



India-Mauritius Relations

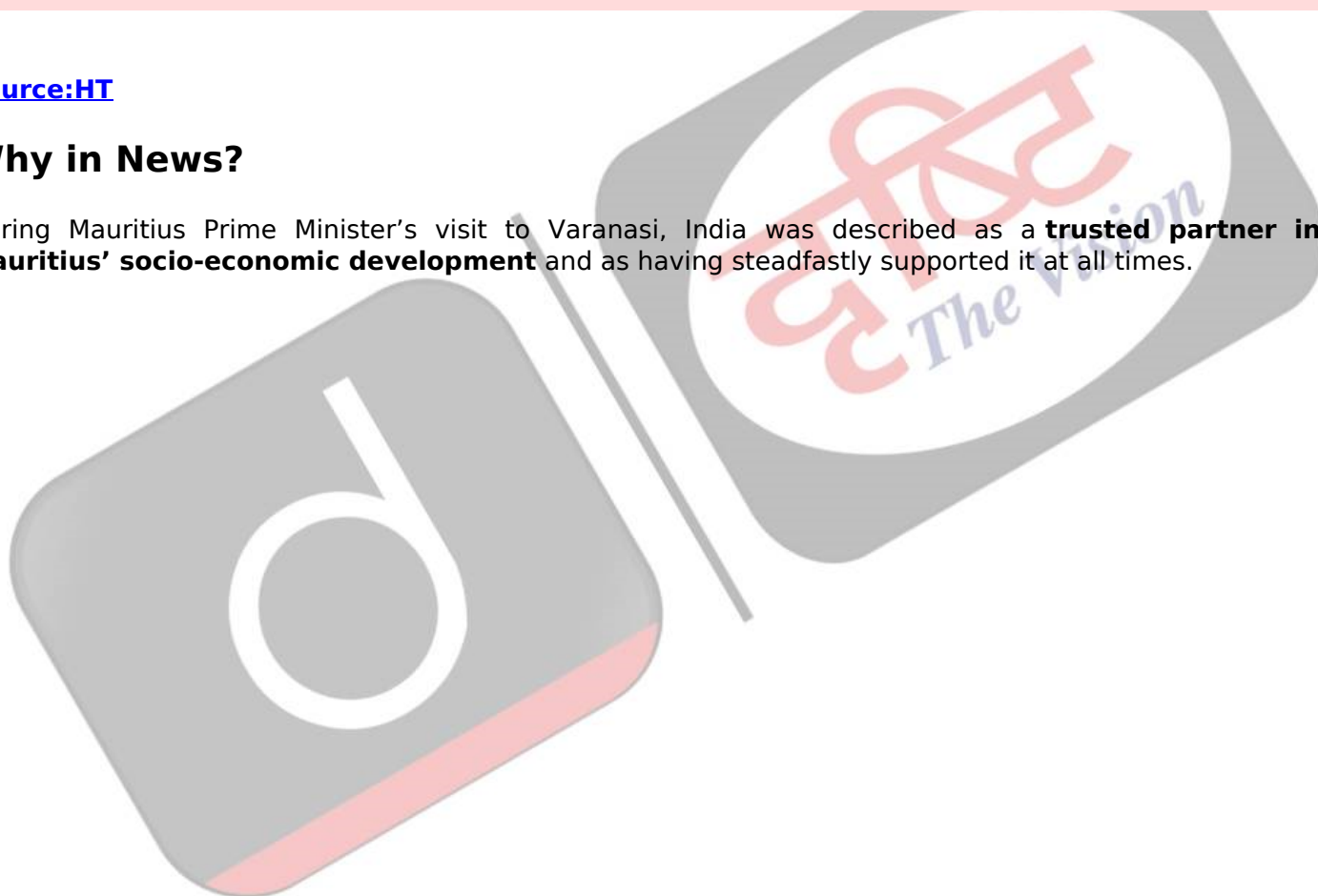
For Prelims: [Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement](#), [AIKEYME](#), [African Continental Free Trade Area](#), [Agaléga Island](#)

For Mains: Significance of India-Mauritius Relations in the changing Indo-Pacific dynamics, India's Neighbourhood First Policy and its regional implications.

[Source:HT](#)

Why in News?

During Mauritius Prime Minister's visit to Varanasi, India was described as a **trusted partner in Mauritius' socio-economic development** and as having steadfastly supported it at all times.





What are the Key Outcomes of Mauritius PM's Visit to India?

- **Development and Economic Support:** India announced a **Special Economic Package for Mauritius**, covering the development of Port Louis, surveillance of the Chagos Marine Protected Area, and support for infrastructure, employment, and healthcare projects.
 - The **first Jan Aushadhi Kendra** outside India has been established in Mauritius, and India will extend cooperation to set up an **AYUSH Centre of Excellence**.
- **Community Development and Capacity Building:** Signed an MOU for Phase 2 of **High Impact Community Development Projects** to strengthen development partnership.
 - India will provide civil service capacity building for Mauritius using **Mission Karmayogi** as a reference platform.
- **Energy:** MoU signed on energy and power sector cooperation to help Mauritius meet energy needs, including a **17.5 MW floating solar power plant**.
- **Space cooperation:** Signed an **MoU on space cooperation** for satellite telemetry, navigation, remote sensing, and capacity building.

How are India's Relations with Mauritius?

- **Diplomatic and Political Relations:** India established diplomatic relations in 1948, before Mauritius' independence (1968).
 - The **India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA), 2021** is the first trade agreement signed by India with an African

country. Ties elevated to an **Enhanced Strategic Partnership in 2025**.

- **Trade and Investment:** India as a trading partner accounts for **11% of Mauritius' imports in 2024, ranking third among its top trading partners**.
 - **Key Indian exports** are petroleum, pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton, shrimps, and bovine meat.
 - **Key Mauritian exports** are vanilla, medical devices, aluminium alloys, refined copper, and cotton shirts.
 - Mauritius has contributed a cumulative 180B USD in [foreign direct investment \(FDI\)](#) to India from 2000 to 2025, accounting for 25% of total inflows, facilitated by the [Double Taxation Avoidance Convention](#).
 - In FY 2023–24, Mauritius was India's second-largest source of FDI after Singapore.
- **Development and Cultural Ties:** India supports healthcare, education, and cultural institutions like the **Mahatma Gandhi Institute and the Indian Cultural Centre** (largest abroad), with over 2,500 Mauritian students benefiting annually.
- **People-to-People Links:** Around 26,000 Indian nationals and 13,000 **Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI)** cardholders live in Mauritius.
 - OCI eligibility has been extended to Mauritians with **Indian ancestry up to seven generations**.
- **Tourism and Education:** Tourism is strong between India and Mauritius, with visa-free entry for Indians and free visas for Mauritians.
- **Strategic and Regional Cooperation:** Mauritius is key to [India's Neighbourhood First Policy](#) and [Vision MAHASAGAR](#).
 - India, through exercises like [AIKEYME](#), trains Mauritian personnel, refits coast guard vessels, and strengthens maritime capabilities.

What is the Significance of the Bilateral Relationship Between India and Mauritius?

Significance of Mauritius for India

- **Strategic Location:** Mauritius' position in the western Indian Ocean helps India secure sea lanes and maintain regional maritime security under **SAGAR/MAHASAGAR**.
 - It acts as a **counterbalance to China's growing influence** and strengthens India's regional role.
- **Economic Relations:** Mauritius is a gateway for India's trade and investment in Africa, as it is a part of [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\)](#).

Significance of India for Mauritius

- **Development Partner:** India has provided over USD 1 billion in the past decade and helps protect **Mauritius' Exclusive Economic Zone** and trains its personnel.
- **Disaster Relief:** It acts as first responder during crises such as [Wakashio oil spill \(2020\)](#) [Cyclone Chido \(2024\)](#), and Covid-19.

What are the Challenges in India-Mauritius Relations?

- **Dependency on Indian Assistance:** Mauritius relies heavily on India for development aid, concessional credit, and grants. Over-reliance may push Mauritius to diversify its partnerships to avoid dependence on a single country for economic and security needs.
 - Domestic policies and balancing relations with China, France, and the US complicate India's engagement.
- **Geopolitical Competition:** Rising Chinese investments in Mauritius, including **Jinfei Smart City and port projects**, challenge India's strategic influence.
- **Limited Private Sector Engagement:** Indian public sector enterprises dominate economic activity in Mauritius, while private sector participation remains low, limiting business innovation and trade diversification.
- **Maritime Security:** Piracy, drug trafficking, and illegal fishing threaten stability in the Western Indian Ocean.

- **Trade Barriers:** High logistics costs and limited direct shipping routes restrict bilateral trade.

What Should be the Way Forward to Strengthen Ties Between India and Mauritius?

- **Trade, and Economic Partnership:** Expand CECTA to include services, fintech, and digital trade.
 - Introduce Rupee-Mauritian Rupee payment system and promote Mauritius as **India's financial gateway to Africa** and encourage private sector investments, particularly in technology, AI, and financial services.
- **Development and Sustainability:** Oil spills, and coastal degradation threaten Mauritius' economy and tourism to contour this prioritize green energy, water security, blue economy projects, climate adaptation, disaster management, and marine conservation.
- **Strategic Cooperation:** India should enhance [Agaléga Island's infrastructure and surveillance capabilities with Mauritius to boost maritime security, and regional strategic presence under MAHASAGAR.](#)
- **Financial and Regulatory Strengthening:** Enhance anti-money laundering cooperation and reinforce **Mauritius' role as a global financial hub.**
- **Cultural and Diaspora Engagement:** Promote Indian culture, heritage, Hindi language, scholarships, Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programs, and establish a [Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra](#) to engage the diaspora.

Conclusion

India-Mauritius ties are a **strategic, economic, and cultural partnership**, with India supporting development and security, and Mauritius playing a key role in **MAHASAGAR**. Strengthening trade, sustainability, and diaspora engagement will ensure a **resilient, mutually beneficial relationship**.

Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the strategic and economic significance of Mauritius for India in the context of the MAHASAGAR initiative.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims:

Q. A great deal of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to India comes from Mauritius than from many major and mature economies like UK and France. Why? (2010)

- (a) India has preference for certain countries as regards receiving FDI
- (b) India has double taxation avoidance agreement with Mauritius
- (c) Most citizens of Mauritius have ethnic identity with India and so they feel secure to invest in India
- (d) Impending dangers of global climatic change prompt Mauritius to make huge investments in India.

Ans: (b)

Mains:

Q. Project 'Mausam' is considered a unique foreign policy initiative of Indian government to improve relationships with its neighbours. Does the project have a strategic dimension? Discuss. (2015)

