

07 May 2019: UPSC Exam PIB Summary & Analysis

Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- BRO is a leading road construction agency under the **Ministry of Defence** with a primary role of providing road connectivity in border areas.
- It executes road construction and maintenance works along the **Northern and Western frontiers** primarily to meet the strategic requirements of the Army and is responsible for over 53,000 Km roads.
- The BRO has also constructed roads in **friendly foreign countries** like Bhutan, Myanmar, Afghanistan etc. thus contributing towards our strategic objectives in the region.

Context

- Border Roads Organisation (BRO) is celebrating its 59th Raising Day.

Initiatives by Commerce Ministry to Boost Trade with African Countries

Context

- Commerce Ministry and Indian High Commissions and Embassies of eleven African countries arranged an interaction over Digital Video Conference (DVC) with the Indian business community in Africa.
- This initiative was held in order to build an effective engagement with the Indian Diaspora in Africa in order to further deepen and strengthen India-Africa trade ties.

Stats

- India's total trade with the African region during 2017-18 was USD 62.69 billion (8.15% of India's total trade with the World).
- India's share of exports to African countries as a percentage of India's total exports to the world was of the order of 8.21% in 2017-18.
- Africa region's share in India's total imports from the World accounted for 8.12% in 2017-18.

Diaspora relationship

As per the latest available estimates the current strength of the Indian Diaspora in the African countries is 2.8 million out of those 2.5 million are PIOs and rest 220967 are NRIs

- The inherent strength of India in Africa is its **rich and vast Diaspora** which has established strong links with the political, economic and social fabric of the African continent.
- In order to formulate a strategy to boost India-Africa Trade & Investment, the **Indian Diaspora in Africa has to be leveraged further in** order to ensure that the strategy is effective

The major issues highlighted by the Indian Business Community in these 11 countries are:

- Improving the Line of Credit system and developing a facility for an affordable and competitive

funding.

- Setting up of Indian Banks/financial institutions in Africa
- Enhanced Buyers' Credit facility for promotion of trade between the two regions
- Reviewing and liberalizing visa policies from both sides
- Need for direct flights between the India and African countries
- Exploring the possibility of rupee trade to address the issue of shortage of dollars in region.
- Creation of common database of buyer-suppliers in the two regions for facilitating matchmaking for enhancement of bilateral trade.
- Development of a robust trade dispute settlement mechanism
- More frequent and structured country/sector specific trade exhibitions in Africa
- Establishment of country chapters of FICCI or CII in Africa
- Frequent visits of policy makers, chamber of commerce and investors for familiarization with local business and investment regime for informed decisions.

Way forward

- This initiative of the Commerce Ministry emphasizes the **need for a multipronged strategy** for further enhancing trade and investment ties between the two regions.
- Commerce Ministry recognizes that for formulating an effective export strategy it is **imperative to engage the Indian business community in Africa** for mutual gain for both sides as trade relations between the people of same origin instill greater confidence amongst trade partners.