

India-Kenya Bilateral Relations

India and Kenya are maritime neighbours with robust and multi-faceted partnership, marked by regular high-level visits, increasing trade and investment and extensive people to people contacts.

Political Relations

India established the office of Commissioner for British East Africa resident in Nairobi in 1948. Following Kenyan independence in December 1963, a High Commission was established. India has had an Assistant High Commission in Mombasa.

High level bilateral visits:

- Vice President Dr. S Radhakrishnan visited Kenya in July 1956.
- Smt. Indira Gandhi attended the Kenyan Independence celebrations in 1963. PM Indira Gandhi visited Kenya in 1970 and 1981.
- PM Morarji Desai visited Kenya in 1978.
- President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy visited Kenya in 1981.
- President Moi visited India for a bilateral visit in 1981 and for the NAM Summit in 1983.
- The State visit of PM Narendra Modi to Kenya on 10-11 July 2016 gave a new impetus to bilateral partnership. PM Narendra Modi and President Uhuru Kenyatta discussed a wide range of bilateral issues. Both leaders witnessed signing of seven (MoUs)/Agreements in the fields of defence, trade and developmental assistance. PM handed over 30 field ambulances for the use of the Kenya Defence Forces. PM and President Kenyatta addressed an India-Kenya Business Forum. Five business to business MoUs were signed on the side-lines of the business event. PM addressed a gathering of over 20,000 Indian community members in Nairobi in which he was joined by President Kenyatta. India announced gifting of a state-of-the-art made in India cancer therapy machine – Bhabhatron II – to Kenyatta National Hospital, grant of US\$ 1 million for the refurbishment of the Mahatma Gandhi graduate library of the University of Nairobi and holding of the first ever Festival of India in Kenya.
- President Uhuru Kenyatta, accompanied by several Ministers, senior officials and a high-level business delegation, paid a State Visit to India from 10-12 January 2017 on an invitation extended by PM Narendra Modi. During the visit, President Kenyatta held meetings with the President and Vice President, attended the Vibrant Gujarat Summit and a business forum in Delhi. Discussions were held on key elements of bilateral relationship including increasing cooperation in defence and maritime security, enhancing trade and investment relationship and counter-terrorism. MoU on Cooperation in the agriculture sector and allied sector and LoC for US\$100 million for agricultural mechanization was signed during the visit. Earlier, President Uhuru Kenyatta attended the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit and held bilateral meeting with PM Modi in October 2015.

- Bilateral Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) at ministerial level was set up in 1999. The first JCM took place in 2003 in Nairobi and second in March, 2019 in New Delhi. An MoU on Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) was signed in 2003. The first bilateral FOCs were held in Nairobi in June 2016.

Bilateral Trade:

- An India-Kenya Trade Agreement was signed in 1981, under which both countries accorded Most Favoured Nation status to each other. As a follow-up to the Agreement, the India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was set up at Ministerial level in 1983, which has met nine times since, the last in August 2019 in New Delhi. In 2018-19, bilateral trade was US\$ 2.208 billion. Main Indian exports to Kenya include petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, steel products, machinery, yarn, vehicles and power transmission equipment. Main Kenyan exports to India include soda ash, vegetables, tea, leather and metal scrap.
- According to the Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest), India is the second largest investor in Kenya. Over 60 major Indian companies have invested in various sectors including manufacturing, real estate, pharmaceuticals, telecom, IT & ITES, banking and agro-based industries. Indian investments have resulted in creation of thousands of direct jobs to Kenyans. Indian pharmaceutical companies have a substantial presence in Kenya. A bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was signed in 1989. Revised DTAA was signed in July 2016 and came into force on 30 August 2017.
- A Joint Business Council (JBC) was set up in 1985 by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KNCCI). The two chambers signed a fresh MoU during the state visit of President Kenyatta in January 2017.

Development Cooperation:

- India offers development assistance to Kenya in the form of loans and credit. This includes a loan of Rs. 50 million to Government of Kenya in 1982 and Lines of Credit by EXIM Bank to Industrial Development Bank Capital Ltd.
- An Agreement on extension of a Line of Credit of US\$ 61.6 million by EXIM Bank of India to Kenya for utilization in the power transmission sector was signed during the visit of PM Raila Odinga to India in November 2010.
- A loan agreement to extend lines of credit of US\$ 15 million (as first tranche out of US\$ 30 million) to IDB Capital Limited for development of SMEs was signed in July 2016.
- A Line of Credit agreement of US\$ 29.95 million for upgradation of Rift Valley Textiles Factory (RIVATEX East Africa Limited) was signed in July 2016. The upgraded facility was inaugurated by President Uhuru Kenyatta on 21 June, 2019.
- An LOC agreement of US\$ 100 million for Agricultural Mechanization Project was signed in January 2017.

- President Kenyatta commissioned an Advanced Telecobalt Cancer Therapy Machine – Bhabhatron II & Digital Radiotherapy Simulator – Imagin, both gifted by India, at the Kenyatta National Hospital in Nairobi in August 2017.
- In July 2018, High Commissioner handed over first tranche of essential medicines to Government of Kenya.

People to people contacts:

- Kenya Airways flies to Mumbai twice daily. Foreign airlines also provide air connectivity via Doha, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Muscat, Addis Ababa and Kigali. Air India's operations to Nairobi via Aden, which began in January 1951, the carrier's second overseas route after London, ended in January 2010 and Air India closed its Nairobi office in March 2011. Air India started its direct flights on Mumbai-Nairobi sector from 27 November 2019.
- India is the third largest source (other than neighbours) of inbound tourists to Kenya. Over 60,000 Indian tourists visited Kenya in 2017. According to Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), 125,032 Indian tourists visited Kenya in 2018. Many Kenyans visit India for medical treatment.

Indian Community and Diaspora in Kenya:

- Indians were trading with the Swahili coast since early historical times as evidenced by ancient works. With the region coming under Omani rule particularly Mogadishu, Mombasa and Zanzibar, Indian presence remained part of Swahili kaleidoscope. With the advent of Portuguese and finally British, Indian involvement became deeper. Prominent figures of the Kenyan Indian community in Kenya's pre-independence period included the labour leader Makhan Singh. M. A. Desai and Pio Gama Pinto participated actively in Kenya's independence struggle. Indian MP Diwan Chaman Lall joined Jomo Kenyatta's defence team which included two other persons of Indian origin, F R S DeSouza (later Kenya's Deputy Speaker) and A R Kapila, at his 1953 trial.
- A vibrant community of persons of Indian origin presently numbered around 80,000 including an estimated 20,000 Indian citizens. Several Kenyans of Indian origin have distinguished themselves as lawyers, judges, doctors and academics. Five persons of Indian origin have been awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman: Mr. Manilal Premchand Chandaria, Mr. Pheroze Nowrojee, Dr. FRS De Souza, Mr. P. V. Sambasiva Rao and Dr. Prakash Madhavdas Heda. The Kenya-India Friendship Association (KIFA) was set up in 1981. 'Bharat wallah Alumni Association' (an alumni association of Kenyan students who had studied in India for the last over 50 years) was formally launched in May 2016. PM interacted with Bharat wallah Alumni Association in July 2016.

Cultural cooperation:

- A bilateral Cultural Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1981. Since 2016, under the sponsorship of ICCR, Indian artists are participating as adjudicators for the Kenya Music Festival. Mission distributed grants-in-aid from Ministry of Culture of India to 16 Kenyan organizations promoting Indian culture. To showcase our rich cultural heritage, South Indian Cultural Festival was organized in May, 2019. 5th International Day of Yoga was celebrated across 10 counties in collaboration with County Governments. For the first time ever, Indian Film Festival was organized in Nairobi in August 2019.
- There are about 3,500 Kenyan students currently studying in 50 Institutions throughout India. In 2018-19, over 400 Kenyan nationals availed training and scholarships programmes in various fields under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme; India-Africa Forum Summit and Aid to Africa Programme. An MoU on establishment of an ICCR Chair on Indian studies between ICCR and University of Nairobi was signed in March 2015. Dr. Seepana Prakasam served as the first ICCR Chair of Indian Studies at the University of Nairobi from Sept 2016-July 2017. Late Kenyan Nobel Peace laureate and environmentalist Prof. Wangari Maathai had been conferred the 2005 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding as well as the 2006 Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

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