

India-Seychelles Relations

Indo-Seychelles relations have been characterised by close friendship, understanding and cooperation. Diplomatic ties were established with Seychelles after its independence in 1976, but the links date back even earlier. An Indian Mission was established in Victoria in 1979 with the High Commissioner based in Dar-es-Salaam concurrently accredited to Seychelles. The first resident High Commissioner was placed in Victoria in 1987, while Seychelles opened its resident mission in New Delhi in early 2008 with Mr. Dick Esparon as its first High Commissioner.

ITEC Assistance:

India has been extending generous assistance since early 1980's to Seychelles under ITEC programme in the civilian, defence and other fields and around 560 Seychellois have so far benefited from various training courses under the programme. At present, there are six defence officers and one civilian officer on deputation to the Government of Seychelles under the ITEC Programme. During the year 2010-11, 6 Civilians and 33 Defence personnel from Seychelles availed of ITEC scholarships and attended/attending various training programmes in India.

Bilateral agreements:

Bilateral co-operation in various fields is governed by the Joint Commission (JCM) on Economic and Technical Co-operation. The seventh JCM was held in Seychelles in May, 2010. Other bilateral agreements are - a Cultural Exchange Programme (2003-05); an Air Services Agreement (1981); an Agreement on Tourism (1996); a Trade Agreement (2000); a Jt. Business Council (2000); and MOUs on Healthcare, Defence and Science and Tech (2003). Revised Bilateral Air Services Agreement is under consideration. Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) (June, 2010). Other important Memoranda for Understanding (MOUs) were for - setting up of an Information Technology Centre in Seychelles (Feb 2010); deployment of a maritime reconnaissance aircraft in Seychelles (Jan 2011), and an MoU on the stationing of an Indian Navy's Dornier aircraft in Seychelles (Feb 2011). Air Seychelles started its weekly operations to Chennai from 15th November, 2010, which have since been suspended w.e.f. June 1, 2011.

VIP/VIP Visits:

There have been high level exchanges from both sides since Seychelles achieved its independence. President France Albert Rene visited India several times. President James Michel paid his second State visit to India in June, 2010. He again visited New Delhi in February, 2011 to participate in the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit.

On 15th November 2011, Jean Paul Adam, Foreign Minister of Seychelles attended the 11th Council of Ministers meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC) at Bengaluru when Seychelles was unanimously re-elected as a member of the IOR-ARC.

President James Michel had a bilateral meeting with Vice President Hamid Ansari in Perth on 28.10.2011 in the margins of CHOGM.

From India, Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi (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).

Defence Links:

There is extensive cooperation between India and Seychelles in the field of defence and security. Most of the senior officers in the SPDF and in the SCG have attended various courses in Indian defence establishments. India has provided defence equipment, and gifted a naval patrol vessel 'INS Tarmugli' in February 2005. Indian Naval ships do make frequent port calls at Port Victoria. Indian Navy is actively engaged in patrolling the Seychelles EEZ against Somali pirate activities. An Indian Naval Dornier aircraft is currently stationed in Seychelles to assist Seychelles in its anti-piracy operations. Indian Naval Ship Sukanya, which was in Seychelles on anti-piracy mission, participated in the Carnival at Victoria in March, 2011.

Indian Naval Ship Shardul visited Seychelles on EEZ surveillance mission from 4-6 June, 2011. INS re-visited from 17-19 June, 2011 and its platoon participated in the National Day Parade on June 18. Indian Naval ship Sarvekshak visited Port Victoria on 7th November 2011 as a part of its deployment to Seychelles and East Africa, conducted hydrographic survey of Aldabra island.

Other Assistance:

India has been providing Seychelles financial aid as well as material assistance in the form of books for the University of Seychelles and pharmaceutical products. During the frequent port calls by Indian Navy vessels, various types of goods, including sports equipment, medicines, provision items, etc. are gifted to Seychelles. Victoria Hospital in Seychelles is connected with major hospitals in India under PAN-African satellite tele-medicine system. Under the PAN-African tele-education system, the Seychelles University is linked with Amity University in NOIDA and the University of Madras. IT Centre for Excellence, set up in Victoria with GOI assistance was inaugurated in April, 2011.

Trade & Commerce

Total Imports from India (2009) : US\$ 28 million

Total Exports to India (2009) : US\$.03 mn

Indian Community:

India has an important link with Seychelles in the form of Indian nationals who have been among the earliest inhabitants of this island, mostly from Tamil Nadu and of late from Gujarat, who came as labour, petty traders, construction workers and more recently as professionals. The Indian community comprises Seychellois of Indian origin in their first or second generations or even older. Together they constitute over 7% of the total population. A South Indian Hindu temple called Lord Navasakthi Vinayagar Temple is situated in Victoria. Hindu Council of Seychelles celebrates Holi, Janmashtami, Dusshera and Diwali every year by organizing cultural shows, display of fireworks and distribution of sweets.

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