

India-Mauritius Bilateral Relations

Mauritius Overview

India has close and longstanding relations with Mauritius, an island nation in the Western Indian Ocean, anchored in shared history, demography and culture. A key reason for the special ties is the fact that Indian origin people comprise nearly 70% of the island's population of 1.2 million (28% Creole, 3% Sino-Mauritian, 1% Franco-Mauritian).

2. Mauritius is a former British and French colony that gained independence from British rule in 1968. Under the nearly century-long French rule (in the year 1729), the first Indians were brought to Mauritius from the Puducherry region, to work as artisans and masons. Under British rule, about half a million Indian indentured workers were brought to Mauritius between 1834 and the early 1900's. About two-thirds of these workers permanently settled down in Mauritius. The first batch of these workers, comprising 36 persons, arrived in Mauritius on November 2, 1834 onboard the ship 'Atlas'. This day is now observed in Mauritius as 'Aapravasi Diwas'.

3. On his way to India from South Africa, Mahatma Gandhi briefly stopped over in Mauritius from October 29-November 15, 1901 and steered the destiny of Indian labourers with his three transformative messages – the importance of education, political empowerment and staying connected with India. In his homage, the National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on March 12 (the date of Gandhiji's Dandi Salt March).

Bilateral Relations

4. Mauritius was one of the handful of important countries with which independent India established diplomatic relations in 1948, even before the independence of Mauritius. India was represented by an Indian Commissioner in British-ruled Mauritius between 1948 and 1968 and thereafter, by a High Commissioner after Mauritius became independent in 1968.

5. The relationship has been characterized by a high level of trust and mutual understanding at the leadership level and continued high-level political engagement. These special ties have resulted in uniquely close cooperation in maritime security, development partnership, capacity-building, cooperation in international fora, technical assistance through deputation of Indian experts to GOM, vibrant cultural exchanges and close people-to-people ties.

6. The close bonds are especially evident in the numerous India-assisted development projects that dot the Mauritian landscape. The enduring cultural and people-to-people ties between India and Mauritius are nurtured by the Indian Cultural Centre in Mauritius (India's biggest in the world), the World Hindi Secretariat, a bilateral organization for the global promotion of Hindi, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute (set up with Indian assistance to promote the study of Indian culture, languages and Indology) as well as over a hundred Mauritian socio-cultural organisations that preserve and promote Indian heritage and culture in Mauritius.

First Responder

7. India has traditionally been the ‘**First Responder**’ for Mauritius in times of crisis, including during the recent Covid-19 and Wakashio oil-spill crises. On Mauritius’ request, India supplied 13 tonnes of medicines, 10 tonnes of Ayurvedic medicines and an Indian Rapid Response Medical Team to help combat Covid in April-May 2020. India was also the first country to supply 1 lakh doses of free Covishield vaccines to Mauritius on 22 January 2021 followed by 1 lakh doses of Covishield and 2 lakh doses of COVAXIN on commercial basis. Mauritius also donated 200 oxygen concentrators to India in April 2021, during the second wave of Covid-19 in India.

8. In the wake of a massive oil spill following the grounding of the Japanese vessel Wakashio off the Mauritian coast on July 25, 2020, India was again the first responder. An IAF aircraft brought 30 tonnes of technical equipment, and a 10-member Technical Response Team on August 16, 2020. INS Nireekshak joined the Mauritian National Coast Guard in salvaging the sunk Mauritian Tug ‘Sir Gaetan Duval’, following an accidental collision during the Wakashio salvage operations. Recently, in the aftermath of Cyclone Chido in December 2024, India extended relief assistance to Agalega through deployment of Indian P8I aircraft, and INS Sarvekshak on the request of Government of Mauritius and transported food, water, medicine supplies, and technical personnel.

Commercial Relations

9. Since 2005, India has been among the largest trading partners of Mauritius. For the FY 2023-24 Indian exports to Mauritius was USD 778.03 mn, Mauritian exports to India was USD 73.10 mn and total trade was USD 851.13 mn. Trade has grown in the last 18 years, from USD 206.76 million in 2005-06 to USD 851.13 million in 2023-24.

10. Petroleum products have been the largest export item for India between 2007 to 2019 until MRPL supply contract was terminated in mid-2019. Other Indian exports to Mauritius include pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton, shrimps, prawns and bovine meat. Main Mauritian exports to India are vanilla, medical devices, needles, aluminium alloys, scrap paper, refined copper, men's cotton shirts, etc.

11. **FDI:** Cumulative FDI worth USD 177 billion has come from Mauritius to India since 2000 (25% of total FDI inflows into India), thanks largely to the bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC). FDI equity inflows from Mauritius to India for the period April–March (FY 2023-24) amounted to USD 7.97 billion, and USD 5.34 billion for 2024-25 (April–Sept) making it the second largest source of FDI into India for the FY 2023-24, after Singapore. In Mauritius, Indian companies have invested over USD 200 mn in the last five years.

12. **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA):** Mauritius and India signed the CECPA on 22 February 2021, during the visit of EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar after nearly 15 years of negotiations. It came into force on 1 April 2021 and is the first trade agreement signed by India with an African country. In August 2022, both sides added a chapter on General Economic Cooperation and provisions related to Auto-Trigger Safeguard Mechanism. Under the CECPA, India’s exports to Mauritius amounted to USD 1.1 mn in 2021, USD 1.8 mn in 2022 and USD 3 million in 2023, USD 4 million for 2024 comprising mainly textiles, quartz slabs and plastics. Mauritian exports to India under CECPA stood at USD 1 mn in 2022 and USD 5 million in 2023, USD 7 million for 2024 comprising mainly medical devices.

13. **Indian Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) in Mauritius:** At present, 11 Indian PSUs are in Mauritius: Bank of Baroda, Life Insurance Corporation, New India Assurance Corporation, Telecommunications Consultant India Ltd, Indian Oil (Mauritius) Limited, Mahanagar Telephone

(Mauritius) Ltd., State Bank of India (Mauritius), National Building and Construction Company Ltd (NBCC), Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES), Hospital Services Consultancy Corporation Ltd. (HSCC) and EdCIL (India) Ltd.

India-assisted Projects

14. In May 2016, India provided a Grant of USD 353 million to Mauritius as a Special Economic Package for five priority projects: (i) Metro Express Project; (ii) Supreme Court Building; (iii) New ENT Hospital; (iv) Social Housing project; (v) Digital Tablets for school children.

15. India extended a USD 500 mn Line of Credit (LoC) in 2017 to Mauritius to finance 10 projects which included Metro Project (Phase I, II and III), Social Housing Project, Supply of Gas based incinerators & fire-fighting vehicles, 8 MW Solar Power Plant, new Forensic Science Laboratory and National Archives & Library and Mauritius Police Academy of which 7 have been completed till date. A MoU on Community Development Projects was signed in January 2022 to undertake 96 small, people-oriented projects all across Mauritius, out of which 50 projects have been inaugurated so far. In 2024, a Mediclinic, first overseas Jan Aushadi Kendra and an Area Health Centre were inaugurated.

16. Other India-assisted projects include the Upadhyay Training Centre, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hospital, the Subramania Bharati Eye Centre, the Rajiv Gandhi Science Centre, the Swami Vivekananda International Conference Centre and the World Hindi Secretariat.

17. Apart from these completed projects, several important projects such as the Civil Services College, the Forensic Science Laboratory, the National Archives and National Library, Mauritius Police Academy, and two Health Projects (Renal Transplant Unit, and an Area Health Centre) are at different stages of implementation.

Other institutions built with India's assistance

18. The Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI) was established in 1976 as a joint venture between India and Mauritius for promoting Indian culture. It also hosts the ICCR Chairs in Sanskrit & Indian Philosophy and Hindi. The Rabindranath Tagore Institute (RTI) was established with Indian assistance in 2000 as a Centre of Studies on Indian culture and traditions.

19. Mauritius also hosts the World Hindi Secretariat, an India-Mauritius bilateral organization to promote Hindi globally, which was constructed with Indian funding and inaugurated during the visit of President Kovind in March 2018.

Cultural Relations and people-to-people ties

20. In 1987, India established the Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC), which is India's largest cultural centre abroad. IGCIC holds classes in Hindustani music, Kathak, Tabla and Yoga for over 2,500 Mauritian students every year.

21. Since 2004, approximately 385 youngsters from Mauritius have participated in 64 batches of the Know India Programme (KIP) of the Ministry of External Affairs. As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', for the first time in August 2022, a 10-member Mauritian youth delegation participated in a National Cadet Corps (NCC) special youth exchange programme in India. Three more delegations

participated thereafter in the NCC Republic Day Camps held in January 2023, January 2024, and January 2025.

ITEC and other scholarships

22. Mauritius is one of the largest beneficiaries of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme and receives about 500 training slots every year for various courses. Since 2002-03, we have trained around 4940 Mauritians under civilian & defence slots of our ITEC program.

23. Under the ICCR India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme, 60 scholarships were extended this year to Mauritian students for pursuing higher education in India. About 200 Mauritian students also enroll in Indian Universities every year on a self-financing basis. Since 2020, India has also been offering scholarships to Mauritians under the e-Vidya Bharti Arogya Bharti (e-VBAB) distance learning project, with 86, 174, 229 and 53 enrollments in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023, respectively. Since 2010, eight Mauritians have availed of the CV Raman Fellowship for African Researchers, which is funded by the Department of Science and Technology, MEA and FICCI.

Indian Community & OCI Card

24. There are 26,357 Indian nationals and 13,198 OCI card holders currently in Mauritius. A special carve-out for OCI Cards for Mauritian nationals with Indian lineage traceable upto the 7th generation, was announced during the State Visit of President Droupadi Murmu in March 2024. Mauritius introduced a visa-free regime in 2004 for Indian tourists visiting Mauritius for up to a month. Mauritians are entitled to gratis visa for visiting India. In pre-Covid times, annually about 80,000 Indian tourists visited Mauritius and 30,000 Mauritian tourists visited India. This number is now slowly getting back to pre-COVID levels. About 2,316 Indian students are currently pursuing higher education in Mauritius in streams such as medicine, hotel management, business studies, etc.

February 2025