

2. India-Seychelles Bilateral Relationship- International Relation

From maritime to digital- India, Seychelles give ties a shot in arm

Marking 50 years of diplomatic ties, India and Seychelles adopted the "SESEL" vision to expand cooperation beyond security into sustainability and capacity building, supported by a USD 175 million Indian package. The leaders reaffirmed Seychelles' role as a pivotal pillar in India's "Vision MAHASAGAR" for maritime security and growth in the Western Indian Ocean.

Context- Bilateral Talks in New Delhi

Occasion- The Prime Minister of India held bilateral talks with the President of Seychelles, Patrick Herminie, in New Delhi.

Dual Celebration- The meeting coincided with two significant milestones- 50 years of diplomatic relations between the two nations. 50th anniversary of Seychelles' independence.

Outcome- Both sides adopted a new strategic framework titled "Joint Vision for Sustainability, Economic Growth and Security through Enhanced Linkages (SESEL)".

SESEL Framework- This framework expands the scope of cooperation beyond traditional security to include sustainable development and institutional capacity-building.

Key Highlights of the Visit

Political and Strategic Partnership

Maritime Neighbourhood- Leaders reaffirmed the special partnership between India and Seychelles as close maritime neighbours, crucial for reinforcing security in the Western Indian Ocean Region.

Vision MAHASAGAR- Seychelles was reiterated as a pivotal pillar in India's Vision MAHASAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region), aimed at fostering regional security and economic growth.

Development Partnership and Economic Cooperation

Recognition of Support- Seychelles acknowledged India's long-standing assistance provided through Lines of Credit (LoC), grants, capacity building, and High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP).

Special Economic Package- India announced a substantial financial package worth USD 175 million.

1. USD 125 million- Extension of a Line of Credit.
2. USD 50 million- Grant assistance.

Focus Areas- The package targets sustainability, maritime security, defence cooperation, resilience, inclusive growth, and capacity building.

Health, Capacity Building, and Social Cooperation

Health Infrastructure- India donated 10 advanced ambulances and committed to supporting hospital construction and public health initiatives.

Medicine Accessibility- Seychelles recognized the Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP), which will streamline the procurement of high-quality medicines. Collaboration was agreed upon under the Jan Aushadhi scheme to provide affordable medicines.

Human Resource Development- Expansion of training programmes under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). Establishment of institutional linkages in critical sectors like governance, cybersecurity, policing, and climate change.

Food Security- India donated 1000 metric tonnes of grains. Agreement to institutionalize the procurement of cost-effective food and essential commodities from India to ensure supply security.

Climate, Maritime Security, and Regional Cooperation

Renewable Energy- Cooperation will be expanded in solar energy under the International Solar Alliance (ISA), along with grid management and green mobility.

Disaster Management- Implementation of Multi-Hazard Early Warning Systems to enhance climate resilience.

Blue Economy & Hydrography– Strengthening of joint hydrographic surveys. Establishment of a Seychelles Hydrographic Unit with Indian assistance.

Defence & Security– Reaffirmation of cooperation in surveillance, joint military exercises, anti-piracy operations, and enhancing maritime domain awareness.

Multilateral Cooperation

Global Platforms– Seychelles will join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Seychelles reaffirmed its support for India's bid for permanent membership in the UN Security Council.

Regional Mechanisms– India welcomed Seychelles' decision to become a full member of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC).

India-Seychelles Bilateral Relations– An Overview

Historical Background

Early Presence– The first recorded Indian presence dates back to 1770, when five Indians arrived as plantation workers alongside African slaves and French settlers.

Colonial Ties– During the British colonial era, Seychelles was administered from the Bombay Presidency for a period. Regular shipping routes facilitated the flow of goods, essential commodities, and Indian migrants.

Diplomatic Relations

Establishment– Seychelles attained independence on 29 June 1976, and formal diplomatic relations were established in 1976.

Missions– India opened its High Commission in Victoria in 1979.

Key Agreements–

1. Air Services Agreement (1981).
2. Tourism Cooperation Agreement (1996).
3. Trade Agreement and Joint Business Council (2000).
4. Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) (2010).

Trade and Investment

Status– Bilateral trade remains modest, primarily due to the lack of direct shipping connectivity.

Trade Statistics (2022–23)–

1. Indian Exports– US\$ 64.88 million.
2. Indian Imports– US\$ 8.96 million.

Key Export Items– Rice, food products, cement, textiles, vehicles, medicines, and medical instruments.

Defence and Security Cooperation

Drivers– Cooperation has expanded significantly to address piracy and maritime security challenges in the Indian Ocean.

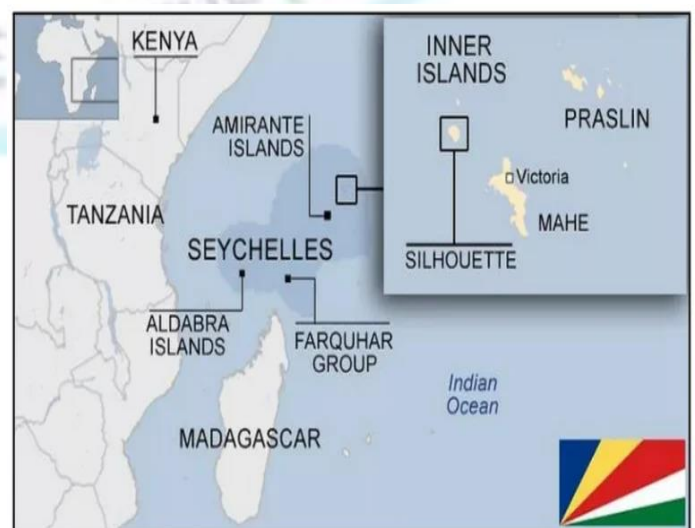
Asset Support– India has gifted various assets to the Seychelles Coast Guard–

1. PS Topaz (2005).
2. PS Constant (2014).
3. Dornier maritime surveillance aircraft (2018).

Joint Exercises– Both nations participate in military exercises such as LAMITYE, MILAN 2024, IMEX-23, and Cutlass Express.

Energy, Environment, and Culture

Blue Economy– A Blue Economy Protocol was signed in 2015, highlighting shared priorities in sustainable ocean usage.



Climate Action- Seychelles is a Founding Member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) (ratified in 2017) and supports India on climate issues globally.

Indian Diaspora- Migration intensified in the 20th century, with origins mainly from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, and Gujarat. Cultural engagement is primarily community-driven with government backing.

Strategic Significance of Seychelles for India

Geostrategic Location- Located in the Western Indian Ocean near major Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) connecting Asia, Africa, and Europe, making it vital for global trade routes.

Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA)- Installation of coastal radar systems and surveillance cooperation allows India to monitor a vast oceanic expanse.

Operational Hub- Seychelles serves as a crucial node for India's anti-piracy missions, particularly for countering threats from the Somali coast.

Balancing Influence- Strategic engagement helps India balance and counter the expanding footprint of China in the Indian Ocean Region.

Assumption Island Project- India's involvement in developing infrastructure on Assumption Island is intended to enhance logistical reach, surveillance capabilities, and operational sustainability.

Logistics Node- Access arrangements facilitate the refuelling, replenishment, and forward deployment of Indian naval assets.

SAGAR Doctrine- The partnership is a practical manifestation of India's SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision.

About Seychelles- Country Profile

Geography and Location-

Type- Archipelagic island nation in the Western Indian Ocean.

Position- Northeast of Madagascar and east of mainland Africa.

Neighbours- South of Seychelles lie Comoros and Mauritius; to the east lies the Maldives.

Size- It is the smallest country in Africa by both land area and population.

Island Composition

Granitic Islands (Mahé Group)- Mountainous, volcanic origin, featuring a narrow coastal belt and rocky interiors.

Coralline Islands- Comprise flat coral atolls or elevated reefs, less rugged than the granitic group.

Geology- The islands sit on the submarine Mascarene Plateau, a major geological feature.

Highest Peak- Morne Seychellois.

Maritime Significance- Possesses an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of approx. 1.35 million sq. km, which is massive relative to its land area.

Climate- Tropical oceanic climate with warm temperatures and minimal seasonal variation.

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