

India-Mauritius relations

Diplomatic relations between India and Mauritius were established in 1948. Mauritius maintained contacts with India through successive Dutch, French and British occupation. From the 1820s, Indian workers started coming into Mauritius to work on sugar plantations. From 1834 when slavery was abolished by the British Parliament, large numbers of Indian workers began to be brought into Mauritius as indentured labourers. November 2, 1834 marks the day when the ship 'Atlas' docked in Mauritius carrying the first batch of Indian indentured labourers. This day is now observed in Mauritius as 'Aapravasi Day'. In all, about half a million Indian indentured labourers are estimated to have been brought into Mauritius between 1834 and the early decades of the 20th century, out of whom about two-thirds settled permanently in Mauritius.

Influence of Indian National Movement: A brief stopover by Mahatma Gandhi *en route* to India from South Africa (October 29 to November 15, 1901), while awaiting departure of his ship *SS Nowshera*, is still etched in the consciousness of Mauritius. Barrister Manillal Doctor, who came to Mauritius in 1907 on the suggestion of Gandhiji, helped the Mauritian Indian community to organise themselves and laid the foundation for their struggle for political and social rights. As a tribute to Gandhiji and the Indian freedom struggle, the National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on March 12 every year (the date on which the Dandi Salt March was launched). In November 2001, a commemorative MRs 100/- silver coin was released on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Gandhiji's arrival in Mauritius.

Bilateral Agreements with Mauritius: India and Mauritius have signed several bilateral agreements. Some of the important agreements are the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (1982), Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (1998), Air Services Agreement (1972; amended in 1995), Agreement for Cooperation in Information Technology (2000), MOU on Cooperation in Biotechnology (2002), Extradition Treaty (2003), MOU on Cooperation against Terrorism (2005), MOU on Cooperation in the field of Environment (2005), Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters (2005), Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (2005), MOU for Cooperation in the field of Hydrography (2005), MOU for Cooperation on Consumer Protection and Legal Metrology (2005), MOU for setting up a Preferential Trade Agreement (2005), MOU Concerning Cooperation in the Exchange of Finance Intelligence Related to Money Laundering & Financing of Terrorism (2008), Supply Contract of one Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter; MOU on the setting up of Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) in Mauritius based on Indian PKI model; Protocol on the Sale of Navigational Charts; Agreement on Cooperation for the establishment of telemetry, tracking and telecommand station for satellites and launch vehicles and for cooperation in the fields of space research, science and applications; MOU for the sharing of e-procurement platform of Government of Andhra Pradesh; MOU on Plant Health Cooperation; Supply Contract for the Coastal Radar Surveillance System (2009), Memorandum of Understanding on the supply of an Offshore Patrol Vessel; Agreement on Early Warning of Coastal Hazards (2010), MOU on Science and Technology Cooperation (2012), MOU on Sports and Youth Affairs (2012), Educational Exchange Programme (2012), MOU on Textiles (2012), and MOU between RGSC Trust Fund and NCSM for setting up a hybrid planetarium (2012). In addition, Cultural Exchange Programmes have been regularly concluded since 1971.

Defence Cooperation: Under the ITEC-II programme, about 50 personnel from the Mauritian Police Force are trained annually in Indian Defence Training Establishments. India gifted *INS Amar* to Mauritius in 1974. India has provided the interceptor patrol boat, *CGS Observer* to Mauritius on a free lease. India also undertook at its own cost extensive repairs to Mauritius' Chilean-made flagship *Vigilant* on two occasions. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) delivered two Dornier maritime aircrafts to Mauritius in May 1990 and April 2004. India had also gifted 2 Chetaks, the first one in May 1976 and the second one in February 1987. ALH *Dhruv* was delivered to the Government of Mauritius in November 2009. A Coastal Radar Surveillance System (CSRS) built by Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) was delivered and subsequently commissioned in April 2011. A bilateral Agreement for the Supply of an Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) to the Government of Mauritius is currently being implemented with the OPV being designed and constructed by GRSE Ltd. at a cost of US\$ 58.5 million (funded partly by the EXIM Bank line of credit (US\$ 48.5 million) and partly by GOI grant (US\$ 10 million)). Goodwill visits of Indian Naval Ships to Mauritius also take place regularly. Indian Naval ships have been carrying out annual hydrography-related tasks in Mauritian waters.

Bilateral Trade: India has been the largest exporter of goods and services to Mauritius since 2007 till 2010. As far as FY 2010-2011 is concerned Department of Commerce, Government of India figures indicates that India exported goods worth US\$ 801.56 million to Mauritius and imported goods worth US\$ 16.51 from Mauritius. These figures indicate that India continued to be the top supplier for Mauritius. India's export to Mauritius comprises largely of petroleum products. A three-year Agreement was renewed between the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) and the State Trading Corporation of Mauritius for supply of all petroleum requirements of Mauritius in July 2010. Besides petroleum products, main items of India's exports to Mauritius in 2010-11 were cotton, pharmaceuticals, cereals, carpets, electrical machinery and equipment parts, apparel and clothing accessories. Main items of Mauritius' exports to India in 2010-11 were Iron and Steel, optical, photographic and precision instruments and aluminium and articles thereof.

Year	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11
India's Exports	163	164	203	258	199	737	1086	1006.9	453.43	801.56
India's Imports	3.26	16.13	7.54	7.19	7.33	14.51	10.07	14.50	10.89	16.51

Bilateral Investment: According to the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, cumulative FDI equity inflows from Mauritius to India during the period April 2000-April 2011 amounted to US\$ 55.203 billion, amounting to 42 % of the total FDI equity flows into India over this period making Mauritius the single largest FDI source for India. Mauritius was the single largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India during the financial year 2010-11, with FDI equity inflows amounting to US\$ 6.987 billion or 35.97 % of total FDI equity inflows during the period. According to Bank of Mauritius figures, in 2010, India was the second largest investor in Mauritius after the UK with US\$

96 million. According to the Government of Mauritius, Indian companies have invested over US\$ 200 million in Mauritius in the last five years.

Indian PSUs in Mauritius: Bank of Baroda; Life Insurance Corporation of India; New India Assurance; India Handloom House; Telecommunications Consultants of India Ltd.; State Bank of India (Mauritius) Ltd.; Indian Oil Corporation; Mahanagar Telephone Mauritius Limited.

Major Indian Assisted Projects: Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital; Equipment for Subramania Bharati Eye Hospital; Upgradation of Upadhyay Training Institute, Court House Building, ISRO TTC Station, Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, Cyber Tower, Rabindranath Tagore Institute, Swami Vivekananda Intl. Conference Centre; World Hindi Secretariat set up jointly by the Governments of India and Mauritius is located in Mauritius.

Visa Regime: In October 2004, the Mauritian Government introduced a **visa-free regime** for Indian tourists. Under the regime, Indian tourists visiting Mauritius for a period up to 60 days do not require a visa, provided they show sufficient funds to cover their stay. 53,955 tourists from India visited Mauritius in 2011.

Lines of Credit: Over the past forty years, the GOI has extended eleven LOCs to Mauritius to assist in the development of its infrastructure human resource skills development, project appraisal, etc. The total credit offered by India to Mauritius at the current exchange rate translates to Indian Rs. 1032.75 crores. All the LOCs to Mauritius have been extended on LIBOR rates of interests. During the State Visit of Mauritian PM Dr. Navinchandra Ramgoolam to India in February 2012, an economic package comprising **credit line of US \$ 250 million and a grant of US\$ 20 million** was offered to Mauritius by India.

Cultural/Educational Relations: Annually, about 100 scholarships are extended to Mauritian students for higher education in India. Approximately 200 Mauritian students enrol every year in Indian universities on a self-financing basis. Active **cultural exchanges** with Mauritius take place both under officially sponsored programmes and through a wide non-official network of Indo-Mauritian socio-cultural organisations. Programme of Cultural Cooperation between India and Mauritius for 2010-2013 was signed in July 2010. The **Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture** has emerged as an important venue for cultural events. Doordarshan programmes are telecast over Mauritian public TV channels.

Under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)** programme, about 120 civilian officials from the Mauritian Government undergo training in Indian institutions every year. A bilateral agreement also provides for deputation of up to 20 ITEC experts to the Mauritius.

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