

High Commission of India

Victoria, Mahé

India-Seychelles Bilateral Relations

Historical background & Diplomatic Links

India's bilateral engagement with Seychelles has evolved over our historical contacts and continuous support to Seychelles for its security, even as our bilateral trade remains modest. Today, India-Seychelles relations are characterized by close friendship, understanding and cooperation. Diplomatic ties were established with Seychelles after its independence in 1976. It was in the year 1770 that a small group of five Indians landed in Seychelles as plantation workers along with seven African slaves and 15 French colonists, and were recorded as the first inhabitants of the Islands. During the British colonial period, Seychelles was governed from the Bombay Presidency for some time, with regular shipping links and flow of goods and essential commodities from India. These trade links facilitated migration of an Indian trading community looking for greener pastures having reached a saturation point in East Africa.

2. When Seychelles attained freedom on 29th June 1976, a contingent from the Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, took part in the Independence Day celebrations. The Indian Mission was established in 1979 in Victoria, with the High Commissioner based in Dar-es-Salaam and concurrently accredited to Seychelles. The first resident High Commissioner was appointed in 1987, while Seychelles opened its resident mission in New Delhi in early 2008.

Visits from India

3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's official visit (10-11 March 2015) to Seychelles was the first Prime Ministerial level visit from India in 34 years. It was a highly successful visit with substantive outcomes: signing of four Agreements/MoUs, inauguration of the Coastal Surveillance Radar System (CSRS) Project, announcement of gifting of a second Dornier aircraft to Seychelles and 3-month gratis visa for Seychelles nationals for travel to India.

4. Previous visits from India include: Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi (1976 & 1981); President Shri R. Venkataraman (1989); Vice-President Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma (1991); Vice-President Shri Bhairon Singh Shekhawat (2003); External Affairs Minister Shri S.M. Krishna (July 2010); Defence

Minister Shri A.K. Antony (July 2010); President Smt. Pratibha Devi Singh Patil (2012).

5. An 8-member delegation led by Lok Sabha Speaker Hon. Sumitra Mahajan attended the 24th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) hosted (8-13 Jan, 2018) by Seychelles.

Visits from Seychelles

6. President Danny Faure, visited India twice in 2018, in March 2018 to attend the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance and in June 2018 for a State Visit. In his former capacity as Vice President, attended the 14th edition of the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit held in New Delhi in February 2014.

7. Former President France Albert Rene visited India in 1980, 1986 and 1990. Thereafter, Vice-President James Alix Michel visited India in 1994, 1996 and 1999 and later as President in July 2005, June 2010, February 2011, February 2012 and August 2015. Vice President Vincent Meriton visited Chennai (11-14 February 2017) to inaugurate a wing in MIOT hospital, Chennai, where Government of Seychelles (GoS) sends their patients for medical treatment.

8. A 12-member Seychelles National Assembly delegation, led by Speaker Patrick Pillay, visited India from 9-13 August 2017. The delegation interacted with the Lok Sabha Speaker and also called on our President, PM and the Vice-President. Leader of the Opposition Hon'ble Wavel Ramkalawan visited India in January 2018 to participate in the PIO Parliamentarians Conference. Recently, Mr. Charles Bastienne, Minister for Agriculture and Fisheries of Seychelles visited Hyderabad from October 23-23, 2018 on an official study tour and Minister for Health Jean Paul Adam visited India from 23-28 September 2019.

Bilateral Agreements/MOUs

9. Several bilateral agreements/MOUs have been signed between the two countries, notable among which are the following: Air Services Agreement (1981); Agreement on Tourism (1996); Trade Agreement (2000); Joint Business Council (2000); MOU on Healthcare (2003); MOU on Defence Cooperation (2003); MOU on Science and Technology (2003); Cultural Exchange Programme (2003-05); Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) (June 2010); MOU for setting up of an Information Technology Centre in Seychelles (February 2010); MOU on Police Research & Training (April-May 2012).

10. 4 MOUs/Agreements were signed during the State Visit of Prime Minister Shri. Narendra Modi to Seychelles in March 2015, including: Renewable Energy Cooperation; MOU for Cooperation in the field of Hydrography; Protocol on Sale of Navigational Charts / Electronic Navigational Charts.

11. During the State visit of the then President James Michel in August 2015, the following MOUs/ Agreements were signed: Bilateral Air Services Agreement; MoU for gifting a second Dornier Maritime Aircraft; Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA); MoU between ICAR and Seychelles Agricultural Agency for Cooperation in Agricultural Research and Education; Protocol on Framework of Cooperation in the field of Blue Economy.

12. During the 1st State Visit of President Danny Faure in June 2018, the following 6 agreements/ MOUs were signed: White Shipping data Agreement; MOU on cyber security (2018); MoU on Small Development Projects, MOU between the Foreign Service Institute India and the Department of Foreign Affairs of Seychelles; Cultural Exchange Program for the years 2018-2022; Twinning Agreement between the Corporation of the City of Panaji (Municipal Corporation) and the City of Victoria of the Republic of Seychelles.

Indian Community

13. History: India has an important link with Seychelles with the first small group of five Indians arriving in Seychelles in 1770. Beginning of the twentieth century onwards, there was a constant flow of Indians, mostly from Tamil Nadu/Puducherry and later from Gujarat, who came in as traders, labourers, construction workers and more recently as professionals.

14. The number of PIOs with Seychelles citizenship is estimated to be around 6000 (or 11% of the population), which is significant in a country with a total population of 100,000. The PIO community is visible in all walks of life and is well known for its professionalism and hard-work.

15. There are about 10,000 Indian citizens holding Gainful Employment Permits, who are mostly workers in the construction sector, shop assistants and a few professionals.

16. The prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award was conferred on Justice D. Karunakaran of the Supreme Court of Seychelles in 2015. He is the second recipient of the PBSA from Seychelles after Dr. V. Ramadoss in 2006.
