

India-Burkina Faso Bilateral Relations

Political Relations

India and Burkina Faso share cordial bilateral relations. As a small country, Burkina Faso looks positively at our friendship and treatment as an important friend. The Embassy of Burkina Faso was opened in New Delhi in 1996 and elevated to the level of Ambassador in 2011. India maintained its Embassy in Ouagadougou from November 1996 until its closure in July 2002. In view of the cordial relations, India reopened its Embassy in March 2019 with the posting of an ambassador.

2. As of January 24, 2022, elected President Mr. Roch Marc Christian Kaboré was ousted in an armed coup led by an army officer, Lieutenant Colonel Paul-Henri Sandaogo Damiba. The Transition Government under the leadership of President Damiba pledged its intention to eventually return to a democratically elected form of government within a period of 36 months. Some countries (eg. China, Egypt, Turkey, Germany, Saudi Arabia, Canada etc.) publicly expressed their support for the Transition Government. ECOWAS and African Union suspended Burkina Faso but other international organizations like the UN, European Union etc., expressed support for the Transition Government. Nevertheless, ECOWAS suspended Burkina Faso from its membership on Jan 28, 2022.

3. On September 30, 2022, a group of soldiers led by Captain Ibrahim Traore took over the power in a coup d'état, citing the reason that ousted President Damiba had begun to focus more on politics rather than on addressing security issues that drove the January coup. Capt. Traore is a 34-year-old army captain who was part of the group of army officers that supported the January 2022 Burkina Faso coup d'état and brought the Patriotic Movement for Safeguard and Restoration (MPSR) military junta to power. On the day of the coup (Sep 30) an ECOWAS statement 'condemned in the strongest terms the seizure of power by force.' On Oct 04, an urgent meeting took place in Ouagadougou, between a high-level ECOWAS delegation and the new Coup Leader Capt Ibrahim Traore. Post-meeting, the ECOWAS delegation appreciated with satisfaction the spirit of consultation that had enabled a quick return to calm this time. However, there were no announcements regarding the lifting of the Jan 28th, 2022 suspension of Burkina Faso by ECOWAS, nor were there any imposition of sanctions. The European Union denounced the new coup as well as the African Union Commission which unequivocally condemned the second takeover by force in Burkina Faso. Meanwhile, following a formal demand by the Burkinabé authorities, former colonialist France agreed to withdraw all personnel from the French Military base located on the outskirts of the capital, thereby formally ending its Military operations in Burkina Faso on February 18, 2023.

4. Burkina Faso's ranking as the second most terrorism-affected country in the world, according to the recent 'Global Terrorism Index-2023' published by the

Institute for Economics & Peace in April 2023, exacerbates the political turmoil. The country has become the epicentre of armed group violence in the Central Sahel region since 2019. Multiple non-state armed groups, including Al Qaeda's Sahel branch, Jama'at Nusrat al-Islam wal-Muslimeen (JNIM), Ansarul Islam, the Group to Support Islam and Muslims, and the Islamic State (IS) in the Greater Sahara, have been active in Burkina Faso. These groups have targeted villages, convoys, water points, and gold mines, resulting in the deaths of hundreds of civilians. Local civil defence groups are often specific targets of these attacks.

Visits from Burkina Faso

5. Bilateral cooperation began in March 1976 when an official delegation led by Burkina Faso's Commerce and Industry Minister visited India and signed a Protocol on Economic and Technical Cooperation. Since then, there have been several high-level visits from Burkina Faso to India, which include the visit of the President of Burkina Faso, the late Capt. Thomas Sankara in 1983 to attend the NAM Summit, the visit by President Blaise Compaore in 1993 (during the visit India offered to assist Burkina Faso in the economic development, particularly in the areas of agriculture, handlooms, mining, irrigation, small-scale industries etc.) President Compaore again visited Delhi in July 1994. During his two-day transit visit, India extended aid of Rs. 250 million to Burkina Faso comprising a package under the integrated Agricultural Project under which 200 tractors and several other accessories including seeds, implements, water pumps etc. were given and again in 1997.

6. The then President Roch Marc Christian Kabore visited India to attend the International Solar Alliance (ISA). During the visit, he met our Prime Minister on 11 March 2018. He also handed over the There has been strong participation from Burkina Faso at the delegation level in CII-EXIM Bank Enclave held in March every year. The former Minister of Trade, Industry and Crafts Mr. Kabore Harouna led an eight-member delegation to the 13th CII-EXIM bank conclave held in New Delhi from 25-27 March 2018.

7. Burkina Faso participated in the India-Africa Partnership Conclave in New Delhi in March 2008. It was the partner country in the CII Conclave held in March 2009 in New Delhi. A 22-member business delegation sponsored by the CII visited Burkina Faso in June 2010 and another 19-Member multi-sectoral delegation of the Federation of Indian Chamber of commerce and Industries from 10-14 April 2013.

8. Former Prime Minister Tertius Zongo visited India in April 2008 to attend the India Forum Summit in New Delhi. He met Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and discussed matters of mutual interest. His visit gave further impetus to bilateral ties. Mr. Yacouba Barry, the then Minister of Housing and Urbanization, Mr. Mahama Zoungrana, the former Minister of Agriculture and Food Security and Mr. Jean Koulidiati, Minister of Development of Digital Economy and Post were part of the delegation.

9. Earlier the Foreign Minister Mr. Mousa Bedialzoun Nebi led a small delegation from Burkina Faso to take part in the 3rd IAFS (as only a transition government was in place in October 2015 and was facing political turmoil, only the then acting

Foreign Minister was able to attend IAFS-III Summit), Mr. Nebi met EAM on 25 October 2015.

10. Visits from 2019 onwards: The then Minister of Energy, Mr. Bashir Ismael Ouedraogo attended the 14th CII-EXIM bank conclave held in New Delhi from 17-19 March 2019. Mr. Batio Basserie, former Minister of Environment, Climate Change and green economy visited India from 8-13 September 2019 in connection with UN Conference on Climate and Desertification in New Delhi. Mr. Moumin Cheriff Sy, the then Defence Minister of Burkina Faso visited India in February 2020 to attend the Aero India 2020 at Lucknow. Mr. Alpha Barry, former FM of Burkina Faso visited India in March 2016 to attend CII-Exim Bank Africa Conclave. Mr. Abdoulaye Tall, Minister of Industrial Development, Commerce, Handicrafts, Small and Medium Enterprises, Burkina Faso visited India from 19 – 20 July 2022, to participate in the 17th CII – Exim Bank Conclave on India – Africa Growth Partnership. A Burkinabé delegation led by Mr. Daoud Traoré, Permanent Representative, INTERPOL/Ouaga National Central Bureau visited India to participate in the 90th Interpol General Assembly held in New Delhi from October 18-21, 2022.

Visits from India

11. From India, MOS for External Affairs visited Burkina Faso in 1987. Prime Minister Shri Narasimha Rao paid a State Visit to Ouagadougou on 2-4 November 1995. This first-ever Prime Ministerial visit was highly successful. Hon'ble PM met the President of Burkina Faso and also addressed the Parliament. The PM was awarded the highest civilian award in Burkina Faso. The visit paved the way for a more intensive interaction in several fields. The PM also inaugurated the new Indian Embassy with a resident Cd'A. The Mission was later closed in July 2002.

12. Special Envoy to PM, Shri Mohanbhai Kundaria, MoS (Agriculture) visited Burkina Faso from 9-10 July 2015 to personally hand over the IAFS-III Summit invitation to the President of Burkina Faso. He called on the interim President Mr. Michael Kafando during the visit. Shri M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Burkina Faso on July 11-13 2018 to lead the Indian delegation to the 4th Joint Commission meeting.

13. A 3-member Indian delegation led by Shri Arvind Kaushal, Additional Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research visited Burkina Faso in December 2013 in connection with the establishment of a Water and Soil tissue test Laboratory in Burkina Faso under IAFS decisions.

Bilateral Trade

14. Bilateral trade has been growing over the past few years as can be seen from the table below, though there has been some decline in the past couple of years due to the worldwide Covid 19 pandemic. The balance of trade is in favour of Burkina Faso. In the year 2021-22, Burkina Faso exported goods worth US \$ 425.44 million to India which included gold, Cashew nuts and Soya Bean.

In the same period, India exported goods worth US\$ 196.64 million to Burkina Faso which included pharmaceutical products, goods vehicles and parts thereof, motorcycles and parts thereof machinery and mechanical appliances, rubber and articles thereof, cotton fabric etc.

All figures in millions of US \$

| Year | India's exports to Burkina Faso | India's imports from Burkina Faso | Total trade | Balance of Trade |
|-------------|----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------------|
| 2015-16 | 106.79 | 238.11 | 346.9 | -131.32 |
| 2016-17 | 114.94 | 256.42 | 371.36 | -141.48 |
| 2017-18 | 148.35 | 632.57 | 780.92 | -484.22 |
| 2018-19 | 181.44 | 881.27 | 1062.71 | -699.83 |
| 2019 – 20 | 153.44 | 542.67 | 696.61 | -389.23 |
| 2020-21 | 207.87 | 359.94 | 567.82 | -152.07 |
| 2021-22 | 196.64 | 425.44 | 622.08 | -228.80 |

[Source: <https://tradestat.commerce.gov.in/eidb/iecnt.asp>]

Joint Commission

15. Bilateral relations got a boost in May-June 1993 when President Blaise Compaore visited India. During this visit, both countries decided to establish the Joint Commission to foster cooperation between the two countries. The Joint Commission on economic, cultural, political and technical cooperation was established after an agreement was signed in October 1994. So far there have been four Joint Commission meetings. The 4th Joint Commission was held in Burkina Faso. The delegation was led by Shri M.J. Akbar, the then Minister of State for External Affairs and the Burkinabe delegation was led by Mr. Alpha Barry, the then FM of Burkina Faso. At the request of Burkina Faso, India offered ten ambulances to meet the requirements of Burkina Faso hospitals and also offered to provide ten thousand bicycles to Burkina Faso. The Indian side highlighted capacity building as an important pillar of our bilateral relationship and offered increased exports of Indian pharmaceuticals and agricultural tools. Both sides agreed to cooperate in solar power projects, health, railways, and agriculture and condemned terrorism in all its forms. Other issues discussed were UNSC to make it more representative, issues of climate change and sustainable development, International Solar Alliance, regional issues of importance and projects under the LOCs

Development Projects

16. An Indian Farmers' project which was launched in Burkina Faso in 1999 for three years was completed in 2002. Under the project, India had supplied expert farmers to demonstrate to Burkina Faso farmers Indian practices of rice growing, including the use of ergonomically designed hand tools, tractors etc. and to train local farmers in the technology-related consumable inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. Farm machinery equipment, vehicles and other necessary support were donated to the Burkina Faso government after the completion of the project. A total amount of US \$ 296 million has already been approved for Burkina Faso under LOC projects which include rural electrification, tomato and mango processing plant, low-cost housing etc. Burkina Faso was included as one of the nine West African countries under GOI's TEAM-9 (Techno-Economic Approach for Africa-India Movement) initiative and Pan-African e-Project network. GOI extended a line of credit (LOC) of US \$ 30.97 million under TEAM-9 for agricultural projects and construction/Equipping electrification in 2008 for setting up a Tomato Processing factory in 2010 for a Public Housing Project and supply of 135 buses for universities and other institutions of higher education, construction of two workshops, construction of covered parking lot and procurement of spare parts etc. in the first half of 2012.

17. On 14 July 2017 former PM Paul Kaba Theiba, accompanied by the Burkinabe Minister for Commerce visited the Tomato and Mango processing plant site at Loumbila, a GOI-funded LOC project that has run into problems and has not been completed. He also convened a meeting of stakeholders involved in the project including the EPC (Engineering Procurement Contractors) M/s. Mohan Exports International Pvt. Ltd. The Burkinabe side requested the EPC to deploy a team of experts to evaluate the plant and advise on the way forward to resolve the pending issues and hand over the project. A technical team from M/s Mohan Exports Pvt. Ltd. visited Ouagadougou in April 2018 to evaluate the project. A report was supposed to have been submitted by the first week of June 2018. The negotiations on the future of the project are ongoing.

Training programmes and institutions assisted under IAFS

18. India had offered to set up three projects viz. Vocational Training Centre/Incubation Centre (VTC/IC), a Vocational Training Centre Barefoot College and a Soil and Water Tissue Testing Laboratory in Burkina Faso under the decisions of India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS 1& II). A two-member delegation National Small Scale Industries Corporation (NSIC) visited Ouagadougou in October 2013 for the signing of an agreement between the Ministry of youth, Vocational Training and Employment (MYVTE), Government of Burkina Faso and NSIC for setting up VTC/IC in Burkina Faso. A 3-member delegation led by Secretary, ICAR visited Burkina Faso in December 2013 for discussions and site inspection for the establishment of the Soil and Water Tissue Testing Laboratory, MOUs for the establishment of Soil and Water Tissue Testing Laboratory in Burkina Faso were forwarded by the Indian side followed by several reminders the last one being in January 2018. The Burkinabe side is yet to revert. The barefoot college has so far conducted two workshops in Burkina Faso and Dr. Bunker Roy of Barefoot college visited Burkina Faso in

April 2015. An MOU for the establishment of the Barefoot Vocational Training Centre in Burkina Faso was signed in April 2017 at Ouagadougou. The construction of the training centre started in October 2017. The centre will impart training to illiterate and semi-literate rural women on solar electrification, rainwater harvesting etc. under the ITEC programme.

19. NSIC successfully set up the Vocational Training Centre in Ouagadougou and handed over the project to the local agency under the Burkinabe Ministry of Youth Professional Employment and Training on 3 November 2016. In a function organized in Ouagadougou, the Burkina Faso government expressed appreciation for the completion of the project and welcomed skill development and capacity-building options that the project offered to the Burkinabe youth.

20. Three participants from Burkina Faso visited India for a five-day Exposure visit for policymakers organized by the IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative in December 2012 under the Cotton Technical Assistance Programme (TAP) implemented under the IAFS-II. A second group of five persons visited India in January 2013 for a training programme on Post-harvest management of Crop residue. A two-member IL&FS Cluster Development Initiative Ltd., NOIDA visited Burkina Faso in November 2013 for discussions with stakeholders in the cotton sector under the Cotton TAP I for Africa. Burkina Faso has been offered assistance under Cotton Tap II but the project proposal is still awaited.

21. Burkina Faso has signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Framework Agreement. They have yet to sign the amended framework agreement of the ISA. They responded positively to the solar projects by the National Institute of Solar Energy under the International Solar Alliance initiative and the NISE is currently in correspondence with relevant Burkinabe agencies for further implementation which involves setting up solar home lights and water pumping systems in Burkina Faso.

Grants

22. a) GOI sent a consignment of medicines to Burkina Faso to help people affected by the severe floods in 2008. Another donation of US \$ 213,356 was made to Burkina Faso as India's contribution towards flood relief assistance in September 2009.

b) Following a request of the former President of Burkina Faso to the Prime Minister, EAM held a telephone conversation on 25 April 2020 with the Burkinabe FM regarding the supply of COVID-19 medicines from India. Accordingly, the Ministry sent a consignment of 100,000 tablets of hydroxychloroquine and 100,000 tablets of paracetamol which were duly handed over by the Embassy to the Ministry of Health of Burkina Faso on May 27, 2020. Accepting the medicines, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health of Burkina Faso thanked the Embassy profusely for this gesture of the Government of India. The Embassy also handed over nearly 5000 kgs of medicines received from DPA, MEA on August 19, 2020. The brief handing-over ceremony held at the Ministry of Health was attended by the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health and Director-General for Asia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso along with other senior officials. They thanked the Embassy for this

generosity of the Government of India stating that this will improve the relations between the two countries.

c) As of April 2022, i.e., after the coup d'état of Jan 24, 2022, the Burkinabé side sought India's food aid in the form of Rice. While Ministry had indicated that under the 'Grain Diplomacy' initiative, 1000 Tonnes would be available as a grant, the Burkinabé side, vide a letter from its Foreign Minister addressed to EAM had indicated their country's overall requirement of rice was to the tune of 649,429 Tonnes. Against this background, the Mission had recommended to the Ministry to explore the possibility of granting 5000 Tonnes of rice as aid to Burkina Faso. However, as of November 30, 2022, the Ministry has decided to halt the supply of rice grains to other countries owing to internal factors like lower production of rice in India in the Kharif season.

MGICC, Ouagadougou

23. GOIs offer of setting up a Mahatma Gandhi International Convention Centre (MGICC) through grant assistance was accepted. Burkina Faso has been identified by GOI to be covered in the first phase of the construction of MGICC. M/s NBCC has been identified by GOI for the construction of the centre and a team from NBCC visited Burkina Faso in end-June 2018. The recently dissolved Government of Burkina Faso was very keen on the early start of construction of the Project, land for which has been already allotted in Ouagadougou.

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme & ICCR Scholarships

24. ITEC programme with Burkina Faso began with the Agricultural Development Project of US \$ 6 million. India has rendered technical assistance to Burkina Faso in its human resource development through the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Burkina Faso utilized 22 ITEC slots during 2013-14, 26 during 2014-15, 12 in 2015-16, 6 in 2016-17 and 2 in 2018-19. Burkina Faso's rate of utilization of ITEC slots is very low (2 out of 10 last year) It has been offered five slots for 2019-20. Due to the Covid 19 pandemic, ITEC courses were cancelled during the period from April to October 2020. Five Burkinabe scientists were awarded CV Raman Fellowships for carrying out research activities in India between June and December 2013. CV Raman Fellowship ad IAFS. Recently Burkina Faso utilized two PCFD slots. During the period 2020-2021, Burkina Faso did not utilize any slot under ICCR scholarships, mainly because of the COVID-19 pandemic but the two slots allotted to the Mission were utilized in 2022, when two Burkinabé students joined their respective Engineering UG courses at the Andhra University.

UN

25. Burkina Faso is appreciative of India's bid for a permanent seat in the UNSC. A joint Statement issued after President Compaore's visit to India in 1997 expressed Burkina Faso's support for our candidature but has not given a formal commitment. The government of Burkina Faso supported India's candidature for UNSC Non-Permanent Seat (2021-22) in the elections held in UNHQ on June 17, 2020. Burkina Faso has been supportive of our candidatures

for various international bodies, especially the UNESCO Executive Board and the inscription of Nalanda on the World Heritage list. Burkina Faso had shown positive interest in supporting the inscription of Jaipur as a world heritage city recently. Recently, the Indian government contributed USD 1 million for the UNDP-supported Project PAMED towards the construction of a dam and perimeter development in the rural commune of Poa in the Niangdo Province. This project in which the India funding comprises 48.4 % of the total expenditure was formally launched on August 3, 2021.

Culture

26. Since 2015, the International Day of Yoga is being celebrated in Burkina Faso. ICCR had deputed a Yoga teacher to Burkina Faso for the event in 2015 which attracted good participation from the small expatriate international community. Since then IDY has been celebrated in Burkina Faso every year. The fifth International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 22 June 2019 at an indoor hall in Ouagadougou. Around 150 yoga enthusiasts participated. An eight-member cultural dance troupe from Rajasthan visited Burkina Faso in Sept. 2015. The troupe was sponsored by ICCR. Two performances were organized in Ouagadougou, to mark Freedom@70 celebrations, when a performance by an Odissi Dance Troupe sponsored by the Ministry of Culture was organized on August 12, 2017.

27. Mission was once again able to extend its outreach by organising the 8th IDY after a hiatus of two years- during which similar events could not be held due to the Covid-19 pandemic-induced social restriction norms. The event was celebrated on June 25, 2022, with much enthusiasm on June 25, 2022, at the Sports Hall, Institute of Sports Sciences and Human Development (ISSDH), the University of Ouagadougou. In association with a local reputed Yoga Club, namely, the 'Hatha-Yoga Club of Burkina Faso' which is a 30-year-old institution of this country, working in partnership with and under the guidance of the Rishikesh-based "Association of Yoga Meditation Societies International (AHYMSHIN) (www.ahymsin.org).

Indian Community

28. The Indian community in Burkina Faso is around 400+. Some of them are engaged in manufacturing, trading, and business while the rest are their employees. Some are also doing business in Cotton and Gold. With the approval of the Ministry nearly 100 Indian nationals stranded in Burkina Faso due to COVID-related global travel restrictions, left for India by private flight in June-July 2020.

Ouagadougou, August 2023.
