

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 1979 in Victoria 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. Presently H.E. Mr. Waven William is Seychelles' High Commissioner in India since February 2012.

Bilateral Agreements:

To facilitate cooperation further, a number of bilateral agreements/MOUs have been signed between the two countries, namely, Cultural Exchange Programme (2003-05); an Air Services Agreement (1981); an Agreement on Tourism (1996); a Trade Agreement (2000); a Jt. Business Council (2000); MOUs on Healthcare, Defence and Science and Tech (2003); Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) (June 2010); Memoranda for Understanding (MOU) for - setting up of an Information Technology Centre in Seychelles (February 2010); MoU on the stationing of an Indian Navy's Dornier aircraft in Seychelles (February 2011); an MoU signed for supply of a new Dornier aircraft to Seychelles in Feb 2012; and an MoU for supply of a coastal surveillance radar system in the outer islands. In addition, MoU on police research/training and MoU for cooperation in youth and sports affairs were signed during our President's visit to Seychelles in the month of April-May 2012.

Exchange of Visits:

There have been high level exchanges from both sides since Seychelles achieved its independence.

From Seychelles – Vice President Danny Faure attended 14th edition of the Delhi Sustainable Development Summit which was held from 6 – 8 February 2014 in New Delhi. The theme of the Summit organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) was 'Attaining Energy, Water and Food Security for All'.

Seychelles Minister for Natural Resources and Industry Mr. Peter Sinon attended the Asia-Africa AgriBusiness Forum 2014 which was held in New Delhi from 4-6 February 2014.

The Indian Naval Ship Trishul, visited Port Victoria from 29 April to 7 May 2014 as part of its mission to carry out surveillance of Seychelles' Exclusive Economic Zone.

The Seychelles Peoples' Defence Forces (SPDF) has received a donation of two military vehicles from the Indian government during the ceremony held at the SPDF Headquarters in Mahe on 3rd June 2014.

From India – Past visits from India are: 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); and President Pratibha Devising Patil (2012).

Development Assistance:

During former President Smt. Pratibha Devising Patil's visit to Seychelles, India announced US\$ 50 million as Lince of Credit and US\$ 25 million as a grant to the Government of Seychelles. India has been extending generous assistance since early 1980's to Seychelles under ITEC programme in the civilian, defence and other fields and around 600 Seychellois have so far benefited from various training courses under the programme. At present, there are a number of officers from India on deputation to the Government of Seychelles under the ITEC Programme.

India has also been providing Seychelles with development assistance in the form of financial aid as well as material assistance. Victoria Hospital in Seychelles is connected with major hospitals in India under PAN-African satellite tele-medicine system. IT Centre for Excellence, set up in Victoria with GOI assistance was inaugurated in April, 2011.

Economic & Commerce:

Though the economic and commercial cooperation at the moment is small, there exist significant scope for cooperation in this field. There is interest on both sides to increase economic and commercial cooperation.

At the moment Seychelles' main items of import from India are Rice, Medicines, Cement, Linen of cotton, Instruments and appliances for medical, surgical, dental etc. Other food products includes cost of Aircraft gift to Seychelles government, vehicles and associated transport equipments. The trade figures are as follows:

Total Imports from India in 2013 : US\$ 69.9 million (approximately)

Total Exports to India in 2013 : US\$ 1.6 million (approximately)

One major investment from an Indian company has been by M/s. Bharti Airtel Telecom group which has invested over US\$25 million and set up Airtel mobile telephone and internet services in Seychelles since 1998. Bank of Baroda has been maintaining a successful overseas branch in Seychelles since 1978 and is doing a profitable business.

M/s Telecommunications Consultants of India Limited (TCIL) was awarded a contract worth 2 Crore in July 2009 through Mauritius Telecom for supply of installation materials and cabling works at Ephelia Resorts, Mahe, Seychelles.

M/s Polaris Software Lab of India is engaged in developing the banking services in Seychelles.

M/s TATA company has so far supplied most of the fleet of bus for Seychelles capital Victoria's city bus requirements for plying to other regions of Mahé Island. The Ashok Leyland's State-of-the-art first consignment of a fleet of 15 buses arrived from India during December 2013 and are being deployed by the Seychelles Public Transport Corporation (SPTC) to start operation from January 2014 onwards.

Cultural Relations

There is also significant cultural cooperation between the two countries. During the last few decades, exchange of cultural troupes has been part of the cultural relations. Some of the recent cultural exchanges are as follows:

The first edition of Seychelles-India Day 2013 was celebrated in Victoria, Seychelles between 4 and 6 October 2013. Top Bollywood stars, play back singers, leading choreographer, Culinary Expert and Musicians from India showcased their talents together with the local artistes in the celebration. Dance workshop, Food workshop, Music concert and dance performance etc., were conducted by these celebrities to enthral the Seychellois and India community on those three days with the culmination of grand gala evening show focusing on the '100 years of Bollywood' on the 6th October 2013.

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 later on from Gujarat, who came as petty traders, labour, 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 around 7% of the total population. A South Indian Hindu temple named as 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. Seychelles Tamil Mandram also actively organize cultural events, talk shows, music concerts etc. to synchronise with important days according to Tamil Calendar.

Useful Resources:

For more information and latest updates please visit
High Commission of India, Victoria, Seychelles website:
<http://www.hciseychelles.com/>

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