India–Fiji Relations

Fiji, in the heart of Pacific Ocean, is an archipelago of 332 islands of which around one-third are inhabited permanently. The total land area is 18,333 square kms. English, Fijian and Hindi are widely spoken. Main ethnic groups include Fijian, Indian, European, other Pacific Islanders and Chinese.

India’s links with Fiji commenced in 1879 when Indian laborers were brought here under indenture system to work on sugarcane plantations. Between 1879 and 1916 around 60,000 Indians were brought to Fiji. Beginning with early 20th century, Indian traders and others also started arriving in Fiji. Agitation by the workers and the reports of C.F. Andrews, who visited Fiji in 1915 and 1917, led to the abolition of the indenture system in 1920. Currently, of the 849,000 population (2009 estimates), 37% are people of Indian origin.

Prior to Fiji’s independence in 1970, India had a Commissioner since 1948 to look after the interests of people of Indian origin. The Commissioner’s post was upgraded to that of High Commissioner after independence. Fiji’s Prime Minister Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara visited India in 1971 and Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Fiji in 1981.

Fiji had several coups starting from 1987. After the 1987 coup-s, the High Commission of India and Indian Cultural Centre were closed on May 24, 1990. The High Commission of India was subsequently reopened in March 1999 and the Indian Cultural Centre in February 2005. Fiji established its first High Commission in New Delhi in January 2004.

India-Fiji bilateral relations have grown steadily during the past few years due to several ongoing initiatives and bilateral visits to and from Fiji. Prime Minister of Fiji Laisenia Qarase, visited India in October 2005. Four MOUs/Agreements on Cooperation in health, Tourism, IT and establishment of Joint Trade Committee were signed during the visit.


MOS (EA) Smt Preneet Kaur visited Fiji on 11-12 September 2011. This was the first ministerial visit from India in five years. She called on President Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, PM Bainimarama and Acting Foreign Minister and Education Minister Philip Bole on 12 September. She also interacted with the Indo-Fijian community. During the visit she offered (i) US$ 200,000 for up-gradation of facilities at the CWM Hospital,
Suva; (ii) a few electronic voting machines for trial for possible use in their elections; training of election officials, and (iv) hosting a delegation from Fiji for a study visit to Coconut/Coir Development Board.

Prime Minister Commodore Bainimarama paid two private visits to India in February 2008 and March 2009. Prime Minister Bainimarama met with Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee on 2nd May 2010 at the ADB Annual meeting in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and discussed bilateral issues. Fiji’s Minister of Works, Transport and Public Utilities Mr. Timoci Natuva visited India in October 2010 to participate in the International Renewable Energy Conference and visited India again in October 2012 to attend the International Seminar on Energy Access.

PM Bainimarama visited India to attend the 41st Meeting of the International Sugar Council from 22-29 April 2012. PM Bainimarama met with Agriculture Minister Shri Sharad Pawar on 24 April, 2012 who offered help for Fiji’s sugar, rice and horticulture sectors. PM Bainimarama also called on PM and Finance Minister Shri Pranab Mukherjee. PM Bainimarama visited India again from 5-10 September 2012 and had a meeting with EAM and MOS (EA).

The President of Fiji, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, called on the President, Shri Pranab Mukherjee, in New Delhi in August 2012 during a private visit.

Attorney General and Communications Minister Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum accompanied by Telecommunication Authority of Fiji Chairperson Mere Vuniwaqa visited Hyderabad in May 2010 to attend the 5th World Telecommunications Development Conference.

Attorney General and Minister for Tourism Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum led a tourism delegation from Fiji to Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi and Mumbai in February 2011. He again visited India in February 2012 for tourism promotion roadshows in Kolkata, Mumbai, Delhi and Bangalore.

Chief Justice of Fiji Mr. Anthony Gates visited Mumbai and New Delhi from 11 to 17 December 2010 and held meetings with the Minister of Law and Justice, Chief Justice of India and other senior dignitaries.

Commander Francis B. Kean, Chief of the Navy of Fiji along with another naval officer attended the HYDROIND 2011 - International Seminar and Exhibition on Hydrology held in New Delhi on 3-4 March 2011.

India has bestowed Pravasi Bhartiya Samman on Mr. Mahendra Chaudhry, former PM (in 2004), internationally acclaimed Golfer, Mr. Vijay Singh (in 2005), Sir Moti Tika Ram, former Supreme Court Judge (in 2007), and businessman and community leader Mr. Y.P. Reddy (in 2010).

In view of the flood and devastation in Fiji Islands caused by Cyclone Tomas in March 2010, Government of India gave assistance of US$100,000/- in May 2010 and contributed US$ 100,000 to the Prime Minister’s National Disaster, Relief and Rehabilitation Account for the floods and cyclone in 2009. Government of Fiji had given F$ 30,000 to India in October 2005 following an earthquake in Kashmir. India
contributed US$ 200,000 in July 2012 for relief operations in the flood affected areas of Western Division.

The First Foreign Office Consultations between India and Fiji took place in Suva in July 2005. The second FOC was held in New Delhi on July 23, 2007. Secretary (East) Shri N. Ravi visited Fiji from August 3 – 5, 2009 for the last FOC.

A 6-member team from Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur visited Fiji for a month in June 2011. During their stay they equipped around 300 amputees selected from different parts of the country with artificial limbs. Their visit was sponsored by the Ministry of Health of Government of Fiji.

A 16-member delegation from National Defence College, led by Rear Admiral Ravindra Gaikwad visited Fiji from 13 to 18 May 2012.

As a follow up of the Agreement signed between the Sahyadri Group Hospitals, Pune and Ministry of Health, Government of Fiji in July 2012, Sahyadri Group of Hospitals started providing tertiary care services in Fiji. In accordance with the Agreement, Sahyadri Group Hospitals will provide medical teams and equipment for surgeries and Ministry of Health will provide physical infrastructure and nursing support. The Sahyadri Group of Hospitals will also train Fijian doctors, nurses etc. in India. Government of India has given a grant of US $ 200,000 to upgrade the facilities in CWM Hospital in Suva.

In fulfillment of announcements made by Government of India for grant-in-aid to each of the PIF countries, Government of India has provided funds for purchase of 5 Toyota Cars for Fiji Police; purchase of 200 sewing Machines; supply of 5 Ambulances for hospitals; supply of 134 Water Tanks for primary and higher secondary schools and a mobile library for Suva Library. In addition GOI has provided assistance for purchase of five sets motorized sugarcane crushing units to Fiji National University and Dialysis machines and other equipment to the Kidney Foundation of Fiji under aid to developing countries.

India extended US$ 50.4 million Line of Credit in July 2005 for up-gradation of sugar industry in Fiji. GOI has extended the moratorium period of the LOC by another 2 years in July 2012, bringing the total moratorium period to 8 years.

India has offered 55 slots under the ITEC and 20 slots under the TCS Colombo Plan to Fiji for short-term training courses in various Indian institutions during the current financial year. In addition 43 slots for Navy and 10 slots for Fiji defence personnel for short/long-term training programmes have been offered during the year 2012-13. India has also offered 25 scholarships under the General Cultural Scholarship Scheme of ICCR. Scholarships are also offered for Diaspora Children (SPDC of the MOIA), and Certificate/Diploma Course in Hindi conducted by Kendriya Hindi Sansthan.

India and Republic of Fiji had signed an MoU on establishment of Joint Trade Committee (JTC) in October 2005. The first meeting of the JTC is scheduled to be held in Nadi on 30-31 January 2012. Unfortunately, the meeting was called off due to
severe floods in the Western Division of Fiji and is likely to be convened in Delhi this year.

Negotiations on India-Fiji Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) were completed in Suva on 19-20 October 2011.

The Chemicals & Allied Products Export Promotion Council (CAPEXIL) Book Division of India (sponsored by Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India) brought a 11-member delegation from Indian Books, Publications and Printing industry to Suva for a Buyer Seller Meet on 21st July. Local Publishers, Booksellers, Printers, Importers, Distributors attended the meet.

India Tourism Sydney participated in the Hibiscus Festival held at Suva from August 17 to 25, 2012. A stall was set up and posters, pamphlets pertaining to India Tourism were displayed and distributed to the visitors who visited the stall. A tourism workshop was also held on 21.8.2012.

A Cultural Centre in Fiji was established by GOI in 1972. After the 1987 Coup, the Cultural Centre was closed down in 1990. The Indian Cultural Centre was reopened in February 2005. A sub-Centre of the ICC at Lautoka was inaugurated in September 2005. Currently ICC Suva and Sub-Centre Lautoka provide classes in Indian classical music and dance, Hindi language and Yoga. ICC, Suva, also organizes cultural evenings, exhibitions, film shows, workshops and discussions. A year-long series of events were held to mark 40 years of ICC in Fiji during 2011-12. A 12-member Odissi dance group, a 23-member Ramleela/Raasleela Group, a 15-member Bollywood group "Karmic Konnection", classical singer Vidushi Savita Devi, folk singer Malini Awasthi, Bharatanatyam dancer Dr. Lata Singh Munshi, a 14-member Bollywood dance group “Matrix” and an 8-member Qawwali group led by Qawwal Wajahat Husain Badayuni visited Fiji as part of the events.

The High Commission joined the Fiji National University and others in organising an International Film Festival, where Indian films won a few awards.

Prof. S. Ghosh joined as ICCR’s Dada Saheb Phalke Chair of Film Production at the Fiji National University in December 2012.

University of Fiji signed an MoU with University of Calcutta in September 2012 for Cooperation between the two universities.

An MoU on Supervisory Cooperation and Exchange of Supervisory Information between the Reserve Bank of India and the Reserve Bank of Fiji was signed on 05 March 2013 by Shri G. Jaganmohan Rao, Chief General Manager, RBI and Mr Barry Whiteside, Governor, RBF

A sum of FJ$ 177,588.35 (= US$ 100,000) was donated on 07 March to Fiji as India’s contribution towards relief efforts following cyclone Evan in Fiji.

A three-member team of experts from the National Sugar Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories Limited, New Delhi, visited Fiji from 11th to 24th March 2013 to study the sugar mill upgrade funded by GOI under EXIM Bank credit.

A total of 300 sewing machines were donated by India to Fiji in March 2013.
The then Minister for Urban Development, Local Government, Housing and Environment, Col. Samuela Saumatu visited India in March 2013 for a study of housing and urban settlements.

Joint Secretary (South), Shri Sanjay Bhattacharyya, visited Fiji on 11-12 April. During the visit he called on Ratu Inoke Kubuabola, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General, and Neil Sharma, Minister of Health. JS(South) also met Feleti Penitala Teo, Deputy Secretary-General, Pacific Islands Forum, Abdul Khan, Chairman, Fiji Sugar Corporation, had an interactive session with the academics at the University of the South Pacific, and also visited the Kidney Foundation of Fiji.

A team of Apollo Hospitals Enterprise Limited from India visited Fiji hospitals and health centres signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Fiji National University, for cooperation in training and capacity building and possible introduction of a telemedicine / mobile health programme.

Fiji's Health Minister, Dr. Neil Sharma, visited India in May 2013 to observe hospital facilities, procurement of equipment and establishment of an oncological unit in Fiji. He met Hon. Health Minister on 31 May 2013, and also met Health Secretary.

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