

High Commission of India
Pretoria, South Africa
India- South Africa Bilateral Relations

India – South Africa Bilateral Brief

Historical Background

India's links with the struggle for freedom and justice in South Africa date back to the period during which Mahatma Gandhi started his Satyagraha movement in South Africa over a century ago. India was also at the forefront of the international community in its support to the anti-apartheid movement; it was the first country to sever trade relations with the apartheid Government (in 1946) and subsequently imposed a complete - diplomatic, commercial, cultural and sports - embargo on South Africa. India worked consistently to put the issue of apartheid on the agenda of the UN, NAM and other multilateral organizations and for the imposition of comprehensive international sanctions against South Africa. The ANC maintained a representative office in New Delhi from the 1960s onwards. India actively worked for the AFRICA Fund to sustain the struggle through support to the frontline countries.

Following talks between the then South African Government and the ANC, India's relations with South Africa were restored after a gap of over four decades with the opening of a Cultural Centre in Johannesburg in May 1993. An Agreement establishing full diplomatic and consular relations with South Africa was signed on 22 November 1993 during the visit of the then South African Foreign Minister, Pik Botha, to India. A Consulate General was thereafter established in Johannesburg. The Indian High Commission in Pretoria was opened in May 1994, followed by the opening of the Consulate General in Durban the same month. Since Parliament in South Africa meets in Cape Town, a permanent office of the High Commission was opened there in 1996, which has been re-designated as Consulate General of India with effect from January 2011.

South Africa established its High Commission in Delhi and opened a Consulate General in Mumbai in April 1994.

Political Relations

India and South Africa established a strategic partnership in March 1997. 2017 marked 20 years of our Strategic Partnership and 2018 marked 25 years since the re-establishment of diplomatic relations with South Africa. 2018 also marked 125 years since the Pietermaritzburg 'incident' involving Mahatma Gandhi. Against the background of India's consistent support to the anti-apartheid struggle, there has been a steady consolidation of our close and friendly ties with South Africa, both bilaterally and through BRICS, IBSA and other Fora. A number of bilateral agreements have been concluded between the two countries since the assumption of diplomatic relations in 1993 in diverse areas ranging from economic and commercial cooperation, defence, culture, health, human settlements, public administration and science and technology. India's Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC) has been a useful medium of promoting cooperation in development of human resources.

Recent High-Level meetings

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had a telephone conversation with H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of the Republic of South Africa on 17 April 2020 and on 4 February 2021 on COVID-19 cooperation. The President of South Africa, Mr Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa paid a State Visit to India on 25-26 January 2019. President Ramaphosa was the Chief Guest at the 70th Republic Day celebrations on 26 January 2019 in New Delhi. President Jacob Zuma attended the 8th BRICS Summit in Goa, India on 15-16 October 2016. President Zuma also led a South African delegation to India for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit from 27-29 October, 2015.

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to South Africa to participate in the 10th BRICS Summit on 25-27 July, 2018. Earlier, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi paid an official visit to South Africa from July 7-9, 2016.

Ministerial visits/Meetings

EAM Dr Jaishankar held telephone conversation with Foreign Minister Dr Naledi Pandor on 7 January 2022. He conveyed a message of solidarity and warmth in the New Year. He stated that bilateral cooperation between India and South Africa in combating Covid and addressing other global challenges had been notable. Foreign Minister of South Africa, Dr Naledi Pandor and the EAM Dr Jaishankar met bilaterally on 28 June 2021 on the sidelines of G20 Foreign Ministers Meet in Italy and discussed vaccine equity & access, climate action approaches. Dr Naledi Pandor and the EAM met bilaterally during the G7 Foreign Ministers Meet on 4 May 2021. They spoke about working together to meet the COVID-19 challenge and about economic recovery and Commonwealth issues. Dr Naledi Pandor, held a telephone conversation with the EAM on 11 January 2021 on COVID-19 cooperation. Dr Pandor, participated in the Fifth Raisina Dialogue Conference, held in New Delhi from 14-16 January 2020. Minister Pandor, on 17 January 2020, co-chaired the 10th South Africa-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) along with Minister Jaishankar. During this visit, Minister Pandor paid a courtesy call on Prime Minister of India.

Tourism Minister, Mmamoloko Kubayi-Ngubane visited India for a two-day market roadshow in Mumbai from 14-16 January 2020.

Former External Affairs Minister, Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited South Africa from 3-7 June, 2018 to participate in the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting in Pretoria on 4 June, 2018. EAM also participated in the IBSA Foreign Ministers' meeting in Pretoria on 4 June, 2018. EAM also called on President Cyril Ramaphosa.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (EFCC) visited South Africa on 17-18 May 2018 to participate in the 4th Meeting of BRICS Environment Ministers in Durban. Shri R.K. Singh, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power visited South Africa from 26-29 June 2018 to attend the 3rd Meeting of BRICS Energy Ministers at Sandton. Shri C. R. Chaudhary, Minister of State, Commerce & Industry visited South Africa 3-5 July 2018 to attend the 3rd BRICS Industry Ministers Meeting and 8th BRICS Trade Ministers Meeting in Gauteng Province.

Shri Satya Pal Singh, Minister of State, Human Resource Development visited South Africa from 5-12 July 2018 to attend the BRICS Education Ministers Meeting in Cape Town. Shri

Jagat Prakash Nadda, Minister of Health & Family Welfare visited South Africa from 18-20 July 2018 to attend 8th BRICS Health Ministers Meeting in Durban. Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Minister of State (Independent Charge), Labour & Employment visited South Africa from 1-4 August 2018 to attend the 2nd BRICS Employment Working Group Meeting and BRICS Labour & Employment Ministerial Meeting in Durban.

Shri Manoj Sinha, Minister of State (IC), Ministry of Communication visited South Africa from 13-16 September 2018 to participate in the 4th BRICS Ministers of Communication Meeting in Durban. Shri K.J. Alphons, Minister of Tourism visited South Africa from 21-23 October 2018 to attend the 2nd IORA Tourism Ministers Meeting in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape. General (Dr) V.K. Singh (Retd), Minister of State for External Affairs visited South Africa to attend the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) 17th Meeting of the Council of Ministers and 8th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission in Durban from 16-18 October 2017.

Parliamentary visits

Exchanges between the Parliaments are another dimension in our bilateral dimensions. A goodwill visits by Indian Parliamentarians led by the then Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Water Resources, Shri Pawan Bansal, visited South Africa in October, 2012 and a joint Parliamentary delegation led by the Speaker Mr. Max Sisulu and the Chairperson, National Council of Provinces, Mr. M.J. Mahlangu, visited India in July, 2012. Six South African Members of Parliament of Indian Origin attended the first PIO-Parliamentarian Conference held on 09 January 2018 in New Delhi.

Joint Ministerial Commission and Foreign Office Consultations

The India-South Africa Joint Ministerial Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers was set up in 1994. On 17 January 2020, India hosted the 10th South Africa-India Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC). The 10th FoC was held in Pretoria on 3 October 2019.

Defence Cooperation

The Defence Cooperation between India and South Africa officially commenced in 1996 with the signing of an MoU on “Cooperation in the field of Defence Equipment” which was replaced by an MoU on “Defence Cooperation” in 2000. Consequently, an India-South Africa Joint Defence Committee (JDC) co-chaired by the Defence Secretaries of both countries was instituted. The latest (8th) edition of JDC was held in India from 5 to 7 December 2017, in Delhi. Indian Naval Ships and Sailing Vessels also regularly make port calls to South Africa. IN Ships Tarkash and Kolkata visited Cape Town from 1 to 13 October 2018 and participated in the 6th IBSA Maritime Exercise (IBSAMAR). INSV Tarini visited Cape Town from 2-14 March 2018 as part of Navika Sagar Parikrama. The South African Army participated in the Multinational Field Training Exercise for African Nations conducted by Indian Army at Pune in March 2019.

Skills Development

To address the shortage of skills among South Africans which is a national priority of the Government of South Africa, an MoU on the setting up of the “Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation for Artisan Skills”(GMCoS) in South Africa was signed during the Prime

Minister's visit to South Africa in July 2018. The Centre, with the collaboration of Hindustan Machine Tools Limited (HMTL) will offer technical expertise, training material, machines and equipment as well as interactive ICT equipment for video conferencing in a multi-skills formation comprising of four skills: mechanical fitter, electrician, boilermaker and millwright for all of which there is demand in South Africa. The soft launch of the Gandhi-Mandela Centre of Specialisation for Artisan Skills took place in Pretoria on 8 October 2018 in the presence of the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Naledi Pandor. The GMCoS was officially launched in Pretoria on 28 October 2021 in presence of Deputy Minister of Higher Education Mr. Buti Manamela and High Commissioner Mr. Jaideep Sarkar.

Commercial & Economic Relations

Commercial relations have flourished since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1993. Recent bilateral trade figures are as follows:

Figures in million US\$	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018- 19	2019-20	2020-21
India's Exports	5,301.99	3588.74	3545.95	3825.21	4,067.20	4108.17	3934.20
India's Imports	6,496.52	5948.42	5833.75	6834.70	6,517.33	6969.79	7,570.79
Total Trade	11798.51	9537.16	9379.71	10,659.91	10,584.53	11,077.97	11504.99

Source: Ministry of Commerce, India

Major Indian exports to South Africa include vehicles and components, transport equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, footwear, dyes and intermediates, chemicals, textiles, rice, and gems and jewellery, etc. Major Indian imports from South Africa include gold, steam coal, copper ores & concentrates, phosphoric acid, manganese ore, aluminium ingots & other minerals. India on 10 April 2020 facilitated the export of about 25 Million tablets of Paracetamol and 0.5 Million tablets of Hydroxychloroquine (200mg) to South Africa.

India-South Africa Business Summit

To explore additional areas of cooperation for growth of bilateral trade and investment, the India-South Africa Business Summit (ISABS) 2018 was held in Sandton, Johannesburg from 29-30 April, 2018. The Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Minister (CIM) of India, Shri Suresh Prabhu led the Indian delegation for this Summit. Dr Rob Davies, Minister of Trade and Industry, Mr Pravin Gordhan, Minister of Public Enterprises and Ms Lindiwe Zulu, Minister of Small Business Enterprises, represented the South African Government at the Summit. The Premier of Gauteng province, Mr David Makhura also participated in the event. An Invest in India Business Forum (IIBF) was held at the Sandton Convention Centre, Johannesburg on 12-13 November 2018 to follow-up on the ISABS 2018, the visit of the Minister of Food Processing Industries to South Africa in June 2018 and to familiarize the potential South African investors with the investment and business friendly India. Mr. Bulelani Magwanishe, the South African Deputy Minister of Trade and Industry visited India from 25-26 June 2018 on an investment mission to India.

CEOs Forum

The third India-South Africa CEOs forum was held in Pretoria during the visit of Prime Minister of India to South Africa. During the meeting of the India-South Africa CEO's Forum, 8 MoUs were signed. The fourth meeting was held in Sandton, Johannesburg in the margins of the India-South Africa Business Summit from 29-30 April 2018.

Science and Technology

India and South Africa signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology on 19 July 1995 and cooperation in Science and Technology between the two countries has flourished and continues to grow. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Hon. Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences, accompanied by a delegation of senior officials and scientists, paid an official visit to South Africa and participated in a series of events organized in Cape Town and Durban from 4-6 October 2017 to commemorate the 20th anniversary of India-South Africa Cooperation in Science & Technology. The Agreement was renewed for a further period of three years during the visit of Minister of Science & Technology to SA in October 2017.

ITEC / ICCR

For the academic year 2020-21, 30 slots have been allocated to South Africa under ICCR . ITEC offered a total of 52 slots to South Africa in 2019-20.

Cultural Relations

With the help of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an intensive programme of cultural exchanges are organised throughout South Africa including scholarships for South African nationals. In addition to such cultural programming, a 'Shared Histories' Festival organized as a public-private partnership is also organised. It held its eleventh edition in 2017 in Johannesburg. A ten member Rajasthani folk music/dance group from India led by Ms. Malka, sponsored by ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations), visited South Africa to participate in the Kalahari Desert Festival from 21 to 24 March 2018. Activities to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhiji was organised throughout the year (October 2018-2020) across South Africa by the Consulates and Mission which include cultural programmes, vegetarian Food Festivals, prayer meetings, organisation of walks, planting of trees, painting of portraits and discourse/talks on Mahatma Gandhi.

A Festival of India in South Africa was held in September 2019 featuring dance and music troupes. An earlier version was organized during July-August 2014 commemorating 20 years of our diplomatic relations and also 100 years of Gandhiji's return to India from South Africa.

Activities to commemorate the 75 years of India's Independence (Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav) are being organized across South Africa by the Consulates and Mission which include 'Revisiting Gandhian Trail' following Mahatma's footsteps for promoting peace, non-violence and harmony organized in October 2021, 'Mataram' showcasing linguistic and cultural diversity of India through cultural performances by Indian Diaspora in South Africa.

Indian Community

The South African Indian origin community numbers around 1 million and constitutes about 3% of South Africa's total population. About 80% of the Indian community lives in the province of KwaZulu Natal, about 15% in the Gauteng (previously Transvaal) area and the remaining 5% in Cape Town. South Africans of Indian origin are well-represented in Government, business, media, legal and other professions. The year 2010 marked the 150th anniversary of the first arrival of Indians in South Africa. 2014 marked 100 years of Gandhiji's final departure to India from South Africa; he reached India on 9th Jan 1915; this date is now commemorated annually as Pravasi Bhartiya Divas.

Source: High Commission of India, South Africa Web site Jan 2022.