

India-Comoros brief for website

Political Relations

India established its diplomatic relations with the Union of Comoros in June 1976. Our Embassy in Antananarivo is concurrently accredited to Comoros. India and Comoros have always enjoyed close and friendly relations. Both the countries have similarities of view on regional and global issues. Comoros is a supporter of India's permanent membership of the UNSC. India is looked upon as a role model of development in Comoros.

Hon'ble Vice-President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu visited Comoros on a State visit from 10-12 October, 2019. Six MoUs were signed during his visit, including a defence cooperation agreement.

A proposal to set up a vocational training centre (VTC) in Moroni to impart skills in plumbing, welding, electricity, civil works, IT, etc. is under consideration of the Government of India. A piece of land in Mitsamiouili in Grand Comore has been identified to set up VTC and it is under evaluation.

EXIM Bank of India has offered a concessional credit of US\$41.6 million for setting up a power plant in Moroni and the same has been accepted by Comoros. An Agreement to implement the LOC has been signed on 22 February 2013 at New Delhi. The contract, by means of tender process to erect a power plant, has been awarded to an Indian company Overseas Infrastructure Alliance Ltd.

In December 2012, Government of India provided US\$ 100,000/- as assistance to Comoros for losses suffered on account of torrential rains in April 2012. The Pan-African e-Network started its operations in Comoros in September 2010 but the utilization remained low.

The Government of India had also granted exemption from ban on export of 25,000 tonnes of non-basmati rice to the Union of Comoros to help relieve the food crisis in Comoros in 2008.

Two naval ships from the Western Fleet of the Indian Navy – INS Mumbai and INS Trikand made a goodwill visit to the port of Moroni from 10-12 May, 2018. For Comoros, the port call by the two ships took place after a gap of 10 years as the last visit by an Indian Naval ship to Comoros was in 2008. The resumption of the visit was welcomed by the Comorian authorities and they extended full support for the same.

A number of VVIP/High-Level visits from Comoros to India had taken place during 2004 to 2013, which are as follows:

Bilateral Visit from Comoros

Sl. No.	Name of the Visitor	Date of visit	Purpose
1.	Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	August 2004	Bilateral visit
2.	Mr. Ahmed Ben Said Djaffer Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	July 2006	Bilateral visit
3.	Mr. Ahmed Abdullah Mohamed Sambu, President of Comoros	4-8 November, 2007	To participate in the 4th International Conference on Federalism.
4.	Mr. Fahmi Said Ibrahim Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	18-19 February 2011	To attend the LDCs Conference
5.	Mr. Mohamed Issmail Minister for National Education	01-02 March 2012	To participate in India-Africa Science & Technology Ministerial Meeting
6.	Mr. Mohamed Bakri Ben Abdoulafatah Charif, Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	02 November 2012	To participate in the Council of Ministers Meeting of Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)
7.	Mr. Mohamed Ali Soilihi Vice President in-charge of Finance Ministry	21-23 February 2013	To sign Agreement with EXIM Bank for grant of US\$ 41.6 million LOC
8.	Mr. Mohamed Ali Soilihi Vice President in-charge of Finance Ministry	21-23 October 2015	4th India Africa Trade Ministers Meeting (IATM)
9.	Dr. Ikililou Dhoinine, President of Comoros	23-29 October	IAFS III Summit

		2015	
10.	Dr.Abdulkarim Mohamed, Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2016	Ist India Arab League Ministerial Conference, Manama
11.	Mr.Azali Assoumani, President	10-12 March 2018	Led 16-member delegation including Foreign Minister El- Souef Amine for the Founding Conference, ISA, New Delhi
12.	Mr. Moustadroine Abdou, Minister of Energy, Agriculture, Fisheries & Environment	3 October, 2018.	Led the Comorian delegation in the First General Assembly meeting of the International Solar Alliance member countries in New Delhi
13.	Mr. Houmed M. Saidie, Minister of Energy of Comoros	31st October, 2019.	2nd General Assembly meeting of International Solar Alliance held in New Delhi

Bilateral Visits from India to Comoros:

Hon'ble Vice President of India Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu visited Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation including Shri Sanjeev Kumar Balyan, Hon'ble MoS for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Dairying, Shri Ram Vichar Netam, Hon'ble Member of Parliament and senior officers of the government of India. Hon'ble Vice President's visit was the first-ever high-level visit from India to Comoros. During the visit there was a high level delegation meeting and one-to-one meeting between the Hon'ble Vice-President and the President of the Union of Comoros.

MOUs

Following six MoUs were signed during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India to Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019:

Sl.	Name of the MoU / Agreement
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1	MoU on Exemption of Visa Diplomatic and Official / Service Passport Holders
2	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Arts & Culture
3	MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Defence
4	MoU for Cooperation in the Field of Health & Medicine
5	Protocol for Consultations between India and Comoros
6	MoU for Participation in the e-VBAB Network Project.

A Line of Credit for USD 20 mn for procurement of High Speed Interceptor Boats was also announced during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India to Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019

ITEC, ICCR & IAFS Scholarships – In the year 2018-19, 25 ITEC slots and 9 ICCR scholarships were allotted to Comoros. In 2019-20, 15 ITEC slots and 9 ICCR scholarships have been allotted to Comoros. In addition, this year 5 IAFS scholarships have also been utilized by Comoros.

Training programme/ Scholarship	Year (allotted and utilized)							
	2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
	Allotted	Utilized	Allotted	Utilized	Allotted	Utilized	Allotted	Utilized
ITEC	30	13	25	21	25	14	15	14
IAFS-II/III		4	-	11	--		--	6
CV Raman	-	-	-	-	--		1	--
FSI Course	-	-	1	1	1		--	--
ICCR General scholarship	09	3	10	1	9	1	9	3

Lines of Credit to Comoros

EXIM Bank of India has offered a concessional credit of US\$ 41.6 million for setting up a 18MW HFO power plant in Moroni. An Agreement to implement the LOC was signed on 22 February 2013 in New Delhi. The bid for construction of the power plant has been won by M/s BHEL and Overseas Infrastructure Alliance consortium. The foundation stone for the setting up of the 18MW HFO has been laid in July 2015. Due to protests from the local villagers the land site was changed in December 2016. The work is under progress at the site.

Grants to Comoros

Following **announcements** of grants were made during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India (HVPI) to Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019:

1. Medicines and medical equipment worth US\$ 1 mn.
2. Transport vehicles worth US\$ 1 mn
3. Interceptor Boats worth US\$ 2 mn
4. Supply of 1000 MT of rice.

Pan-African E-Network & e-Vidya Bharati and e-Aarogya Bharati (e-VBAB)

The Pan African e-Network Project started its operations in Comoros in September 2010 but utilization was low, partly due to language barrier. Government of India has signed the e-Vidya Bharati and e-Aarogya Bharati (E-VBAB) Network Project with the Government of Comoros in October 2019 which will extend the facility of tele-education and tele-medicine to Comoros.

Commercial Relations:

India is the second largest importer of goods from Comoros while it stands at fifth position as a source of import from Comoros. The trade between Comoros and India is increasing steadily. Comoros as an LDC, is also a beneficiary under Gols Duty Free Tariff Preference scheme introduced in April 2008.

Balance of Trade – In the year 2018-19, India's exports to Comoros were US\$ 15.75 million and imports were US\$ 31.36 million. In 2019-20 (Apr-Dec) India's exports are US\$ 14.34 million as compared to India's imports of US\$ 10.39 million, thus indicating the balance of trade in favour of India in the current year. The trade data for the last five years is given below:

Bilateral Trade Figures (US Dollar Million)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 Apr-Dec
India's Export	17.75	17.01	20.78	29.62	19.29	14.34
India's Import	11.30	15.10	25.65	37.27	32.39	10.39
Total Trade	29.05	32.10	46.43	66.89	51.68	

Source: DGFT

Main Items of Import and Export: Main items of import from Comoros to India are Coffee, Tea and Spices, Iron & Steel, Electrical Machinery, sound recorders and TV image recorders, copper and items thereof. The main items of export from India to Comoros are meat and edible meat products, cotton and woven fabrics of cotton, articles of apparel and clothing accessories, cereals, footwear, plastic articles, dairy products, egg, honey, etc.

Cultural Relations

An ICCR-sponsored Indian Contemporary Dance Group visited Moroni and performed at the Comorian National Assembly Hall on 28 August, 2018. This was the first ever visit by an Indian dance group to Comoros. The event was attended by the Comorian President along with First Lady, the Foreign Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly as well as a few other Ministers and senior dignitaries. One Comorian national participated in Kumbh Mela celebrations organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations from 21-24 March, 2019. Festival of India will be celebrated in Comoros in 2020. A 15-member group of artists from Comoros participated in the Surajkund Mela from 1-16 February, 2020, in India.

All five editions of International Day of Yoga have been celebrated in Moroni, Comoros to coincide with the worldwide celebrations of IYD. This year too the International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Moroni on 25 June, 2019. Persons from a cross section of Comorian society, which included local senior government dignitaries, members of diplomatic corps and Indian diaspora, usually participated in the event.

An MoU on Cooperation in the field of Art & Culture was signed between India and Comoros during the visit of the HVPI to Comoros on 10-12 October 2019.

Connectivity: There is no direct flight connections between India and Comoros. Connecting flights to India are via Kenya, Ethiopia and Madagascar.

Indian Community/PIO

The Indian Diaspora comprises of around 250 persons and majority of them are engaged in trade and business. The role played by the Indian community in the overall development of Comoros is highly appreciated at all levels. Some of the Indians are influential and their contribution to the total GDP of Comoros has also been significant. The Indian Diaspora has been playing a significant role in promoting Indian culture and traditional values in Comoros. In recent years, a number of young professionals have started working for some foreign companies in Comoros.

Resources:

Website: <https://www.eoiantananarivo.gov.in/>

Facebook: India in Madagascar and Comoros

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/indembtana>

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