

# **Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCIS, Kolkata.**

## **India-Sudan 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 30.07.2025 depicting the Embassy of Sudan.

2. Relations between India and Sudan date back to ancient times. Evidence indicate that there were contacts and possibly trade almost 5,000 years ago between Nilotic and Indus Valley Civilizations through Mesopotamia. Two steel suspension rail bridges in Khartoum and Atbara were imported from India in the 1900s. These bridges are still in use today. Since 1900, Indian experts have been involved in the development of Sudan's forestry sector. Mahatma Gandhi visited Port Sudan in 1935, on his way to England and met with the members of the Indian diaspora in Sudan.

3. The first Sudanese Parliamentary elections in 1953 were conducted by Shri Sukumar Sen, the then India's Chief Election Commissioner (the Sudanese Election Commission, formed in 1957, drew heavily on Indian elections norms and laws). India opened diplomatic representation in Khartoum in March 1955.

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

4. India is a significant trade partner of Sudan. India primarily exports food stuffs, petroleum products, manufactured goods, machinery and equipment, chemicals including pharmaceuticals and textiles to Sudan. Sudan mainly exports sesame seed, gum Arabic, cotton, water melon seeds, hides and skins and ground nuts to India. Bilateral trade between both countries is on a steep rise, lately. But with the armed conflicts that broke out on April 15, 2023, the trade declined drastically. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are as under:

**Export-Import statistics as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2020-21 to 2024-25 are as follows :**

(USD Million)			
<b>Year</b>	<b>India's Exports</b>	<b>India's Imports</b>	<b>Total Bilateral Trade</b>
2020-21	1022.33	368.28	1390.61
2021-22	1077.25	129.15	1206.40
2022-23	1815.84	218.18	2034.02
2023-24	805.04	330.55	1135.59
2024-25	589.03	427.55	1016.58

*(Source: Department of Commerce, India)*

5. A number of Indian companies have presence in Sudan in different fields such as pharmaceuticals, agriculture, mining, energy services etc. Indian experts and workers are also present in different sectors like IT, pharmaceutical, sugar, steel industry, ceramic industry etc. and are making a significant contribution. A number of steel units are owned by PIOs such as Liberty Steel, Omega Steel and Aarti Steel, which is a subsidiary of Bhusan Group. Indian pharmaceutical companies are very active in Sudan and are a source of formulations and active pharmaceutical ingredients (API). Indian Pharmaceutical machinery manufacturers have put up a number of lines of manufacturing units for the pharmaceutical industry of Sudan.

6. Vegetable oil machinery manufacturers and consultants have put up a number of manufacturing lines for the major food groups in Sudan. Orient Fan, which has a major share and is a market leader in Sudan, is represented by an Indian origin businessman. Major Indian brands in pharma like Sun Pharma, Cadila etc. have representations and so do major automotive companies like Tata, Mahindra and Bajaj. As per National Investment Authority of Sudan, total Indian investments in Sudan up to Dec 2019 amounted to more than USD 471.5 million with 86 investment projects including 51 industrial projects, 21 service projects and 14 agricultural projects.

7. Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs held a virtual meeting with Acting Foreign Minister of Sudan on 14th December 2020 in which bilateral relations, regional and international issues of mutual interest were reviewed. Both sides identified several areas for furthering cooperation in sectors such as infrastructure, agriculture, mining, renewable energy, health and education, defence & security cooperation etc. EAM and the Sudanese FM Dr. Mariam Al-Sadig Al-Mahdi held a telecon on 27th August 2021.

### **C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :**

➤ India and Sudan have almost 30 bilateral agreements covering trade, science and technology, media, culture, consultations, business, small industries, legal matters, air services, agriculture etc.

➤ The main focus of bilateral engagement has been on capacity building, political, commercial and cultural exchanges. Sudanese scholars have also been selected for the C.V. Raman Fellowship Programme. Sudanese diplomats have been attending Professional Courses for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) organized by Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Services (SSIFS). In November 2019, 40 Sudanese Government professionals had undergone a special English language proficiency course in Hyderabad; 25 Sudanese Judges went to Bengaluru in December 2019 for a special training programme; a group of 50 officials from various Sudanese Ministries/ Agencies attended a special English course in Hyderabad in March 2020.

➤ Sudan is the third largest country in Africa, and it is estimated that around 10% of the world's arable land is in Sudan. Cooperation in agriculture between India and Sudan has been strong. The areas of cooperation include skill development and training, sale of agricultural machineries, including tractors, agricultural equipment, hybrid seeds, agrochemicals and agro-fertilizers. India dominates the agricultural tractor market in Sudan with export of around 2500 tractors in a year. Indian hybrid seeds are popular and companies like JK Seeds and Nath Seeds have good distribution network in Sudan. In the agro-chemical industries, UPL is a dominant player. India also imports a lot

of agro commodities from Sudan, including sesame seeds, watermelon seeds, groundnuts, pigeon peas and chick peas.

➤ Kosti Thermal Power Plant built by BHEL is located at Um Dabaker in Sudan with capacity of 500 MW (4 X 125 MW). This is the largest thermal power plant in Sudan, the biggest combined cycle project built by BHEL in Africa. It is BHEL's largest oil-fired thermal power plant in the overseas market and also its first crude-oil fired thermal power plant in Africa. The project is financed under LoC of USD 350 million to Sudan.

➤ Following record breaking floods in July-August 2020 and the ongoing COVID pandemic, GOI donated 100 MT food aid (75 MT white flour and 25 MT sugar) as HADR supplies on November 2, 2020 at Port Sudan delivered by INS Airavat. In April 2021, GOI also donated 6 Tonnes of life saving essential medicines to Sudan.

➤ A contingent from Sudan Armed Forces participated in Africa-India Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-2019) in Pune in March 2019. In 2019, a team of 16 senior officers of National Defence from Nimity Defence Academy visited India on study tour which was hosted by National Defence College, New Delhi. High level Sudanese delegation has been regularly participating in AERO-INDIA-2019, DEF-EXPO 2020, AERO-INDIA- 2021 and DEF-EXPO-2022.

➤ INS Airavat made an OTR port call at Port Sudan on 2-4 November 2020, in a first after 1995, carrying 100 MT of HADR supplies for Sudan. INS Tabar undertook a Maritime Exercise (PASSEX) with the Sudanese Navy in the Sudanese territorial waters in the Red Sea on 10 September 2021. Two Sudanese warships Abdel fadil Almaz and Almak-Nimr took part in the exercises, the first ever bilateral maritime exercise involving a wide range of naval operations. In February 2022, a delegation from Defence Industries System of Sudan visited various Indian Firms. During the visit, three MOUs with Rashtriya Metal Industries Ltd (RIML), Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWEIL) and Hyderabad Precision Manufacturing have been signed. DIS has also submitted two MOUs to Yantra India Limited (YIL) and Munition India Ltd (MIL), which are pending with these firms.

➤ Healthcare is an important sector for cooperation between the two countries. In pursuance of the commitments made under IAFS-III, mid-career specialized training courses are conducted at regular intervals at renowned hospitals in India like Apollo, Fortis and Artemis. India has become the major destination for Sudanese patients to avail medical treatment. Mission issued 6175 Medical/medical attendant visas in 2019, 3284 (2020), 4049 (2021) and 1480 (June 2022). Prominent hospitals like Apollo, Yashoda, Fortis are in the process of setting up information centres in Sudan to better serve the Sudanese patients. Recently, a comprehensive draft MOU for Cooperation in Health Sector has been shared with the Sudanese side.

➤ About 1500 students travel to India annually for higher studies mainly to Pune, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore. More than 100,000 Sudanese, graduates of Indian Universities, have carved a niche for themselves in their chosen fields and some of them are holding high positions in government and business.

➤ India had in the past provided germ plasm for Neem, Mango and Ashok trees. Sudan had also requested help for technical know-how for rice production; small scale sugar mills of capacity up to 200 TCD (Tons of Cane Per Day). Some areas of cooperation could be twinning of agricultural universities; capacity building in micro-finance; bio- fertilizers; cow and sheep breeding technology; warehousing; rain water harvesting; milk co-operatives etc. During the last Joint Ministerial Meeting, the Indian side suggested to send a multi-disciplinary composite delegation of scientists and experts from agricultural and allied sectors. A comprehensive draft MoU has been submitted to the

Sudanese side for consideration.

➤ On the request of Sudanese side, a virtual meeting between National Information Centre (NIC) of Sudan and Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) was held on 23 August 2021 to understand the Aadhaar project of India. On a request from Sudan's PM Office for assistance in developing e-governance system in Sudan, the Mission in partnership with NIC, Sudan organized a webinar on sharing 'India's experience in e- Governance' in Khartoum on 2 September 2021.

➤ A Letter of Intent (LoI) on cooperation in exchange of ideas, information, personnel, skills, capacity building and regulatory experience was signed between Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) and Telecommunication and Post Regulatory Authority (TPRA) of Sudan during a virtual meeting on 6 April 2021. Under the LoI, TRAI has conducted a five-day Capacity Building Programme from 20-24 September 2021 for TPRA officers virtually.

➤ An MoU between Sudanese Standards & Metrology Organisation (SSMO) and Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was signed on 25 February 2021. To discuss concrete cooperation the two sides held a virtual meeting in March 2021. Under the MoU, BIS provided right to SSMO to use indigenously developed Indian Standards. Some online training programmes will also be offered by to SSMO.

➤ Government of Sudan has been extending logistic assistance to cultural troupes visiting Sudan. ICCR sponsored cultural troupes regularly visit Sudan. A 15-member Sudanese artisan and artists group has participated in the Surajkund International Crafts Mela in February 2023. Three ICCR sponsored cultural troupes (a) A to Z Bollywood Music & Dance Group (12-15 Nov 2023) (b) 8 member Gujarati Folk Group, "Kalapath Sanstha" from 2 -4 February 2023 and (c) 11 member Maharashtrian cultural troupe " Bhavani Productions" from 30.11.2022 to 02.12.2022. Visited Sudan had enthralling performances at Friendship Hall, Al Neelain University, Ahfad University, Ribat University, Omdurman National Theatre, Omdurman Indian Club and India-Sudan Friendship Club.

➤ The armed conflict broke out on April 15th between Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF) had a devastating impact over the country. Over 45000 civilians lost their life (though media estimates higher figure) while close to 12.5 million people were displaced. More than 5.4 lakhs buildings in the country, including civilians' residences, were destroyed or made in hospitable. Above 50% of the population now requires food support and facing stiff challenges in wake of spread of diseases and collapse of health set up as 70% of the health care facilities have been fully or partially damaged. Our Mission in Port Sudan notwithstanding the prevailing situation continue to extend Consular, Visa and Passport services. Over 1200 visas have been granted to Sudanese nationals ever since restoration of visa services.

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