

**High Commission of India  
Port Louis**

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**India-Mauritius Bilateral Relations**

**Mauritius Overview**

Mauritius is an island nation in the western Indian Ocean. Indian origin people comprise nearly 70% of island's population of 1.3 million (28% Creole, 3% Sino-Mauritian, 1% Franco-Mauritian). Mauritius is former British and earlier a French colony. It gained independence from British rule in 1968. The economy of Mauritius is dependent upon tourism, financial services, ICT, sugar and textiles. Mauritius is an upper middle income country (GDP is approximately USD 14 billion; and per capita income of approximately USD 11,000).

2. From 1834, when slavery was abolished by the British Parliament, large numbers of Indian workers began to be brought to Mauritius as indentured workers. First batch of these workers, comprising of 36 persons, arrived in Mauritius on November 2, 1834 onboard a British ship called 'Atlas'. This day is now observed in Mauritius as 'Aapravasi Diwas'. In all, about half a million Indian indentured workers are estimated to have been brought to Mauritius between 1834 and the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, about two-thirds of these workers permanently settled down in Mauritius. As a result, Indian origin population today constitutes approximately 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the Mauritian population.

**Bilateral Relations**

3. Formal diplomatic relations between India and Mauritius were established in 1948, i.e. before the independence of Mauritius. India was represented by a Commission between 1948 and 1968 and a High Commission after Mauritius' independence. Earlier, Mauritius maintained contacts with India through successive Dutch, French and British colonial rule.

4. Leadership of the two countries enjoy high level of trust and mutual understanding, this is reflected from continued high level of political engagement. The two countries have also been cooperating in several large developmental projects in Mauritius.

5. Mahatma Gandhi *en route* to India from South Africa made a brief stopover (October 29 to November 15, 1901), in Mauritius. As a tribute to Gandhiji and the Indian freedom struggle, the National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on March 12 (the date of launch of *Dandi* Salt March).

6. Some of the recent visits by senior leadership of the two countries are listed below.

#### **High level visits in 2019:**

- Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth (PMPJ) visited India from 3-10 December 2019 during which he also met PM Narendra Modi.
- PMPJ visited India from 30-31 May 2019 to attend the swearing-in ceremony of PM Narendra Modi.
- PMPJ visited India from 20-28 January 2019 to attend 15<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) in Varanasi as Chief Guest and to attend the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.

#### **High level visits in 2018:**

- Acting President of Mauritius, Paramasivam Pillay Vyapoory, visited India from 8-18 October 2018 to attend the 1<sup>st</sup> Pondicherry Global Economic Summit 2019 and the 5<sup>th</sup> World Tamils Economic Conference in Pondicherry.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference (WHC) was held in Mauritius from 18-20 August 2018. The Inaugural ceremony was attended by PMPJ and then EAM, late Smt. Sushma Swaraj.
- President, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, paid a four-day State Visit to Mauritius from 11-14 March 2018. He was the Chief Guest for 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Independence of Mauritius.

#### **Commercial Relations**

7. India is Mauritius' second largest trading partner after China and was the exclusive supplier of petroleum products to Mauritius from 2007 till 2019. In 2019, India exported goods & services worth USD 776 million to Mauritius and imported goods & services worth USD 24 million from Mauritius. For China, the corresponding figures in 2019 were as follows: exports of USD 935 million to Mauritius and imports of USD 32 million from Mauritius. India's exports to Mauritius comprise largely of petroleum products. Besides petroleum products, main items of India's exports to Mauritius are pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton, shrimps, prawns and frozen boneless bovine meat. Main items of Mauritius' exports to India are vanilla, medical/surgical

instruments and appliances, needles, aluminum alloys, waste paper/paperboard, refined copper, cotton shirts, light vessels, fire-floats, floating crane, float dock and jewelry.

8. Cumulative FDI equity inflows from Mauritius to India during the period April 2000-March 2019 amounted to USD 134.46 billion (32% of total FDI inflows over this period). The Protocol amending the India-Mauritius Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) was signed on 10 May 2016. Mauritius was the single largest source of FDI into India during the financial year 2017-18, with FDI equity inflows amounting to USD 15.94 billion. In FY 2018-19, FDI inflows from Mauritius halved to USD 8.08 billion.

9. The protocol amending the India-Mauritius DTAC was signed on 10 May 2016. The Comprehensive Economic and Commercial Partnership Agreement (CECPA) between India and Mauritius was signed during the visit of EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar to Mauritius on 22 February, 2021 and it came into force on April 1, 2021.

10. 10 Indian Public Sector Enterprises are currently functioning in Mauritius. The Bank of Baroda (BoB), Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), and New India Assurance Corporation (NIAC) were the first to establish operations, followed by other PSUs including Telecommunications Consultant India Ltd (TCIL), Indian Oil (Mauritius) Limited (IOML), Mahanagar Telephone (Mauritius) Ltd. and State Bank of India (Mauritius) Limited, National Building and Construction Company Ltd (NBCC), Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES), and Hospital Services Consultancy Corporation Ltd. (HSCC). Besides their core work, the PSUs have also contributed to various activities in Mauritius under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes.

### **Cultural Relations**

11. India and Mauritius are both, multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic and multi-cultural countries. With the majority of Mauritian population tracing its origins to India, the composite culture of Mauritius has many aspects common with India's diverse cultural heritage.

12. India established the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC) in Mauritius in the year 1987. The IGCIC is one of the largest centres of ICCR, has emerged as an important venue for promotion of Indian cultural activities in Mauritius. The IGCIC holds classes in disciplines of Hindustani music, Kathak, Tabla and Yoga for Mauritian students. Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) for 2018-2021 was renewed in March 2018.

### **Other institutions built with India's assistance**

13. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) was founded as a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius for the promotion of Indian culture and education. It also hosts the ICCR Chair in Sanskrit and Indian Philosophy.

14. The Rabindranath Tagore Institute was established with the assistance of the Government of India in 2000 as a Centre of Studies on Indian culture and traditions.

15. Mauritius also hosts the World Hindi Secretariat, which is a bilateral organization and was inaugurated during the visit of President in March 2018.

### **ITEC and other scholarships**

16. Mauritius is one of the largest beneficiary countries of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and for FY 2018-19, 210 Civilian slots and 169 defence slots and 5 slots each for IORA and World Hindi Secretariat were offered.

17. Mauritius is the largest beneficiary of Africa Scholarships under IAFS with 97 ICCR scholarships extended annually to Mauritian students for higher education in India. Another about 200 Mauritian students enrolls themselves in Indian Universities every year on a self-financing basis. India ranks fourth in terms of Mauritian students studying in overseas tertiary education institutions. This year the first academic session under the e-VBAB online, distance learning programme started with enrollment of 81 Mauritian students in various streams.

### **Indian Community & OCI Card**

18. Approximately 10,500 Indian nationals are currently residing in Mauritius. Owing to the historical linkages between the two countries, Mauritius was granted, at 14<sup>th</sup> Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in January 2017, a special carve-out for issuance of OCI Cards to its nationals of Indian origin wherein restriction on the number of generations was waived off. The number of OCI card holders in Mauritius is currently about 8,500. Mauritius introduced a visa-free regime for Indian tourists in October 2004, whereby Indian tourists visiting Mauritius for a period up to 30 days do not require a visa. Mauritians are entitled to *gratis* E-tourist visa for visiting India.

**Useful Resources:**

Website: [hcimauritius.gov.in](http://hcimauritius.gov.in)

Facebook page: [facebook.com/indianmauritius](https://www.facebook.com/indianmauritius)

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