



India-Seychelles

Why in News

Recently, a virtual meet was held between the **Prime Minister of India** and the **President of Seychelles**.



Key Points //

▪ Events at the Meet:

◦ Joint Inauguration:

- Inaugurated the **new magistrates' court building in Mahé** constructed with a USD 3.5-million, a **1 MW solar power plant** built at a cost of USD3.4 million, and **10 community development projects** in Seychelles.
 - All the projects were built by the **help of India**.
- India has so far taken up **29 small people-oriented development projects in Seychelles**, while the 1MW solar project was built in addition to installing solar systems at **146 government buildings and domestic households**.
- The **solar plant will meet the electricity needs of around 400 houses round the year**.

◦ Fast Patrol Vehicle:

- India handed over a **fast patrol vessel (PS Zoroaster)** to the island nation.
- The 48.9-metre patrol boat was built by **Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineering** (under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence) at a **cost of Rs. 100 crore** and has a **top speed of 35 knots** and an **endurance of 1,500 nautical miles**.
- The vessel will be **used for multi-purpose operations**, such as patrolling, anti-smuggling and anti-poaching operations, and search and rescue.
- India **gifted similar vessels to the Seychelles in 2005, 2014 and 2016**.

▪ **India's Stand:**

- Seychelles is central to India's vision of [Security and Growth for All in the Region \(SAGAR\)](#).
- India is **honoured to be a partner of Seychelles** in the development of its security capabilities and in meeting its infrastructural and developmental needs.

▪ **Seychelles Stand:**

- **India is a reliable and trusted partner.**
- India's precious donation of 50,000 doses of [Covid-19 vaccines](#) had **helped Seychelles in moving towards the goals of achieving 70% herd immunity** by the end of April 2021 and opening up the economy.
 - Seychelles was the **first country** to receive the Covid vaccine from India.

India-Seychelles Relation

▪ **Background:**

- **Diplomatic ties** were established with Seychelles after its independence in **1976**.
- When Seychelles attained freedom, a contingent from the **Indian Naval Ship, INS Nilgiri, took part in the Independence Day celebrations**.
 - Since then the tradition of Indian military participation at the Seychelles National Day celebrations has continued till date.
- An **Indian Mission was established in 1979 in Victoria**, Seychelles with the High Commissioner based in [Dar-es-Salaam](#) (Tanzania) and concurrently accredited to Seychelles.
- The **first resident High Commissioner was appointed in 1987**, while **Seychelles opened its resident mission in New Delhi in early 2008**.

▪ **Economic Relation:**

- India exported goods worth USD 84.49 million and imported goods worth USD 5.27 million from Seychelles during the financial year 2018-19.
- [Tax Information Exchange Agreement \(TIEA\)](#) between India and Seychelles was signed in August 2015. Seychelles is also keen to sign the [Double Tax Avoidance Agreement \(DTAA\)](#).

▪ **Energy & Environment:**

- [Blue Economy](#) Protocol between India and Seychelles was signed in August 2015.
 - Recently, India has been [accepted as an observer of the Indian Ocean Commission](#), of which Seychelles is a member.
- With the ratification of the [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#) Framework Agreement in September 2017, Seychelles has officially become one of the Founding Members of ISA.

- **ISA is an Indian Initiative.**

▪ **Cultural Relations:**

- With a significant presence of [Indian Diaspora](#) in Seychelles, cultural contacts between the two countries have been primarily community-driven with support from the two governments.
- At the initiative of prominent **Person of Indian Origin (PIO)** associations in Seychelles, several Indian cultural troupes regularly visit Seychelles for performance.
- In June 2018, **Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP)** was signed with Seychelles to mark the friendship and goodwill between the two countries.
- **Indian Community:**
 - The number of PIOs with Seychelles citizenship is estimated to be around 10,000 (or **11% of the population**), **which is significant in a country with a total population of 96,000 (April 2019)**.
 - There are about **10,000 Indian citizens** holding Gainful Employment Permits, who are mostly workers in the construction sector, shop assistants and a few professionals.
- **Defence:**
 - India and Seychelles have an elaborate architecture of defence and security cooperation that has deepened over the years with the growing piracy menace and other economic offences in the strategic [Indian Ocean region](#).
 - **India gifted and installed six coastal surveillance radar systems in Seychelles** in 2015 enabling better coastal security for Seychelles.
 - The **Seychelles government has leased the Assumption Island to the [Indian Navy](#)** to build an overseas base of operations there.
 - Developing infrastructure on **Assumption Island in Seychelles is a key piece in India's proactive maritime strategy** as it counters China's moves in the Indian Ocean region.
 - Developing its infrastructure is being regarded as a "strategic asset" in India's arsenal.

SAGAR

- Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) was **launched in 2015. It is India's strategic vision for the Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
- Through SAGAR, **India seeks to deepen economic and security cooperation with its maritime neighbours** and assist in building their maritime security capabilities.
- Further, **India seeks to safeguard its national interests** and ensure Indian Ocean region to become inclusive, collaborative and respect international law.
- The key **relevance of SAGAR emerges when seen in conjunction with India's other policies** impacting the maritime domain like [Act East Policy](#), [Project Sagarmala](#), [Project Mausam](#), India as 'net security provider', focus on Blue Economy etc.

Way Forward

- Seychelles has been a **strategic destination for several major powers** with vested interests in the region, however India's image and visibility in Seychelles is very high as compared to others.
- The **geo-strategic importance of Seychelles's location remains undiminished** in contemporary times, and will become enhanced and **China is fighting to get an upper hand which India must not allow**.
- There is also a **need to strengthen shared efforts of both the countries to combat drug trafficking, IUU** (Illegal, unreported and unregulated) fishing, piracy and [climate change](#) while protecting the ocean ecosystem.

[Source: PIB](#)

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