

Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S, Kolkata.

India-Mauritius Bilateral Relations

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is a Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Mauritius.

2. India has close, longstanding relations with Mauritius, an island nation in the Western Indian Ocean, owing to historic, demographic and cultural reasons. 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).

3. Mauritius is a former British and French colony that gained independence from British rule in 1968. Under the 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'.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

4. There has been growth in economic and commercial relations between India and Mauritius in recent years, especially in areas such as oil and gas, shipping and maritime industries, renewable energy, offshore projects and service sectors. Since 2005, India has been among the largest trading partners of Mauritius. For the FY2022-2023, Indian exports to Mauritius was USD 462.69 million, Indian imports to Mauritius during the said period was USD 91.77 million and Total trade was USD 554.46 million. Trade has grown in the last 17 years, from USD 206.62 million in 2005-06 to USD 554.46 million in 2022-23. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as under:

The Export-Import statistics as per India's Ministry of Commerce data bank from 2019-20 to 2023-24 are as follows:

The Export-Import statistics from 2019-20 to 2023-24

(US Dollar Million)

S. No		2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
1.	Export	662.13	422.91	714.85	462.69	778.03
2.	Import	30.41	43.84	71.88	91.77	73.63
3.	Total Trade	692.54	466.75	786.73	554.46	851.66

(Source: Doc, Ministry of Commerce & Industry)

5. 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.

6. **FDI:** Cumulative FDI worth USD 161 billion came from Mauritius to India in the two decades from 2000 - 2022 (26% of total FDI inflows into India), thanks largely to the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC). Since the signing of the DTAC amendment in 2016, FDI inflows from Mauritius have dropped from USD 15.72 billion in 2016-17 to USD 6.13 billion in 2022-23, with Mauritius becoming India's third largest source of FDI. In Mauritius, Indian companies have invested over USD 200 million in the last five years.

7. **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 (GEC) and provisions related to Auto- Trigger Safeguard Mechanism (ATSM) to the CECPA. Under the CECPA, India's exports to Mauritius amounted to USD 1.1 million in 2021, USD 1.8 million in 2022 and USD 1.7 million in 2023 (Jan-Aug) comprising mainly textiles, quartz slabs and spices. Mauritian exports to India under CECPA stood at USD 1 million in 2022 and USD 3.7 million in 2023 (Jan-Aug), comprising mainly medical devices and apparel.

8. **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.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation:

➤ Several Agreements/ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) have been signed between India and Mauritius for cooperation in the fields of defence, economic and commercial links, technical cooperation and culture. The leadership of the two countries enjoys a high level of trust and mutual understanding, which is reflected in the continued high-level political engagement. These special ties have also resulted in uniquely close cooperation in maritime security, development partnership, capacity-building, cooperation in international fora and bilateral technical assistance through deputation of Indian experts to GOM.

➤ India extended a USD 500 million Line of Credit (LoC) in 2017 to Mauritius to finance social/infrastructure projects. In October 2021, an LoC of USD 190 million and USD 10 million grant was approved by India for Phase III of the Metro Project. In August 2022, another LoC worth USD 300 million and a grant of USD 25 million was announced. A MoU on Community Development Projects was signed in January 2022 to undertake around 100 small, people-oriented projects in Mauritius.

➤ Other completed 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.

- Since 2004, approximately 261 youngsters from Mauritius have participated in 52 batches of the Know India Programme (KIP) of the Ministry of External Affairs. As part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', for the very first time in August 2022, the National Cadet Corps (NCC) of India invited a 10-member Mauritian youth delegation to India for a special youth exchange programme. Another 10-member delegation participated in the NCC Republic Day Camp held in January 2023. A reciprocal visit by Indian NCC cadets to Mauritius is on the cards.
- 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.
- The close bonds are also 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) and the World Hindi Secretariat, a bilateral organization for the global promotion of Hindi.
- There are approximately 17,403 Indian nationals and 11,600 OCI card holders currently in Mauritius. A special carve-out for OCI Cards for Mauritian nationals, with Indian lineage traceable upto the 6th generation, was announced during the 14th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in January 2017. Mauritius introduced a visa-free regime in 2004 for Indian tourists visiting Mauritius for a month. Mauritians are entitled to *gratis* E-tourist visa for visiting India. In pre-Covid times, annually about 80,000 Indian tourists visited Mauritius and 30,000 Mauritian tourists visited India. About 3,100 Indian students are currently pursuing their higher education and internship in Mauritius in various streams, including medicine, hotel management and catering, business studies, etc.

Source: www.mea.gov.in