

## Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

### India-Benin Bilateral Relations

#### A. Introduction:

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Embassy Profile Report for 03.09.2025 depicting the Embassy of Benin.
2. Benin is a West African nation. Its official capital is Porto- Novo, though Cotonou serves as the largest city and economic Centre. India and Benin have friendly ties characterized by democracy and secularism. Benin as a shining example of a tolerant, progressive multi-ethnic and multi-religious society with a multi-party democracy, is a natural partner to India, being the world's largest democracy.
3. Benin as a member of several international forums, including the United Nations, works closely with India. During the visit to India of the then President of Benin Dr. Boni Yayi in March 2009, Benin extended its unflinching support to India in her bid for a Permanent Seat in an expanded UN Security Council. Benin expressed solidarity with India in its efforts to tackle the scourge of terrorism, which has become the biggest threat to international peace and security in the current times.

#### B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

4. India emerged as the largest trading partner of Benin with two-way trade touching USD 1.33 billion in 2024-25. Lead items of India's exports were rice, pharmaceutical products, electrical machinery, cotton, and automobiles particularly two and three-wheelers etc.

#### Export-Import statistics from 2020-21 to 2024-25

(USD Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2020-21	881.17	325.97	555.20
2021-22	1118.53	402.12	716.41
2022-23	1345.39	452.58	892.81
2023-24	967.11	214.57	752.54
2024-25	1328.62	133.64	1194.98

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

### **C. Other Major Areas of Co-operation:**

- India and Benin have signed multiple Agreements/MoUs covering areas such as Education, R&D, Tourism, Defense Production, Environment, Telecommunication etc.
- India-Benin relations were placed on a firm footing with the State visit of the then President Boni Yayi accompanied by five Cabinet ministers to India from 3 to 7 March, 2009. In addition to delegation-level meeting with the then Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, President Boni Yayi held meetings with the President, Vice President, and External Affairs Minister. India announced a Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 15 million for Benin during the visit. The visit concluded with five bilateral agreements with Benin including an MoU on setting up an Information Technology Centre of Excellence (CETI) in the Republic of Benin.
- His Excellency Mr. Ram Nath Kovind, President of the Republic of India, paid a State visit to Benin on July 28-30, 2019, heading a high-level delegation and met his counterpart his Excellency Mr. Patrice TALON, President of the Republic of Benin. He also visited the Benin National Assembly where he had discussions with the Speaker of the Benin Parliament and addressed Beninese MPs during a regular session of the Parliament. This visit is an historic visit, very first to Benin at the level of Head of State/Government. During the visit, the two Heads of State held a tete-a-tete, at the Palace of the Republic, for discussions relating to bilateral cooperation, India-Africa partnership, and global issues. President Kovind also announced the inclusion of Benin in India's e-visa regime. Four (4) Agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit -Cultural Exchange Programme between Benin and India for 2019-23; MoU on Tele-medicine and Tele-education; Agreement on mutual exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic, official/service passports; and MoU on cooperation in the field of export credit and investment insurance.
- Ms. Medesse Veronique Tognifode, Hon'ble Minister of Social Affairs and Micro Finance of the Republic of Benin visited India in Jan 2020, to attend the Peer Exchange- "Accelerating Digital Social Protection Payments" organized in New Delhi.
- In February 2023, Mr. Romuald WADAGNI, Minister of Economy and Finance & Mr. Dona Jean-Claude HOUSSOU, Minister of Energy visited India. During this visit they met EXIM Bank officials.
- Beninese Armed Forces have been attending training/courses in defence institutions in India under the ITEC program. The focus of the training is on specialist areas like counter terrorism and anti-piracy. India is also looking at capacity building of the Beninese Armed Forces. Vacancies in UN courses are also being provided.
- Benin is part of the Pan African e-Network project. An MoU on e-VBAB (Tele- education and Tele-medicine) was signed between the Republic of Benin and TCIL, during the State Visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Benin from 28-30 July, 2019.
- President Ram Nath KOVIND announced Line of Credit of USD 100 million to Benin for its national priority projects, during his State Visit to Benin from 28-30 July, 2019.

- IBSA's Salt Farming Project: An India-Brazil-South Africa (IBSA) project on Salt farming in the Republic of Benin was announced on 16 July 2021 in Djegbadji village near Ouidah, Benin. The Salt Farming Project aims to provide improved technology, capacity building and distribution support to the local population (mainly women) in the efficient, cost-effective, and environmentally safe production of salt.
- ITEC/e-ITEC: Since 1964, India has been supporting Benin's efforts in Capacity building under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme. India regularly offers training slots under ITEC Civil to Benin annually. Beninese officials regularly attend short to medium terms training programmes in diverse subjects ranging from IT to Parliamentary studies in India. Beninese public servants regularly attending a special course on English Proficiency of six-week duration under ITEC, at EFLU, Hyderabad.
- ICCR Scholarship: Every year there are 5-10 scholarships offered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) for Beninese Students to pursue under graduate/ postgraduate courses in India.
- C.V Raman International Fellowships: Beninese Nationals are regularly availing the C.V. Raman International Fellowships offered by Government of India in doctoral and post-doctoral research training.
- e-Vidya Bharati and e-Arogya Bharati MoU: The Government of the Republic of Benin and Nigeria and Telecommunications Consultants India Limited (TCIL) signed the e-VBAB MoU in 2019 and India has been offering various free online courses (tele-education and free tele-medicine) to Benin under this MoU. Beninese students regularly availing scholarship under e-VBAB.
- India and Benin signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for 2019-23 during the State Visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Benin from 28-30 July, 2019. A 15-members Theyyam dance group from Kerala visited Benin on December 2, 2011 and gave a performance at Palaisde Congress in Cotonou.
- The Indian Community in Benin is estimated at 1500 persons. About 90 Indian companies mainly in trading and retailing are in Benin, dealing in textiles, rice, cashew, scrap, electronics and supermarkets. Indian experts are working in the West Africa Rice Development Centre (WARDA). A school for local rural children was opened and run by the community. Cotonou has an Indian Cultural Association as well as a Hindu Temple to anchor cultural activities. The Indian Community has also set up the Indian International School of Benin in Cotonou.
- India does not have a Resident Diplomatic Mission in Benin. High Commissioner of India to Nigeria is concurrently accredited as Ambassador to Benin. Government of India appointed Mr. Gobind Manglani (current President of Indian Association, Benin - IAB) as India's Honorary Consul in Benin. Benin's resident mission in New Delhi was opened in September 2010. The Benin Resident Embassy in New Delhi was closed in 2016.

**Source:** [www.mea.gov.in](http://www.mea.gov.in)