

Brief on India-Comoros Relations

Comoros is strategically located in the Mozambique Channel in the Indian Ocean between Madagascar and Mozambique. 98% of population of Comoros follow Sunni Islam. The commonly used languages are Shikomoro (Swahili dialect), French and Arabic.

2. India established diplomatic relations with Comoros in June 1976 and the Embassy of India in Antananarivo is also accredited to Comoros. India and Comoros enjoy close and friendly relations. Both countries are members of IORA and share similar views on regional and multilateral issues of importance. Comoros joined IORA in November 2012 – a regional forum consisting of coastal countries bordering the Indian Ocean.

3. Foreign Minister of Comoros H.E. Mr. Dhoihir Dhoulkamal visited New Delhi from 1-3 March 2023 to take part in the G-20 Foreign Ministers Meeting, in Comoros's capacity as the current Chair of the African Union. He had a bilateral meeting with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on the sidelines of the G-20 Foreign Ministers Meeting. Minister of Economy and Industry of Comoros H.E. Mr. Ahmed Ali Bazi attended the G-20 Development Ministers Meeting from 11-13 June 2023 in Varanasi. President of Comoros H.E. Mr. Azali Assoumani is expected to take part in the G-20 Summit to be held in New Delhi on 9-10 September 2023.

4. Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar called on President of Comoros, Azali Assoumani on the sidelines of 77th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 20 September 2022. EAM welcomed President's appreciation for India's outreach in combating Covid-19 and dengue. They also discussed about taking forward the development partnership and working together on maritime security.

5. 12 diplomats from Comoros took part in the 1st Special Course for diplomats of the Indian Ocean Region at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi from 20 September - 01 October 2021. One diplomat from Comoros attended the 69th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) from 03-28 October 2022 at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS).

6. Hon'ble EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar had a telephonic conversation with the Comorian Foreign Minister in April 2020. As a result, a 14-member medical assistance team visited Comoros.

7. Hon'ble Vice-President of India visited Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019. During the visit of the Vice-President of India to Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019, six MoUs were signed:

- i. MoU on Exemption of Visa Diplomatic and Official / Service Passport Holders
- ii. MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Arts & Culture
- iii. MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Defence
- iv. MoU for Cooperation in the Field of Health & Medicine
- v. Protocol for Consultations between India and Comoros
- vi. MoU for Participation in the e-VBAB Network Project

Following **announcements** of grants were made during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India (HVPI) to Comoros from 10-12 October, 2019:

- i. Medicines and medical equipment worth US\$ 1 mn.
- ii. Transport vehicles worth US\$ 1 mn
- iii. Interceptor Boats worth US\$ 2 mn
- iv. Supply of 1000 MT of rice. (*Delivered in March 2021 during the visit of INS Jalashwa to Comoros. Foreign Minister Dhoihir Dhoulkamal received the consignment on behalf of Govt. of Comoros.*)

8. President of the Union of Comoros, H.E. Mr. Azali Assoumani led a Comorian delegation to participate in the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi in March 2018.

9. The then Minister of State for Science & Technology, Mr. Y.S. Chowdhary visited Comoros as Special Envoy of the Prime Minister of India in August 2015.

Trade-Economic Cooperation

10. India was the second largest export destination of Comoros (IMF, 2021). Comoros as an LDC, is also a beneficiary under GoIs Duty Free Tariff Preference scheme introduced in April 2008.

11. **Balance of Trade** –The total export and import figures of India with respect to Comoros available on Export-Import Data Bank of Department of Commerce, Government of India for the last five years is given below:

12. **Bilateral Trade Figures (US Dollar Million)**

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
India's Export	18.88	18.26	23.05	39.83
India's Import	19.65	12.48	14.87	16.11
Total Trade	38.52	30.74	37.91	55.93

Source: DGFT

13. **Main Items of Import and Export:** Top commodities of import from Comoros to India are cloves, iron and steel, copper, aluminium etc. and the top commodities of export from India to Comoros are rice, meat, cotton, sugar, textiles etc.

Defence

14. A Line of Credit for US\$ 20 mn was announced for procurement of Boats during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India to Comoros from 10-12 October 2019.

15. Goa Maritime Symposium:Two officers of the Comorian Coast Guard participated in the online video conference of the Goa Maritime Symposium from 11-13 May 2021. Two officers of the Comorian Coast Guard participated in the Goa Maritime Symposium from 30 October – 01 November 22.

16. MILAN 2022: Two officers of the Comorian Coast Guard participated in the online Mid-planning conference for MILAN 2022 on 18 November 2021.

17. Technical Assistance: Indian Naval Ship Kesari visited Comoros on 7 January 2022 to extend technical assistance to the Comorian Coast Guard.The visit came as a response to the request made by the Comorian Coast Guard (CCG) to the Indian Navy during the Goa Maritime Conclave 2021 for providing technical assistance in repairing a grounded patrol vessel of CCG: P002-M' kombozi.

18. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Tarkash made a Port Call at Port Mutsamudu in Anjouan, Comoros from 18-20 October 2022. The ship carried out different capability enhancement activities for the Comoros Coast Guard, thus strengthening India-Comoros ties. Activities like Yoga and sports were also organized during the visit.

19. Indian Naval Ship (INS) Trishul made a Port Call at Port Mutsamudu in Anjouan, Comoros from 31/5-02/06/2023. The ship carried out various drills for capability enhancement activities for the Comoros Coast Guard, thus strengthening India-Comoros ties. Activities like Yoga and sports were also organized during the visit.

Developmental Partnership

20. India offers a number of scholarships to Comoros under its developmental partnership. As on date, total slots availed by Comoros are:

- i. ICCR: **30**
- ii. ITEC-Civilian: **94**
- iii. IAFS-III: **29**

Humanitarian Assistance

21. In December 2012, Government of India provided US\$ 100,000 as assistance to Comoros for losses suffered on account of torrential rains in April 2012. The Pan-African e-Network started its operations in Comoros in September 2010.

22. In response to the requests received from the Government of Comoros for supply of medicines including 600mg Chloroquine and 250mg Azithromycin in dealing with Covid-19 situation, during telephonic conversation between the Foreign Minister of Comoros and EAM, a 14-member Medical Assistance Team visited from India onboard INS Kesari from 1 to 18 June, 2020 as India's support to Comoros in fight against spread of Dengue and Covid-19. A consignment of medicines as relief assistance was also donated by India to Comoros in support of its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. India has offered Covid-19 vaccine to Comoros.

23. INS Jalashwa visited the port of Anjouan in Comoros from 14-18 March 2021 to deliver 1000 MT of rice in fulfilment of the announcement

of donation of rice made during the visit of the Hon'ble Vice-President of India to Comoros in Oct 2019. The consignment of rice was received by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Comoros, H.E. Mr. Dhoihir Dhoulkamal.

24. EXIM Bank of India had offered a concessional credit of US\$41.6 million in the year 2013 for setting up a power plant in Moroni and the same has been accepted by Comoros. An Agreement to implement the LOC has been signed and the foundation stone for the project, laid in July 2015. A consortium of BHEL and Indian company Overseas Infrastructure Alliance (OIA) Ltd. are the contractors of the project.

25. India donated Anti TB Drugs to Comoros in July 2022 under NTEP (National Tuberculosis Elimination Program).

Culture

26. An ICCR-sponsored Indian Contemporary Dance Group visited Moroni and performed at the Comorian National Assembly Hall on 28 August, 2018. This was the first ever visit by an Indian dance group to Comoros. The event was attended by the Comorian President along with First Lady, the Foreign Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly as well as a few other Ministers and senior dignitaries. One Comorian national participated in Kumbh Mela celebrations organised by the Indian Council of Cultural Relations from 21-24 March, 2019. A 15-member delegation participated from Comoros in the Surajkund Mela (Haryana) in February 2020 and in February 2023.

27. All eight editions of International Day of Yoga have been celebrated in Moroni, Comoros to coincide with the worldwide celebrations of IDY. Persons from a cross section of Comorian society, which included local senior government dignitaries, members of diplomatic corps and Indian diaspora, participate in the event. Ambassador participated in the preparations of 8th International Yoga Day celebrations in Moroni on 21 May 2022 organised by members of Indian diaspora and Yoga practitioners in Comoros. 9th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Moroni on 15 June 2023.

Indian Diaspora

28. The Indian Diaspora comprises of around 250 persons and majority of them are engaged in trade and business. The role played by the Indian

community in the overall development of Comoros is highly appreciated at all levels. The Indian Diaspora has been playing significant role in promoting Indian culture and traditional values in Comoros. In recent years, a number of young professionals have started working for some foreign companies in Comoros.

Resources:

www.eoiantananarivo.gov.in

<https://www.facebook.com/IndiainAntananarivoMadagascar/?ref=bookmarks>

<https://twitter.com/IndembTana>

<https://www.instagram.com/indiainmadagascar/>

ANNEXURE-1

Bilateral Visits from Comoros to India

Sl. No.	Name of the Visitor	Date of visit	Purpose
1.	Mr. Souef Mohamed El-Amine, Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	August 2004	Bilateral visit
2.	Mr. Ahmed Ben Said Djaffer Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	July 2006	Bilateral visit
3.	Mr. Ahmed Abdullah Mohamed Sambu, President of Comoros	4-8 November 2007	To participate in the 4th International Conference on Federalism.
4.	Mr. Fahmi Said Ibrahim Minister of External Relations &	18-19 February 2011	To attend the LDCs Conference

	Cooperation		
5.	Mr. Mohamed Issimail Minister for National Education	01-02 March 2012	To participate in India- Africa Science & Technology Ministerial Meeting
6.	Mr. Mohamed Bakri Ben Abdoulafatah Charif, Minister of External Relations & Cooperation	02 November 2012	To participate in the Council of Ministers Meeting of Indian Ocean Rim-Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)
7.	Mr. Mohamed Ali Soilihi Vice President in-charge of Finance Ministry	21-23 February 2013	To sign Agreement with EXIM Bank for grant of US\$ 41.6 million LOC
8.	Mr. Mohamed Ali Soilihi Vice President in-charge of Finance Ministry	21-23 October 2015	4t h India Africa Trade Ministers Meeting (IATM)
9.	Dr.Ikililou Dhoinine, President of Comoros	23-29 October 2015	IAFS III Summit
10.	Dr.Abdulkarim Mohamed, Minister of Foreign Affairs	January 2016	Ist India Arab League Ministerial Conference, Manama
11.	Mr.Azali Assoumani,	10-12 March	Led 16-member delegation including Foreign Minister

	President	2018	El-Souef Amine for the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance in New Delhi.
12.	Mr. Abdou Moustadroine, Minister of Energy, Agriculture, Fisheries & Environment	3 October 2018	Led the Comorian delegation in the First General Assembly meeting of the International Solar Alliance member countries in New Delhi
13.	Mr. Dhoahir Dhoulkamal, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Comoros	3-5 February 2021	To take part in the Aero India 2021 and IOR Defence Ministers Conclave in Bangalore and had a meeting with Hon'ble Defence Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh.
14.	Mr. Moudjib Rahmane Adaine, Chief of Comorian Coast Guard	7-9 November 2021.	Goa Maritime Conclave 2021
15.	Mr. Moudjib Rahmane Adaine, Chief of Comorian Coast Guard	24-28 February 2022	MILAN 2022.
16.	Mr. Moudjib Rahmane Adaine, Chief of Comorian Coast Guard	18-22 October 2022	To take part in DefExpo 2022 in Gandhinagar (Gujarat).

17.	Col. Said Hamza, Technical Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Comorian Army	13-17 February 2023	To take part in Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru
18.	Mr. Dhoiher Dhoulkamal, Foreign Minister of Comoros	1-3 March 2023	To take part in the G-20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi.
19.	Lt-Col Kamali Ali, Chief of Land Force of Comoros	28-30 March 2023	To take part in Africa- India Exercise (AFINDEX) in Pune.
20	Mr. Ahmed Ali Bazi, Minister of Economy and Industry of Comoros	11-13 June 2023	To attend the G-20 Development Ministers Meeting in Varanasi.
21	Mr. Azali Assoumani, President	9-10 September, 2023	Led the delegation including Foreign Minister and Trade Minister to attend the G-20 Summit at New Delhi

September 2023
