

India-Mauritius Relations

India–Mauritius Relations refer to the historical, political, economic, military, social and cultural connections between the Republic of India and the Republic of Mauritius. Diplomatic relations between these two countries were established in 1948. Mauritius maintained contacts with India through successive Dutch, French and British occupation.

The first Prime Minister and the Father of the Mauritian Nation Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam accorded centrality to India in Mauritius' foreign policy, after Mauritius got independence on March 12, 1968.

India-Mauritius Relations - A Brief Background

- From the 1820s, Indian workers started moving to Mauritius to work on sugar plantations and after the abolition of slavery by the British Government in 1834, large numbers of Indian workers began to be brought to Mauritius as indentured labourers
- A brief stopover by Mahatma Gandhi en route to India from South Africa (October 29 to November 15, 1901), while awaiting the departure of his ship SS Nowshera, is still etched in the consciousness of Mauritius
- Barrister Manilal 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

Why is 'Aapravasi Day' observed in Mauritius?

November 2 is observed as the 'Aapravasi Day' in Mauritius. On this day, in 1834, ship 'Atlas' docked in Mauritius carrying the first batch of Indian indentured labourers.

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.

When is the National Day of Mauritius celebrated?

The National Day of Mauritius is celebrated on March 12 (the date of launch of Dandi Salt March) as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian freedom struggle.

Bilateral & Diplomatic Relations Between India and Mauritius

- High-level visits have been one of the significant aspects of bilateral relations between India and Mauritius
- The cultural affinities and long historical ties between the two nations have contributed to strong and cordial relations between the two nations
- Some important Agreements and MoUs signed between the two countries include:
 - Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (1982)
 - Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (1998)

- MoU on Air Services (2005)
 - Agreement on Cooperation in Information Technology (2000)
 - MOU on Cooperation in Biotechnology (2002)
 - MOU on Cooperation against Terrorism (2005)
 - Agreement on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons (2005)
 - MOU on Sports and Youth Affairs (2012)
 - Educational Exchange Programme (2012)
 - MOU on Textiles (2012)
- Both India and Mauritius are a part of various International Organisations and initiatives, including:
 - World Trade Organisation (WTO)
 - Commonwealth of Nations
 - United Nations Organisation (UN)
- Several Indian Public Enterprises are present in Mauritius. The PSUs have contributed to various activities in Mauritius under the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) schemes. These include:
 - Bank of Baroda (BoB)
 - Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)
 - New India Assurance Corporation (NIAC)
 - India Handloom House
 - Telecommunications Consultant India Ltd (TCIL)
 - Indian Oil (Mauritius) Limited (IOML)
 - State Bank of India (Mauritius) Limited
 - Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES)

India & Mauritius Political Relations

- Prime Minister Pravin Jugnauth was invited and visited India for the oath-taking ceremony of the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019
- In 2014, Dr Navinchandra Ramgoolam, the then Mauritius Prime Minister, was the only non-SAARC member which was invited to witness the swearing-in ceremony of the new Government in New Delhi
- The 11th World Hindi Conference (WHC) was held in Mauritius from 18-20 August 2018. The theme of the conference is "Hindi Vishwa Aur Bharateey Sanskriti" (Global Hindi and Indian Culture)

Commercial and Trade Ties - India & Mauritius

- India is one of the largest trading partners and exporter of goods and services to Mauritius since 2007
- A three-year Agreement between the Mangalore Refinery and Petrochemicals Ltd (MRPL) and the State Trading Corporation of Mauritius for the supply of all petroleum requirements of Mauritius was renewed in July 2013
- Given below are the statistics of the bilateral trade between India and Mauritius over the years:

Category	2018-19	2014-15	2013-14
Export from India	US\$ 1160.78 million	US\$ 1.9 billion	US\$ 1.31 billion
Import to India	US\$ 71.59 million	US\$ 21.19 million	US\$ 28.49 million

- Cumulative FDI equity inflows from Mauritius to India during the period April 2000- September 2015 amounted to USD 91.22 billion. Mauritius was the single largest source of FDI into India during the financial year 2014-15, with FDI equity inflows amounting to USD 9.03 billion - 29% of total inflows in 2014-15
- Given below is a list of key products exported by India to Mauritius:

Petroleum Products	Pharmaceuticals	Cereals
Cotton	Shrimps and Prawns	Frozen Boneless Bovine Meat

- Given below is a list of key products India imports from Mauritius:

Vanilla	Instruments and apparatus for medical/surgical sciences	Aluminium alloys
Iron and steel	Precious/semiprecious stones	Photographic and precision instruments

India & Mauritius - Cultural Relations

- The **Indira Gandhi Centre for Indian Culture (IGCIC)** at Phoenix is one of the largest centres of ICCR, which from March 2000, has emerged as an important venue for the promotion of Indian cultural activities in Mauritius
- **Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP)** for 2018-2021 was renewed in March 2018
- To commemorate the 50th anniversary of Mauritius's independence in the year 2018, the High Commission in collaboration with the Ministry of Arts & Culture of Mauritius and ICCR organised an "India Week" in Mauritius from 14-22 April 2018
- **Yoga and traditional Indian systems of health (AYUSH)** are extremely popular among the general public in Mauritius
- The **Mahatma Gandhi Institute (MGI)** was founded as a joint venture between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius for the promotion of Indian culture and education
- The **Rabindranath Tagore Institute** was established with the assistance of the Government of India in 2000 as a Centre of Studies on Indian culture and traditions

Educational Relations

- Mauritius is one of the largest beneficiary countries of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Mauritian nationals have taken advantage of a large number of scholarships offered by India on civilian and defence related training courses at Indian institutions

- Mauritius is the largest beneficiary of Africa Scholarships under IAFS with 97 ICCR scholarships extended annually to Mauritian students for higher education in India
- About 200 Mauritian students enrol themselves in Indian Universities every year on a self-financing basis
- Around 100 ICCR scholarships are extended annually to Mauritian students for higher education in India

Indians in Mauritius

- As per the data released by the Ministry of Home Affairs in September 2019, there are nearly 10,000 Indian nationals in Mauritius
- To increase tourist flow in Mauritius, the Mauritian Government introduced a visa-free regime for Indian tourists visiting Mauritius for a period of up to 30 days do not require a visa, provided they show sufficient funds to cover their stay
- As of September 2019, the number of OCI cardholders in Mauritius is about 8500

Who are OCI Card Holders?

Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) is a form of permanent residency available to people of Indian origin and their spouses which allows them to live and work in India indefinitely.