



# Curtain Raiser Held for India-Africa Business Dialogue & Exhibition to be held on sidelines of 4th India-Africa Forum Summit

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A Curtain Raiser Event for the forthcoming India-Africa Business Dialogue (IABD) & Exhibition to be held on the sidelines of the 4th India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-IV) was held on 13th May, 2026 at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, under the chairmanship of the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Piyush Goyal. The event brought together Resident Ambassadors and High Commissioners from African countries, senior officials from the Government of India, representatives of Chambers of industry, Associations, Export Promotion Councils (EPCs), businesses, and other distinguished stakeholders from India and Africa.

The IABD and Exhibition is envisioned as a premier platform to deepen economic and strategic engagement between India and African nations through enhanced trade, investment, technology partnerships, and people-to-people collaboration.

Addressing the gathering, the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry highlighted the unique historical and civilizational ties shared between India and Africa, underpinned by centuries of maritime connectivity, solidarity in anti-colonial struggles, and strong socio-cultural bonds. He noted that India and Africa together can shape a more inclusive, resilient, and innovation-driven future for the Global South.

The Union Minister emphasized that India-Africa economic relations have witnessed strong momentum in recent years. Bilateral trade between India and Africa reached USD 93.69 billion in 2025–26, registering a growth of 14.39% over the previous year. India's exports to Africa stood at USD 45.42 billion, while imports reached USD 48.27 billion during the same period.

The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry emphasized the need to build upon existing trade ties and preferential trade frameworks by aligning standards, customs procedures and business practices to facilitate faster and smarter growth for businesses on both sides. Highlighting the immense economic potential of collaboration between India and Africa, he noted that the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), valued at nearly USD 3.4 trillion, together with India's rapidly expanding USD 4 trillion economy, presents immense opportunities to create resilient partnerships, diversify supply chains, and move beyond raw material trade towards higher-value manufacturing and integrated value chains.

The Minister further underlined the importance of technology transfer and youth-driven growth in shaping the future of India-Africa cooperation. He identified renewable energy, green hydrogen, green ammonia, electric mobility, digitalization, and telecommunications as key sectors for collaboration. Stressing that nearly two-thirds of the population of India and Africa was below the age of 35, he called for greater focus on skilling, startups, innovation ecosystems, and talent development to prepare the workforce for industries of the future. Recalling an African proverb heard during the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference in Cameroon recently "One hand cannot tie a bundle", the Minister reaffirmed India's commitment to forging strong and enduring partnerships with African nations for shared prosperity and inclusive growth.

The Minister underlined that the next phase of India-Africa partnership must move beyond traditional raw material trade towards higher-value products, integrated supply chains, local manufacturing and technology-driven cooperation. He identified agriculture and food processing, digital public infrastructure, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, critical minerals, electric mobility, manufacturing, defence production, and emerging technologies as key sectors for future collaboration.

He further highlighted the transformational potential of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and reiterated India's commitment to strengthening engagement with African regional economic groupings. The Hon'ble Minister also emphasized the need to build stronger South-South trade corridors and articulated the shared ambition of doubling India-Africa bilateral trade by 2030 through diversified supply chains, improved logistics, and climate-smart partnerships.

Speaking on the occasion, the Commerce Secretary, Shri Rajesh Agrawal stated that India and Africa share a long-standing multidimensional partnership driven by common history, trade, people-to-people ties and developmental aspirations. He highlighted that the upcoming India-Africa Business Dialogue & Exhibition will serve as an important platform to bring together policymakers, industry leaders, investors, innovators, development institutions, and entrepreneurs from both sides.

The Commerce Secretary shared that the event will focus on thematic areas including climate action and sustainability, infrastructure and connectivity, digital innovation and AI, manufacturing and MSME partnerships, healthcare and human capital development, financial services, logistics, strategic cooperation, and critical minerals. The event will feature plenary sessions, policy dialogues, sectoral roundtables, B2B and B2G meetings, networking engagements, and a thematic exhibition showcasing technologies, innovations, sectoral best practices, and collaborative success stories from India and Africa.

The Commerce Secretary also highlighted the recent 10th India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee (JTC) and 5th India-Tanzania Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meetings, where discussions focused on reviewing bilateral trade relations, strengthening investment cooperation, and identifying new areas of partnership. He noted that these engagements reflect the growing momentum in India's economic ties with African countries and the shared commitment to expanding cooperation across key sectors.

The Curtain Raiser also underscored the Government of India's continued commitment towards strengthening institutional and policy frameworks to facilitate trade and investment with African partners, including through initiatives such as the Duty-Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme for Least Developed Countries and ongoing bilateral Joint Trade Committee mechanisms with several African countries.

The participants expressed strong support for the upcoming India-Africa Business Dialogue & Exhibition and reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening India-Africa economic cooperation and strategic partnership in line with the shared visions of Viksit Bharat 2047 and Africa Agenda 2063.

The Government of India looks forward to the active and wider participation of governments, businesses, industry associations, financial institutions, and development partners from across Africa and India in making the India-Africa Business Dialogue & Exhibition and the 4th India-Africa Forum Summit a success.

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