

India – Madagascar Relations

India has had maritime links with Madagascar for several centuries and visits to Madagascar and settlements of Indian merchants in Madagascar date at least to the late eighteenth century. The late nineteenth century and early years of the twentieth century witnessed a steady increase in the number of persons from India in Madagascar and persons of Indian origin began to play a significant role in business. India opened a Consulate General in Antananarivo in 1954 making 2014, the diamond jubilee year of diplomatic ties between India and Madagascar. Upon Madagascar gaining independence in 1960, the Consulate General was up-graded to an Embassy. India and Madagascar enjoy cordial bilateral relations.

While no high level visits from India to Madagascar have taken place in the recent past, high level and Ministerial level visits from Madagascar to India are taking place at periodic intervals. A list of high-level bilateral visits that have taken place so far is as follows:

Visits from Madagascar

Sl. No.	Name of the Visitor	Period
1.	Mr. Didier Ratsiraka, President	1980, 1983
2.	Malagasy Parliamentary delegation	2000
3.	Mr. Lila Hanitra Ratsifandrihamanana, Foreign Minister	2001
4.	Mr. Marcel Ranjeva, Foreign Minister	2005
5.	Chief of Staff to the President	Feb 2006
6.	Mr. Marius Ratolojanahary, Minister for Agriculture	Jul 2007
7.	Mr. Ivohasina Razafimahefa, Minister for Economy, Commerce and Industry; and Mr. Marius Ratolojanahary, Minister for Agriculture	Mar 2008
8.	Mr. Marius Ratolojanahary, Minister for Agriculture	Nov 2008
9.	Mr. Pierrot J. Rajaonarivelo, Minister of Foreign Affairs	Nov 2012
10.	Prof (Mr.) Mamy Lalatiana Andriamanarivo, Health Minister	August 2015
11.	Mr. Hery Rajaonarimampianina, President (along with Foreign Minister Ms. Beatrice Attalah and Agriculture Minister Mr. Rolond Ravotomanga to attend IAFS III at New Delhi)	October 2015

Visits from India

Sl. No.	Name of the Visitor	Period
1.	Shri P.A. Sangma, Minister of State for Commerce	1985
2.	Shri Hari Kishore Singh, External Affairs Minister	1990

Bilateral Developmental Cooperation:

Government of India had extended a concessional Line of Credit of US\$ 25 million to Madagascar for raising productivity of rice and setting up of fertilizer plants, which had enhanced India's image in Madagascar. The Malagasy Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Marius Ratolojanahary, signed an agreement in this regard in New Delhi in 2008 with EXIM Bank of India. The project is under implementation.

Centre for Geo-informatics Applications in Rural Development (CGARD):

An expert from the National Institute of Rural Development, Government of India visited Madagascar from 17 to 22 March, 2015 to conduct a feasibility study for setting up of Centre for Geo-informatics Applications in Rural Development (CGARD) in Madagascar. The MoU for setting up of the CGARD is under finalization.

Aid/Assistance:

The Government of India provided cash assistance of US\$100,000/- to Madagascar as disaster relief for damages caused due to the tropical cyclone 'Haruna' in early 2013. In April 2015, a cash assistance of US\$ 200,000/- (Ar.585,964,840/-) was provided to the victims of the cyclone "Chedza". India also provided indelible ink costing Rs.31,38,000/- Madagascar for the recently held municipal and local elections (July, 2015) in the country.

Capacity Building Programmes: As part of South-South Cooperation, India's focus has been on capacity building including training in highly skilled/technical fields through courses which are offered under ITEC and India Africa Forum Summit Scholarships, which has been widely appreciated by the local population. Two defence slots have also been sanctioned under ITEC which are open for utilisation by Malagasy army and navy both. During 2014-15, Malagasy scholars utilised 73 ITEC slots, 10 slots under IAFS and 12 slots under ICCR and one slot under RTF-DCS. During 2015-16, Madagascar has so far been able to utilise 45 and 8 slots under ITEC and IAFS respectively.

Madagascar is a beneficiary of the Pan African e-network project, which has been extended till 2016. Since the inception of the programme, 330 students registered in **Tele-education facilities** offered in collaboration with Imailaka University. Out of which 34 students have successfully completed their education till date. Tele-medicine facilities are offered in collaboration with the Institute Médicale de Madagascar (IMM). Since its inception in 2010, 109 telemedicine consultations have been arranged and twelve patients have undergone treatment in India using the tele-medicine facility of the project.

Bilateral Trade: Bilateral trade between India and Madagascar had been steadily growing till 2013-14, though it was well below the potential. India's export to Madagascar have decreased in 2014-15. Lack of proper direct shipping routes and banking facilities for exports are mainly responsible for the declining trend in Indian exports. The bilateral trade figures for the last three years are as follows:

In millions US\$

	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16(Apr-Sep)
India's exports	123.63	154.52	238.74	167.19	97.99
India's imports	82.75	72.88	52.84	95.29	55.09

Source: DGFT

The main items of exports from Madagascar to India are Coffee, Spices, Edible Vegetables, Salt, Sulphur & Earth, Essential Oils & Resinoids, Base Metals, Precious and Semi-precious Stones, etc.. The major imports from India are Cereals, Apparel Products, Iron & Steel, Cotton, Pharmaceutical Products, Products of the Milling Industry, Sugar and Sugar confectionery, etc.

Economic and Commercial Relations with India:

Following the installation of popularly elected government and subsequent international recognition, the Indian companies are showing renewed interest in investing in Madagascar.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the International Trade Board of Madagascar (ITBM) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 18th March 2014 in New Delhi to enhance economic relations.

A market survey on the Pharmaceutical, Agribusiness and Investment sectors to assess opportunities in both trade and investments for Indian companies was conducted by the Embassy and a report was published in March 2014. A Catalogue Show was also arranged in the same month where Indian companies who have already invested in Madagascar participated. A Make in India Trade Promotion Initiative was organized in October 2015.

Indian investments: The major Indian investments amounting to approximately \$907.4 million [*Source: UNCTAD Stats: 2011*] by Indian companies were in the mining, oil and gas sectors, telecom sector and health sectors. Airtel is the main player in mobile telephony and Dr. Aggarwal's Eye Hospital in the health sector. Other Indian companies which have invested in Madagascar but are yet to commence operations due to the crisis include the Tatas, Essar, Varun Industries, GIMPEX Osho Ventures, Sahara (India), Diamond Cement, Jindals, etc. Madagascar has vast potential in the mining sector including oil and gas.

Cultural and Educational Relations:

While there had not been any significant exchange of cultural visits between the two countries in recent years, Malagasies are familiar with Indian culture, thanks to vibrant PIO community. Indian TV channels are included in the cable TV package by local cable operators. Indian movies provided by the Embassy has also been telecast on National TV. The famous TV serial Kabhi-Kabhi was telecast on National TV. The cultural programmes, including film shows, organized by the Embassy in association with local organizations, have been well attended.

International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2015: The first International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21 June 2015 in Antananarivo, Madagascar to coincide with worldwide celebrations of IYD. Over 500 persons from a cross section of Malagasy society which included local government dignitaries, members of diplomatic corps and Indian diaspora participated. The event was well received by the local member public.

Festival of India in Madagascar – 2015: As part of Festival of India in Indian Ocean region, a series of cultural events sponsored by the Ministry of Culture, SangeetNatak Academy and ITDC India were held in main cities of Madagascar during September – November 2015. The festival was inaugurated with a fusion dance performance by Nrityarupa dance troupe on 24 September. This was followed by a Bhangra dance performance and Mehendi Art show on 9-12 October (Antananarivo & Toamasina), Food Festival of India on 9-15 November (Antananarivo) and Gujarati Folk Dance on 25-30 November (Antananarivo and Mahajanga). The events received overwhelming response from the local PIO as well as Malagasy communities.

At Embassy's initiative, an EdCIL delegation visited Madagascar from 5 to 11 June 2013 and organized workshops/seminars in collaboration with the Universities of Antananarivo and Mahajanga, which were well attended and it is expected that many students would look at India as a destination for higher education.

Fully paid scholarship is being provided to Malagasy nationals by the ICCR and they have been taking maximum benefit of it. Self-financing students are also studying in various educational institutes of India, particularly in Bangalore, Chennai, Goa and some places in Gujarat.

Connectivity and Travel: Foreign airlines provide connectivity to India via Mauritius, Dubai and Nairobi. Major airlines Air Seychelles flights via Seychelles have been introduced recently, which provide comparatively a cheaper option.

Indian Community/Diaspora: There are about 22,000 persons of India origin in Madagascar, including approximately 2500 Indian passport holders. Most of them are in trading but some of them are also in the manufacturing sector and other businesses as well. In recent years a number of Indian professionals have been working in different companies including multi-national companies in Madagascar. The role played by the Indian community and diaspora in economic development of Madagascar is appreciated at all levels. Some of the Indian Diaspora are quite influential and their contribution to the total GDP of Madagascar is substantial. The Indian Diaspora has been playing a significant role in preserving and promoting Indian culture and traditional values in Madagascar.

Useful Resources:

Embassy of India, Antananarivo website

www.embassyofindia.mg

Embassy of India, Antananarivo Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInMadagascar>

Embassy of India, Antananarivo Twitter link:

<https://twitter.com/indemtana>

Embassy of India, Antananarivo Youtube Channel:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRiM_YUXv9KnKxyVTR3XiGw

January 2016