

India-Zambia Bilateral Relations

India and Zambia enjoy warm and cordial relations. Over these last several decades, India has come to be seen as a reliable partner and friend by successive Zambian leadership. The relationship continues to be driven by mutual respect and is based on a spirit of partnership for mutual benefit. India was among the first few countries to establish diplomatic relations with Zambia just after its independence in 1964. The year 2024 marked the 60th year of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

High-level visits/meetings

High level visits have been a feature of India- Zambia historical bilateral relationship.

Visits from Zambia :

- (i) President Dr. Kenneth Kaunda visited India more than ten times including as a freedom fighter in 1957 and on a State visit in 1967. He also paid a private visit to India in June 2012.
- (ii) President Mr. Frederick Chiluba paid a State visit in October 1993.
- (iii) President Mr. Levy Mwanawasa paid a State visit in April 2003.
- (iv) President Mr. Michael Chilufya Sata, accompanied by First Lady Mrs. Christine Kaseba, paid a private visit in March 2012.
- (v) Vice President Dr. Guy Scott led a high-power official and business delegation, comprising Ministers of Commerce, Trade & Industry, Gender and Child Development and Deputy Minister of Mining to the 9th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held in New Delhi in March 2013 at which Zambia was a Focus Country.
- (vi) Vice President Mrs. Inonge M. Wina, accompanied by Minister of Agriculture and Deputy Ministers of Health and Foreign Affairs, represented Zambia at the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in October 2015.
- (vii) President Mr. Edgar Chagwa Lungu paid a State visit to India from 20-22 August 2019. Seven MoUs for cooperation in the areas of Defence, Mining, Health, Art & Culture, Election matters, among others were signed during the visit.
- (viii) Vice President Ms. W.K. Mutale Nalumango led a delegation, including Elias Mubanga, Minister of Small and Medium Enterprises Development of the Republic of Zambia, to the 17th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership held on 19-20 July, 2022 in New Delhi.
- (ix) Agriculture Minister Mr. Reuben Mtolo Phiri visited India to attend the Global Millets Conference held in New Delhi in March 2023. He also met Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

- (x) Defence Minister Mr. Ambrose Lwiji Lufuma visited India twice to attend Aero India 2023 and Aero India 2025 held in Bengaluru and also held bilateral meeting with Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh.

Visits from India:

- (i) Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi visited in 1964 [as I&B Minister] and in 1970 and 1976.
- (ii) President Shri V.V. Giri paid a State visit in 1974
- (iii) President Shri Sanjiva Reddy paid a State visit in 1981
- (iii) Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi visited in 1986
- (iv) President Shri R. Venkataraman paid a State visit in 1989
- (v) Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari visited in January 2010
- (vi) Shri G. M. Siddeshwara, Minister of State for Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises visited Zambia in July 2015, as Prime Minister's Special Envoy to invite Zambian President for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit held in New Delhi in October 2015.
- (vii) President Shri Ram Nath Kovind paid a State visit in April 2018. He held bilateral talks involving a wide range of issues with his Zambian counterpart on 11th April 2018 at State House followed by signing of four MoUs.
- (viii) Shri V. Muraleedharan, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Zambia from 14-15 October 2019 and inaugurated the CII-EXIM Bank Southern Africa Regional Conclave in Lusaka. He also called on President Edgar Chagwa Lungu and met Foreign Minister Joseph Malanji.
- (ix) Shri Kirti Vardhan Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs and Environment, Forest and Climate Change visited Zambia from 04-07 November 2024 to co-chair the 6th Session of India- Zambia Joint Permanent Commission.

Parliamentary exchanges

Dr. Patrick Matibini, Speaker, National Assembly of Zambia paid an official visit to India in December 2018. Ms. Nelly Butete Mutti, Speaker of National Assembly of Zambia led a nine-member delegation to India for an orientation visit to Lok Sabha in February 2023. Mr Roy Ngulube, Clerk of the National Assembly undertook an orientation visit to Lok Sabha in April 2024.

Institutional mechanisms

The 6th Session of Joint Permanent Commission at Ministerial level took place on 6th November 2024 in Lusaka, after a gap of 19 years, wherein both sides undertook a comprehensive review of entire gamut of bilateral relations. JPC discussed the cooperation in the areas of agriculture, education, science & technology, energy, culture, housing and urban development, finance,

development partnership, training scholarship and capacity building, defence, mines and mineral resources, transport & communications, water development and sanitation, disaster management, healthcare, cooperative & SMEs etc. The 4th round of Foreign Office Consultations was held on 8th August 2024 in Lusaka.

Development Cooperation

Zambia is among the few African countries, which considerably benefited from India's development cooperation programme. India has provided EXIM Bank credits, railway wagons and flood relief grants and lines of credit besides fully paid scholarships for various higher education courses and ITEC training slots as well as specialized capacity building programmes under IAFS. In 1979 and then in 1982, India extended government and EXIM Bank credits to Zambia totalling Rs. 25 crores. In 1989, India provided railways wagons costing about Rs. 8 crores to Zambia under the Africa Fund. Other assistance such as Maruti vehicles were given to Zambia News Agency and emergency medical supplies. During President Mwanawasa's visit to India in April 2003, further assistance was provided and India waived off the inter-governmental credit amounting to about \$3 mn. Pan-Africa E-network Project was implemented at three sites in Zambia in 2009: VVIP Centre for Video Conferencing at the State House, Lusaka; Patient End Location at the UTH, Lusaka; and Learning Centre for tele-education at the Mulungushi University in Kabwe.

Lines of Credit

India provided Lines of Credit (LoC) of US\$ 10 million in 2003, for general purpose, including – purchase of TATA buses, motor vehicles, motor cycles and vocational tool kits. India extended LoC of US\$ 50 million for 120 MW Itezhi Tezhi Hydropower Project (ITHP), a joint venture project of Zambia's State Power utility ZESCO and TATA Power of India. The project was commissioned in March 2016. Out of LoC of US\$ 50 million for the project, Zambian side had utilized US\$ 29 million.

The construction of 650 rural pre-fabricated health posts was announced in 2011 for which an LOC of US\$ 50 million was signed in 2013. Construction of the health posts commenced in 2014. An additional LOC of US\$ 18 million was approved in 2017 to complete the project. Out of LoC of US\$ 68 million, Zambia had utilised about US\$ 60 million. 563 health posts have already been completed and are operational.

Buyer's Credit

M/s Afcons a subsidiary of M/s Shapoorji Pallonji group, completed the US\$ 289.5 million Lusaka City Road De-congestion Project. The project was financed by EXIM Bank of India under Buyer's Credit of US\$ 245.74 million and

remaining part was funded by the government of Zambia.

Grants / Humanitarian Aid

In fulfillment of the announcement of Rashtrapatiji during his state visit to Zambia in April 2018, medicines worth US\$ 2 million were handed over to Ministry of Health in December 2019. To augment Zambia's fight against COVID-19 pandemic, essential medicines including HCQ, weighing 6000 kgs were donated to Zambia in May 2020. As announced by Hon'ble Prime Minister during H.E. President Lungu's visit to India in August 2019, 1000 MT of non-Basmati rice was delivered to Zambia in October 2020. To help Zambia fight against cholera, humanitarian assistance weighing approx. 3.5 tonnes comprising chlorine tablets and ORS sachets was handed over in February 2024. India also provided humanitarian assistance of 2500 MT of maize in December 2024 to help Zambia in its fight against drought.

Bilateral Trade

Bilateral trade has been growing steadily and has immense potential of further increase in various areas, particularly agriculture, mining, pharmaceuticals and petroleum products etc. The figure of bilateral trade in the last three years is as below :

(US\$ million)

Year	Exports by India	Imports by India	Total Trade
2021-22	340.00	114.70	454.70
2022-23	280.68	184.93	465.61
2023-24	244.31	204.08	448.39

India's export items include drugs and pharmaceuticals, machinery and instruments, transportation equipment, cotton yarn and fabrics, plastic, rubber, chemicals, and electronic goods. India's imports from Zambia include non-ferrous metals, ores (copper and cobalt), semi-precious stones and raw cotton.

Zambia signed the Letter of Intent to utilize Duty Free Tariff Preference Scheme (DFTP) in May 2010 and in April 2012. Zambia was notified as one of the beneficiaries of the scheme.

Indian Investment

Zambia, with its rich natural resources, has become an important destination for Indian investments particularly in the mining sector. India's pledged investment is valued over US\$ 5 billion and hence, India is one of the leading investors in Zambia. Prominent Indian Investments in Zambia include, Indo-Zambia Bank, M/s Vedanta Resources Ltd, M/s Maamba Energy, M/s Bharti

Airtel, M/s TATA, M/s R. J. Corporation, M/s Mount Meru, M/s Yash Pharmaceuticals, Neelkantha Group of Companies etc. In addition, there are several other Indian companies who have made sizeable investments in various fields of the Zambian economy and trade. Trade Kings, a company owned by Zambians of Indian origin, is among the successful ventures in Zambia.

Indo- Zambia bank was established in 1984, as a joint venture between Government of Zambia and three Indian public sector banks i.e. Bank of India, Bank of Baroda and Central Bank of India. The three Indian PSUs hold 60% equity with the remaining 40% held by the Zambian government. It is a milestone in India's relations with Zambia, and an example of a mutually beneficial, solid joint venture partnership that has withstood the test of time

Cooperation in Culture

An ICCR sponsored 'Vande Bharatam Rekha Dance Group' also visited Zambia in June 2022 and performed in Lusaka and Ndola. A six-member group visited India in July 2022 under the Generation Next Programme of ICCR. A 20 member Zambian cultural troupe participated in the Surajkund Mela from 03-19 February 2023. An MoU on establishment of Chair of Indian Studies at University of Zambia was signed on 3rd April 2023. A 07 member Carnatic Cultural Troupe sponsored Indian Council For Cultural Relations visited Zambia in August 2023 and performed during 'India Week' celebrations. A 15 member Zambian cultural troupe participated in the Surajkund Mela in February 2024. A 07 member Gujarati Folk dance group 'Nrtiyavali' visited Zambia in June 2024 and performed during 'UTSAV 2024' organised by Lusaka Indian Ladies Association in collaboration with the High Commission. An 18-member Zambian cultural troupe participated in the Surajkund Mela 2025.

Indian Community

Zambia hosts a large and vibrant Indian community, many of them had settled down in Zambia decades ago. It is estimated that about 25,000 PIOs/OCIs are living in Zambia, a majority of whom have obtained Zambian/other foreign nationality. A large section of PIOs/NRIs are from Gujarat state. It is also estimated that about 5000 NRIs are working in Zambia. Zambians of Indian origin have played a significant role in Zambia's economy, especially in trade, industry, pharmaceuticals, edible oils, hospitality and transport sectors. The Indian community is also becoming more engaged in precious and semi-precious stones, mining, agriculture, horticulture and chemicals. During President Chiluba's regime, two persons of Indian origin were appointed as the Cabinet Ministers: Mr. Suresh Desai, Minister of Agriculture and Mr. Dipak Patel, Minister of Commerce, Trade & Industry who continued to hold the same portfolio in President Mwanawasa's government. In March 2019, Ms. Abha Patel became the first person of Indian origin to be appointed as a Judge in Zambia. Mr. Ashu Sagar is the President of Zambia Association of Manufacturers (ZAM) and also a

board member of Zambia Development Agency (ZDA). In recent years, the renewed rise of India's economic and commercial engagement has seen a visible growth in the number of Indian professionals especially in Indian owned enterprises. The Indian community has been actively engaged in organisation of various business and cultural events.

April 2025
