

### 3. India-Mauritius Relationship – International Relations

Transcript of Special briefing by MEA on State visit of Prime Minister of Mauritius to India (September 11, 2025). India and Mauritius have elevated their deep-rooted historical and cultural ties to an 'Enhanced Strategic Partnership,' crucial for India's security vision in the Indian Ocean. This partnership faces contemporary challenges, including declining FDI after tax treaty changes and countering China's growing regional influence.

#### Mauritius Prime Minister's Visit to India (September 2025)

##### Key Agreements and MoUs Signed

1. **Science and Technology** – An MoU was signed to promote innovation in biotechnology, environmental science, and renewable energy.
2. **Oceanographic Research** – A collaboration was established between CSIR-NIO (India) and the Mauritius Oceanography Institute to advance marine research and sustainable fisheries.
3. **Public Service Reforms** – An MoU between Karmayogi Bharat and Mauritius's Public Service Ministry for governance reforms and capacity building.
4. **Power Sector** – An agreement to cooperate on renewable energy projects (solar and wind) and improve energy infrastructure.
5. **Community Development** – India extended grant assistance for Phase II of small development projects in Mauritius, focusing on health, education, and sanitation.
6. **Hydrography and Space** – MoUs were renewed/signed for cooperation in maritime safety, hydrographic resources, and satellite tracking.

##### Strategic and Security Cooperation Announcements

**MAHASAGAR Vision** – India announced its new vision for the Global South, "MAHASAGAR" (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions), which will focus on trade for development, capacity building, and mutual security.

**Enhanced Strategic Partnership** – Both nations decided to elevate their bilateral relationship to an 'Enhanced Strategic Partnership'.

##### Economic Cooperation and Reforms

**Investment and DTAC** – The Mauritius PM sought Indian investment, proposed reforms to reduce bureaucracy, and discussed amendments to the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC) and the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA).

**Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC)** – This is an agreement between two countries to prevent the same income from being taxed twice, thereby promoting cross-border trade and investment.

##### Infrastructure and Diaspora Engagement

**Infrastructure Projects** – Over 20 India-funded projects were inaugurated, including a Civil Services College. India also announced cooperation in building a new Parliament building in Mauritius.

**Diaspora and OCI Cards** – PM Modi announced Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) cards for the Mauritian PM and his spouse, extending eligibility to the 7th generation of Indian-origin Mauritians.

**Girmitiya Heritage** – Both leaders emphasized the preservation and promotion of the heritage of the "Girmitiyas"—the indentured labourers who migrated from India in the 19th century.

##### Naval Cooperation and Cultural Exchanges

**Naval Presence** – Indian naval ship INS Imphal participated in Mauritius' National Day celebrations, where the Indian PM was the Chief Guest.

**Cultural Engagement** – The visit included participation in traditional ceremonies like Geet Gawai (a Bhojpuri cultural performance) and paying homage to Mauritius's founding fathers.

#### India-Mauritius Relations – A Deep-Rooted Partnership

##### Historical and Cultural Ties

**Indian Diaspora** – Nearly 70% of Mauritius's population is of Indian origin, creating a unique and deep-rooted cultural connection.

**Colonial History** – The first Indians arrived from Puducherry during French rule. However, the majority arrived as indentured workers ("Girmitiyas") between 1834 and the early 1900s under British rule.

**Gandhi's Influence** – Mahatma Gandhi's visit in 1901 was pivotal in inspiring the community towards political empowerment. Mauritius's National Day (March 12) poignantly coincides with the anniversary of Gandhi's Dandi March.

## Diplomatic Relations and India as a "First Responder"

**Early Engagement** – Diplomatic relations were established in 1948, even before Mauritius's independence in 1968.

**Reliable Partner** – India has consistently acted as a "first responder" for Mauritius during crises, providing aid during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Wakashio oil spill (2020), and Cyclone Chido (2024).

## Economic and Trade Relations

**CECPA** – The Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (2021) was India's first such trade agreement with an African country.

**Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** – Historically, Mauritius has been a top source of FDI into India, accounting for 25% of total inflows since 2000. However, these flows have declined since the 2016 amendment to the DTAA, which was aimed at curbing tax evasion.

## Development Assistance and Key Projects

India has funded and supported several high-profile infrastructure projects in Mauritius, including the Metro Express Project, a Social Housing Project, and the development of an airstrip and jetty on Agaléga Island.

## Defence and Maritime Cooperation

**SAGAR Vision** – Mauritius is central to India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision, acting as a "Sentinel of the Western Indian Ocean."

**Agaléga Island** – India's development of infrastructure on Agaléga Island significantly enhances Mauritius's defense capabilities and boosts regional maritime security and disaster response.

**Information Sharing** – Mauritius has access to India's Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) for real-time maritime data sharing.

## The Strategic Importance of Mauritius for India

**Countering China's Influence** – A strong partnership with Mauritius is crucial for countering China's increasing strategic presence in the Indian Ocean, often referred to as its "String of Pearls" strategy.

**Maritime Security Hub** – The naval infrastructure on Agaléga Island and the network of coastal surveillance radars enhance India's ability to monitor the Western Indian Ocean.

**Gateway to Africa** – Mauritius's bilingual (English and French) population and its strong trade links make it a strategic gateway for India's engagement with Francophone Africa.

**Support on Chagos Archipelago** – India supports Mauritius's sovereignty claim over the Chagos Archipelago, a territory disputed with the UK.

## Key Challenges in the Bilateral Relationship

**Declining FDI from Mauritius** – The 2016 amendment to the DTAA has significantly reduced Mauritius's attractiveness as a conduit for FDI into India.

**Trade Imbalance** – The trade relationship is heavily skewed in India's favor, with Indian exports far exceeding its imports from Mauritius.

**Growing Chinese Influence** – China has expanded its economic footprint in Mauritius through an FTA and significant investments, posing a strategic challenge to India's influence.

**Security Threats** – Both nations face common maritime security threats like piracy, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing.

**Project Delays and Political Sensitivities** – Some India-funded projects have faced delays, and there are domestic political sensitivities in Mauritius regarding the potential military use of the Agaléga Island facilities.

## The Way Forward – Strengthening the Partnership

**Economic Deepening** – Expand the scope of CECPA to include new sectors like IT, fintech, and renewable energy.

**Enhancing Maritime Security** – Increase joint naval exercises, training, and real-time data sharing through the IFC-IOR.

**Timely Project Implementation** – Address bureaucratic hurdles to ensure the timely completion of India-funded infrastructure and community projects.

**Boosting Diaspora Ties** – Continue to strengthen people-to-people connections through cultural exchanges, tourism, and diaspora-friendly policies like the expanded OCI card eligibility.

**Countering Malign Influence** – Maintain high-level political engagement to ensure Mauritius remains a trusted strategic partner and to counter any potential anti-India narratives.

**Conclusion – A Partnership for Regional Stability**

India and Mauritius share a unique and deep-rooted relationship built on historical, cultural, and strategic ties. By proactively addressing challenges in trade and security and by enhancing cooperation in development and technology, both nations can further solidify their "Enhanced Strategic Partnership," ensuring mutual growth and contributing to the stability of the entire Indian Ocean Region.

Source - [https://www.mea.gov.in/media-](https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/40130/Transcript_of_Special_briefing_by_MEA_on_State_visit_of_Prime_Minister_of_Mauritius_to_India_September_11_2025#-~-text=This%20visit%20of%20the%20Prime.government%2C%20and%20a%20business%20delegation.)

[briefings.htm?dtl/40130/Transcript of Special briefing by MEA on State visit of Prime Minister of Mauritius to India September 11 2025# - ~ -](https://www.mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/40130/Transcript_of_Special_briefing_by_MEA_on_State_visit_of_Prime_Minister_of_Mauritius_to_India_September_11_2025#-~-text=This%20visit%20of%20the%20Prime.government%2C%20and%20a%20business%20delegation.)

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