

**High Commission of India**  
**Abuja**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**Bilateral Visit of Minister of State for External Affairs H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar and Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary to Nigeria (7-10 October 2018)**

1. H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs of India and H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry along with senior officials participated in the first-ever CII and EXIM Bank Regional Conclave on India and West Africa with the theme 'Project Partnership' held in Abuja from 8 to 9 October 2018. A 70-member Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-led business delegation under the leadership of Mr. Rajesh Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of ION Exchange, attended the Regional Conclave. H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Minister of State for External Affairs of India and H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, delivered their Special Addresses at the Inaugural Session of the Regional Conclave. (Speeches available on <http://www.hciabuja.gov.in/index.php>)



*H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry of India addressing the India-West Africa Regional Conclave.*

2. The choice of Nigeria as the destination for holding a Regional Conclave in West Africa was guided by the country assuming the Chairmanship of ECOWAS for this year, and also by its pre-eminent position as the largest economy of Africa and India's largest trading partner in Africa. India is also the largest trading partner of Nigeria with two-way trade during 2017-18 touching US \$ 12 billion.

3. The two Hon'ble Ministers of State from India paid a joint courtesy call on H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of Nigeria on 8 October. Nigerian Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama was also present at the meeting. Thereafter, the two Indian Ministers of State were joined by an eight-member CII-delegation led by Shri Rajesh Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of ION Exchange, in a meeting chaired by His Excellency the Vice President of Nigeria. Among others present at the meeting included Ms. Yewandu Sadiku, Executive Secretary of the Nigerian Investment Promotion Commission (NIPC).



*H.E. Prof Yemi Osinbajo, Vice President of Nigeria received the two Ministers of State from India.*

4. While welcoming the Indian delegation, His Excellency the Vice President of Nigeria recalled the long-standing relationship between India and Nigeria, and described both countries as natural partners. He expressed satisfaction in the progress made in bilateral trade, economic and investment relations over the

years. He hoped that the visit of CII-led captains of Indian industry will help contribute towards participation of Indian businesses in priority sectors for Nigeria including agriculture, mining and industrial development with emphasis on technology collaboration and technology transfer. He also conveyed Nigeria's readiness to contribute towards the success of the Conclave.

5. Nigerian Foreign Minister Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama received Minister of State for External Affairs on 9 October in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The meeting reviewed the bilateral relations as well as regional and multilateral issues of interest. It was agreed that efforts will be made to conclude several bilateral agreements currently under discussion between the countries, and to further strengthen the existing relationship.



*H.E. Mr. Geoffrey Onyeama, Hon'ble Foreign Minister of Nigeria received H.E. Mr. M.J.Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India.*

6. A Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of ICCR Chair for Sanskrit Studies in Umaru Musa Yara'dua University was signed on 8 October 2018 by the Vice Chancellor of the University and High Commissioner of India, in the presence of Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. M.J. Akbar.



*First ICCR Sanskrit chair established in Nigeria in Umaru Musa Yara'dua University with signing of an MoU in the presence of Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India.*

7. A Photo Exhibition on Mahatma Gandhi's life and message was held as part of the ongoing 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. The Photo Exhibition was inaugurated on 8 October by both the Indian Ministers of State along with the President of ECOWAS Commission, the Nigerian Minister of Trade,

Investment and Industry, and Ministers from ECOWAS countries. On display was a collection of photographs from Gandhi National Museum, New Delhi. Also on display were paintings drawn by young children of six Nigerian schools and children from the Indian community in Abuja on themes relating to Mahatma Gandhi's life and his teachings.



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8. Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs Mr. M.J. Akbar addressed the Nigerian Army Resource Centre on 9 October, which was attended by the senior members of the Nigerian Armed Forces and experts in security matters.



*H.E. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India addressing the Nigerian Army Resource Centre (NARC), Abuja.*

9. Both Hon'ble Ministers of State for External Affairs of India attended a welcome reception organized by the Indian Cultural Association (ICA), Abuja, on 8 October, and interacted with the members of the India community in Abuja. Both the Hon'ble Ministers of States visited Lagos during their second leg of their visit to Nigeria.

10. The Hon'ble Ministers of the State visited the Indian Language School (ILS) in Lagos, which has about 2000 Indian students following CBSE curriculum. It is the largest Indian school in West Africa. The visit coincided with the culmination of a week-long events organised by the Indian School to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The event showcased skits and songs, apart from display of posters depicting various facets of Mahatma Gandhi's life and message. The Board Members and Principal of the School received the two Ministers of State, who also inaugurated the Special Education Needs (SEN) Centre in the School.

11. Mr. M.J. Akbar, Hon'ble MoS for External Affairs delivered a talk at the prestigious Nigerian Institute of International Affairs (NIIA) on the topic 'India and Nigeria -Partners for Progress in Africa and Beyond'. Established in 1961 to

provide a platform of ideas on what direction Nigeria should follow on international policies vis-à-vis its relationship with the outside world, NIIA is working closely with the Indian Council for World Affairs (ICWA) based in New Delhi.



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12. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry attended a reception hosted by Indian Professional Forum (IPF) based in Lagos. The Forum brings together more than 400 Indian professionals engaged in various business and professional activities with business houses from Nigeria, India and other multinational companies.

13. The Nigerian and Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NICCI) organised a Special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Business Roundtable in association with the High Commission to commemorate the 60 years of India-Nigeria diplomatic engagement. Both Ministers of State addressed the gathering and conveyed their appreciation to both Indian and Nigerian business communities for taking a lead

role in promoting India-Nigeria trade and investment relations. They exhorted on the need for scaling up the bilateral economic and commercial engagement in diverse sectors including agriculture, infrastructure development, ICTs, pharmaceutical, power, to name a few, and to further advance the existing complementarities between the two countries. The Business Roundtable was attended by captains of Nigerian and Indian industry based in Lagos, and in addition leading personalities including Nigerian former Ministers of Finance and Commerce & Industry.



*H.E. Mr.M.J.Akbar, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs of India addressing the Special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Business Roundtable organized by NICCI, Lagos.*





*H.E. Mr. C.R. Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Commerce & Industry of India addressing the Special 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Business Roundtable organized by NICCI, Lagos.*

14. The Indian Cultural Association (ICA) in Lagos also hosted a welcome reception in honour of Hon'ble MoS for External Affairs Mr. M.J. Akbar, in the evening of the 10 October. The ICA gave detailed presentation on its activities including several charity activities undertaken by it in local communities. Hon'ble MoS interacted with the members of the Indian community.

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