

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

India-Oman Bilateral Relation

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director 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 Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Oman.
2. The Sultanate of Oman is a strategic partner of India and an important interlocutor at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League, and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora. India and Oman are linked by geography, history, and culture and enjoy warm and cordial relations. While people-to-people contact between India and Oman can be traced back 5000 years, diplomatic relations were established in 1955, and the relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2008.

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

3. India is among Oman's top trading partners. India is the 4th largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2023 after South Korea. India is also the 3rd largest market for Oman's non-oil exports for the year 2023 after Saudi Arabia and 3rd largest source of its import after UAE and Saudi Arabia. India's exports to Oman in FY 2023-2024 is US\$ 4.43 billion. Oman is India's 29th largest export market for the FY 2023-2024. India's imports from Oman in FY 2023-2024 were US\$ 4.52 billion. Oman is India's 29th largest import source for the FY 2023-2024. Overall, Oman is India's 30th largest trading partner in FY 2023-2024 with total trade of US\$ 8.95 billion. There are over 6000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman with estimated investment of over US\$ 7.5 billion.

**An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as under:
Export-Import statistics from 2019-20 to 2023-24**

(US Dollar Billion)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	5.93	3.67	2.26
2020-21	5.44	3.09	2.35
2021-22	9.99	6.84	3.15
2022-23	12.39	7.91	4.48
2023-24	8.95	4.52	4.43

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

4. Main items of India's exports to Oman: Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; Inorganic chemicals; Organic or Inorganic compounds of precious metals; Iron and Steel; cereals; Ships, boats and floating structures; electrical machinery & equipment; Boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, parts thereof; organic chemicals, Article of Iron and Steel; Ceramic products etc. in addition to traditional export items like tea, coffee, spices, dairy produce, articles of apparel, meat and other food items, etc.

5. Main items of India's imports from Oman: Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation; Fertilizers; Ships, boats and floating structures; Plastics and Articles thereof; Salt; Sulphur; Earth and Stone; Plastering Materials, Lime and Cement; Organic Chemicals; Inorganic Chemicals; Organic or Inorganic compounds of precious metals; Aluminum and Articles Thereof; Aircraft , spacecraft, and parts thereof; Iron and Steel.

6. Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF) is a 50-50 Joint Venture between the State Bank of India and the erstwhile State General Reserve Fund (SGRF) of Oman. It was set up in July 2010 as a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to invest in India. OIJIF commenced its operations in 2011 with an initial seed capital of US\$ 100 million, fully invested across seven Indian companies from diversified sectors. After successful utilization of funds under Tranche I and II, the 3rd Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF) tranche worth 300 million dollars was announced during the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to India on 16 December 2023.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :

- Several Agreements/ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been signed between India and Oman cover cooperation in Health; Tourism; Military Cooperation; peaceful uses of Outer Space; visa exemption for diplomats/officials; Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters; Extradition; legal and judicial cooperation in civil and commercial matters; Agriculture; Civil Aviation; Avoidance of Double Taxation; Standards and Measures; Manpower; Maritime Issues; Maritime Transport; Joint Investment Fund; and Cultural Cooperation. There are also MoUs for Cooperation between Oman's National Defence College (NDC) and the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) of India; Cooperation between FSI and Omani Diplomatic Institute; and State Audit Institution of Oman and the Office of Comptroller and Auditor General of India.
- Oman is India's closest defense partner in Gulf region and defense cooperation has emerged as a key pillar of the strategic partnership between India and Oman. Oman is the first Gulf country with which all the three wings of India's defense forces hold joint exercises. In recent years, both countries have cooperated in ensuring maritime security in the Indian Ocean region. In this regard, the first meeting of the Joint Maritime Committee constituted was held on 23 February 2022 virtually. On 30 July – 03 August, 2023, Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of the Naval Staff of India led a delegation to Oman and held important bilateral meetings. The first ever India-Oman Defence Industrial Seminar was held in Muscat on 24 September 2023. Shri Giridhar Aramane, Defence Secretary of the Republic of India visited Oman on 30-31 January 2024 to hold the Twelfth meeting of the India-Oman Joint Military Cooperation Committee (JMCC). The 5th HLM was also held in New Delhi from 22-26 April 2024, and the ICG delegation was led by DG ICG and Deputy Commander, ROPCG, represented ROPCG.
- During the visit of Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan (MOSVM) in October 2022, the Central Bank of Oman (CBO) signed a landmark Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) to link the payment systems between the two countries. Another MOU between Oman News Agency and Asia News International was exchanged. The MOU facilitates the exchange of news and information between both countries.
- During the visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to India in Dec. 2023, various MoUs/agreements inked were MoU for cooperation in IT, MoU between the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and the National Center for Financial Information (FNCI) on intelligence exchange related to money laundering, associated predicate offenses, and

terrorism financing, MoU in the field of Culture, MoU for the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies-Hindi Language at Dhofar University and an Agreement addressing the gainful employment of accompanying persons of official employees.

- As a mark of special friendship, India extended an invitation to the sultanate of Oman to participate in the G20 Summit and meetings as a guest country during India's Presidency in 2023. Oman actively participated in more than 150 meetings of the Working Groups, and 9 Omani Ministers travelled to India to participate in G20 Ministerial Meetings. HH Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik Al Said, Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations & Cooperation Affairs and Personal Representative of His Majesty Sultan represented Oman in the G20 Summit held on 09-10 September 2023.
- At the HOS/HOG level, PM Modi and Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik held phone conversations in April 2020 and February 2021, discussing COVID-19 and bilateral cooperation. On 11 June 2024, PM Modi received a congratulatory call from His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik on his re- appointment as Prime Minister of India. EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar held telecons with Oman's Foreign Minister in October 2023, February 2024 and June 2024.
- India and Oman share a close cultural bond rooted in millennia-old people-to-people exchanges and the presence of a substantial Indian community in Oman. A notable event was the announcement of the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019, awarded to the Late HM Sultan Qaboos in March 2021, fostering immense goodwill for India.
- Indian Embassy, in association with the National Archives of India (NAI), conducted a first of its kind special digitization and oral history project, titled 'The Oman Collection – Archival Heritage of the Indian Community in Oman' from 19 to 27 May 2024. Under this project, digitization of over 7,000 historical records of 32 old Indian diaspora families living in Oman for more than 250 years was done. These documents included personal diaries, account books, trade invoices, passports, letters, etc. These documents, dating from 1838 to early 20th century, were in English, Arabic, Gujarati and Hindi.
- Oman hosts a sizeable Indian community totaling approximately 659,789 individuals (512,611 males and 147,128 females) as of March 2024. 508,913 Indian nationals hold work visas, according to National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI) data from April 2024. Some Indian families have established roots in Oman for more than 150-200 years. As of May 2024, 1910 individuals of Indian origin possess Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cards. Thousands of Indians work as doctors, engineers, chartered accountants, teachers, lecturers, nurses, managers, etc. The role played by the Indian expatriate community in building Oman is often acknowledged by Omani Government. 22 Indian schools are offering a curriculum catering to the educational needs of more than 42,922 Indian students.
- Indian community in Oman is organized under Indian Social clubs in Muscat, Salalah, Sohar, and Sur. These clubs have several sub-groups called Linguistic Wings which cater to their members' cultural and social needs.
- The Hindu merchant community has two temples, one over a century old, and cremation grounds. Churches have been permitted, and a Gurudwara has been there for over two decades, along with at least two other temporary structures used as Gurudwaras. Indian Embassy receives good support from local authorities in delivering services aimed at the welfare of the Indian community in Oman.

- Outstanding contributions of Indians and People of Indian Origin in Oman to the strengthening of our bilateral relations have been recognized by the Government of India through Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards. The Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awardees from Oman are: Shri KanaksiKhimji (2003),Dr. P.Mohamed Ali(2004), P.N.C.Menon(2009), S.K.Virmani (2010), KiranAsher(2012) R.MParakh(2015) and Dr.VinodanV.T.(2019).

Source: www.mea.gov.in