Nationals are regularly availing the C.V.Raman International Fellowships offered by Government of India in doctoral and post-doctoral research training. Nigerian nationals are regularly attending year-long Hindi classes (Hindi scholarships) at Central Institute of Hindi in Agra, availing AYUSH Scholarship.

Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) signed the e-VBAB MoU in Sep 2021. Under this MoU, India has offered free tele-education to 15000 students and free tele-medicine to 1000 doctors and paramedics. For Academic year 2022, iLearn portal was opened for Nigerian students for online courses and around 11500 students applied for scholarships. Total 4830 Nigerian students got admitted in various Universities in India. In 2023, around 450 Nigerian students got admitted in various Universities in India.

### **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)**

Since 1964, India has been supporting Nigeria’s efforts in capacity building under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme. Every year India offered about 250 civilian and 150 defence training slots under ITEC/e-ITEC to Nigeria.

### **Science & Technology**

On 13 August 2020, India and Nigeria signed an MoU on cooperation in outer space in Abuja. The ceremony was attended online by MoS (EA) Mr. V. Muraleedharan and Nigerian Minister of Science & Technology Dr. Ogbonnaya Onu. The MoU focuses on applications in agriculture, environment, mining, micro and mini satellites, and capacity building.

### **Cultural Relations:**

ICCR Indian Dance troupes that visited and performed in Nigeria includes Kathak group led by Ms. Surabhi Singh (27 Jan-3 Feb 2021), Haryana Folk Dance Troupe (November 2018), Bastar Band Dance Troupe from Chhattisgarh (2-14 April 2019), Narmada Cultural Organization, a Manipuri Dance Group (21-26 November 2019), Odyssey Dance Troupe Kaishiki Dance Academy (23-29 January 2020) and Baba Gorenath Gotipua Dance Association (01-06 November 2021).

A 10 members Afri Theater Artist group participated in second National Tribal Festival in Raipur, Chhattisgarh (28-31 October 2021). In March 2022, 15 members Nigerian cultural troupe from the Federal Ministry of Culture participated in in 35<sup>th</sup>, 36<sup>th</sup> and 37<sup>th</sup> Surajkund Mela in India. The said troupe was jointly sponsored by MEA and the Govt. of Haryana.

High Commission of India in association with various Indian cultural associations in Nigeria also organizes events to celebrate International Day of Yoga, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, World Hindi Day, Gandhi Jayanthi, Swatchata Diwas, International Women's Day, ICCR Day, ITEC Day and B.R. Ambedkar Jayanthi, Constitution Day etc. Mission also organised various events under the International Year of Millets and Mission Life. Indian Associations also separately organize events to celebrate Indian festivals such as Holi and Diwali in different cities of Nigeria.

### **Indian Community:**

The Indian community in Nigeria, comprising approximately 50,000 individuals, includes Indian nationals and OCI cardholders. Many Nigerians, now in their forties to sixties, have been taught by Indian educators, treated by Indian doctors, and influenced by Indian cinema. The CBSE-affiliated Indian Language School in Lagos

serves around 2,000 students. Indian Cultural Associations (ICAs) operate in key cities such as Lagos, Abuja, Kano, Kaduna, Port Harcourt, and Ibadan. In January 2021, the Indian Culture Association (ICA), Lagos, received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, marking the first such honor for Nigeria.

*March 2025*

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