

## **India-Comoros Unclassified Bilateral brief**

Strategically located at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel in the Indian Ocean between northern Madagascar and northern Mozambique, Comoros is predominantly a Muslim country with 98% population following Sunni Islam. The commonly used language is Shikomoro (Swahili dialect). French and Arabic are also widely spoken. Around 60% of the population is literate.

### **Indian Diaspora**

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. The Indian Diaspora has been playing 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.

### **Diplomatic 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.

Comoros joined IORA in November 2012 – a regional forum consisting of coastal countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

President of the Union of Comoros, H.E. Mr. Azali Assoumani led a Comorian delegation to participate in the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi from March 10-12, 2018.

Hon'ble Vice President of India visited Comoros on a state visit in October 2019. Six MoUs were signed during the visit.

Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephonic conversation with the Comorian Foreign Minister in April 2020. As a result, a 14-member medical assistance team visited Comoros.

Foreign Minister Dhoihir Dhoulkamal visited India to take part in the IOR Defence Ministers meeting and Def Expo in Bangalore in February 2021 and had a meeting with Hon'ble Defence Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh.

### **Development Assistance/HADR**

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.

### **18 MW Power Project**

EXIM Bank of India had offered a concessional credit of US\$41.6 million in the year 2013 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 and the foundation stone for the project, laid in July 2015. A consortium of BHEL and Indian company Overseas Infrastructure Alliance (OIA) Ltd. are the contractors of the project.

### **COVID-19**

In response to the two requests received from the Government of Comoros for supply of medicines including 600mg Chloroquine and 250mg Azythromycin sufficient for treatment of 5000 patients and medical assistance in dealing with Covid-19 situation, during telephonic conversation between the Foreign Minister of Comoros and EAM, a 14-member Medical Assistance Team visited from India from 1 to 18 June, 2020 as India's support to Comoros in fight against spread of Dengue and Covid-19 in the country. The medical team visited three islands of Comoros Anjouan, Moheli and Grand Comore and a consignment of medicines as relief assistance was also donated by India to Comoros in support of its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. India has offered Covid-19 vaccine to Comoros.

### **1000 tonnes of Rice**

INS Jalashwa visited the port of Anjouan in Comoros from 14-18 March, 2021 to deliver 1000 MT of rice in fulfilment of the announcement of donation of rice made during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India to Comoros in Oct 2019. The consignment of rice was received by the Hon'ble Minister of Foreign Affairs of Comoros, H.E. Mr. Dhoihir Dhoulkamal. The formal presentation ceremony of the consignment was held on 15 Mar, 2021 and Ambassador Abhay Kumar also participated in it virtually.

### **Bilateral Visits from Comoros to India**

A number of VVIP/High-Level visits from Comoros to India have taken place. These are as follows:

<b>Sl. No.</b>	<b>Name of the Visitor</b>	<b>Date of visit</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
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	4-8	To participate in the 4th

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	Sambi, President of Comoros	November, 2007	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 Issimail 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	4 <sup>th</sup> India Africa Trade Ministers Meeting (IATM)
9.	Dr. Ikililou Dhoinine, President of Comoros	23-29 October 2015	IAFS III Summit
10.	Dr. Abdulkarim Mohamed, Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2016	1st 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.	A 3-member Comorian delegation led by Mr. Dhoiher Dhoulkamal, Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, Union of Comoros	3-5 Feb, 2021	Aero India 2021 and IOR Defence Ministers Conclave

**Bilateral Visits from India to Comoros:**

1. Former Minister of Science & Technology, Mr. Y.S. Chowdary visited Comoros as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India on 25-26 August, 2015.

2. Hon'ble Vice-President of India visited Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019. 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
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.

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. *(Delivered on 15 March, 2021 during the visit of INS Jalashwa to Comoros, received by Foreign Minister Dhohir Dhoulkamal on behalf of Govt. of Comoros.)*

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

**Goa Maritime Symposium:** Two officers of the Comorian Coast Guard participated in the online video conference of the Goa Maritime Symposium from 11-13 May 2021.

**ITEC, ICCR & IAFS Scholarships** - In the year 2018-19 out of 25 ITEC slots allotted to Comoros, 14 were utilized and out of 9 ICCR scholarships only 1 was utilized. In 2019-20, out of 15 allotted ITEC slots, 13 have been utilized and 9 ICCR scholarships, 3 have been utilized. In addition, this year 8 IAFS scholarships have also been utilized by Comoros. The utilization on the part of Comoros remains low due to lack of knowledge of English as well as lack of awareness. Details of last four years are as follows:

Sl. No	Training program me/ Scholars	Year (allotted and utilized)							
		2016-17		2017-18		2018-19		2019-20	
		Allotte	Utiliz	Allott	Utiliz	Allott	Utiliz	Allotte	Utilized

	<b>hip</b>	<b>d</b>	<b>ed</b>	<b>ed</b>	<b>ed</b>	<b>ed</b>	<b>ed</b>	<b>d</b>	
	ITEC	<b>20</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>
	IAFS-II/III		4	-	11	--		--	<b>8</b>
	CV Raman	-	-	-	-	--		--	--
	FSI Course	-	-	1	1	1		--	--
	ICCR General scholarship	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>

**Commercial Relations:**

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

**Balance of Trade** - The total export and import figures of India with respect to Comoros available on Export-Import Data Bank of Department of Commerce, Government of India it is clear that India has a negative trade balance with Comoros since 2016-17. 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	2020-21 (Apr-Feb)
India's Export	17.75	17.01	20.78	29.62	19.29	18.88	16.44
India's Import	11.30	15.10	25.65	37.27	32.39	19.65	11.80
Total Trade	29.05	32.10	46.43	66.89	51.58	38.52	28.24

Source: DGFT

**Main Items of Import and Export:** The main items of import from Comoros to India are coffee, tea, mate, spices, iron, steel, electrical machinery and equipment, sound recorders and reproducers, television image, copper etc., and the main items of export from India to Comoros are cotton, meat and edible meat offal, article of apparel and clothing accessories knitted or crocheted, pharmaceuticals products, sugars and sugar confectionery 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 recently held Kumbh Mela celebrations organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations from 21-24 March, 2019. Festival of India is planned in Comoros.

All six editions of International Day of Yoga have been celebrated in Moroni, Comoros to coincide with the worldwide celebrations of IDY. Persons from a cross section of Comorian society, which included local senior government dignitaries, members of diplomatic corps and Indian diaspora, participated in the event. This year, the International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Moroni on 21 June, 2020 on online platforms due to COVID-19 pandemic.

**Connectivity:** There is no change in the flight connections between India and Comoros for many years. No direct flights are available. Fast connections to India are via Kenya and Ethiopia.

**Resources**

[www.eoiantananarivo.gov.in](http://www.eoiantananarivo.gov.in)

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiainAntananarivoMadagascar/?ref=bookmarks>

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As on 09.06.2021