

**Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S,
Kolkata.**

Dated: --/12/2023

**India-South Africa Bilateral Relations (prepared
based on MEA’s July, 2023 India-Philippines
Report)**

A. Introduction:

India – South Africa relationship has the potential to fulfil dreams and aspirations of around 1/3rd of the world’s population. India and South Africa established a strategic partnership in March 1997. 2018 marked 25 years of our Strategic Partnership 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 International Fora.

The South African Indian origin community numbers around 1.4 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. In South Africa, South Africans of Indian origin is well-represented in Government, business, media, legal and other professions.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures:

The bilateral relations between the Republic of India and the Republic of South Africa have grown strong since the end of apartheid in South Africa in 1994. Both the countries have since developed close strategic, cultural and economic ties. The exports and imports were approximately balanced with exports being US\$ 8.47 Billion and imports being US\$ 10.40 Billion in FY 2022-23.

The Export-Import statistics as per India’s Ministry of Commerce data bank are as follows: -

Export-Import statistics from 2017-18 to 2022-23 (USD million)

Figures in million US\$	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
India’s Exports	3825.21	4067.20	4108.17	3934.20	6085.29	8,474.42
India’s Imports	6834.70	6517.33	6969.79	7,570.79	10,965.81	10,397.83
Total Trade	10659.91	10584.54	11077.97	11504.99	17,051.10	18,872.25

Source: Ministry of Commerce, India

From the above table it is seen that trade between the two nations has since evolved over time. Major Indian exports to South Africa include vehicles and its components, transport equipment, drugs and pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, footwear, dyes and intermediates, chemicals,

textiles, rice, gems and Jewellery, etc. Major Indian imports from South Africa include gold, steam coal, copper ores & concentrates, phosphoric acid, manganese ore, aluminum ingots & other minerals.

C. Other Major Areas of Co-operation:

- The Defence Cooperation between India and South Africa had officially commenced in 1996 with the signing of a MoU on “Cooperation in the field of Defence Equipment”. Currently an India-South Africa Joint Defence Committee (JDC) co-chaired by the Defence Secretaries of both countries is in effect (with eight editions of the same already held till date).
- A MoU on Cooperation in the Reintroduction of Cheetah in India was signed between the Republic of India and the Republic of South Africa on 17 January 2023. The MoU facilitates cooperation between the two countries, *inter alia*, to establish a viable and secure cheetah population in India. A first batch of 12 cheetahs (7 males, 5 females) were translocated from South Africa to India on 1 February 18, 2023.
- India and South Africa signed an Agreement on Cooperation in the fields of Science and Technology on July 19, 1995 which continues till date. The 13th Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation between India and South Africa took place on July 12, 2023. During the meeting, both sides agreed to reinforce their ongoing cooperation in the fields of Astronomy, Grass Root Innovations and Health Sciences.
- During the last few years Indian Mission with the help of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), an intensive programme of cultural exchanges has been organised throughout South Africa including scholarships for South African nationals. In addition to such cultural programming, a ‘Shared Histories’ Festival as a public-private partnership is also being organised. Both nations are also engaging intensively to develop their human resource exchanges
- Year 2014 marked 100 years of Gandhiji’s final departure to India from South Africa; he reached India on January 9, 1915; this date is now commemorated annually as Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.
