



## India-Mauritius Relations

**For Prelims:** [Agalega Island](#), [Chagos Archipelago](#), [Colombo Security Conclave](#), [IORA](#), [Indian Ocean Conference](#), [Dandi March](#), [SAGAR \(Security and Growth for All in the Region\)](#), [Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation \(ITEC\) Program](#), [National Centre for Good Governance \(NCGG\)](#).

**For Mains:** Significance of Mauritius as international partner, India-Mauritius relations.

**Source:** [HT](#)

### Why in News?

During the **Prime Minister (PM)** of India's visit to Mauritius, both nations signed multiple agreements on **trade, maritime security, and defense**, emphasizing regional cooperation and elevating their ties to an **enhanced strategic partnership**.

- PM also received the highest national award of Mauritius, the '**Grand Commander of the Order of the Star and Key of the Indian Ocean**.'

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

- **Enhanced Strategic Partnership:** Both elevated their ties to an **Enhanced Strategic Partnership**, strengthening security, trade in local currencies, and development while reaffirming their commitment to a **free and secure** Indian Ocean.
  - Both countries agreed to ratify the **protocol** amending the **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** to align with **international treaty standards**.
- **'Mahasagar' Vision:** India introduced the **MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)** initiative for the Global South.
  - The MAHASAGAR vision **builds on SAGAR**, enhancing engagement with the Global South through **technology sharing, concessional loans, grants, trade, and mutual security cooperation**.
- **Security Cooperation:** India and Mauritius agreed to enhance the use of [Agalega Island's](#) **new runway and jetty**, developed by India.
  - India also reaffirmed support for Mauritius's sovereignty over the [Chagos Archipelago](#).
  - Cooperation will be strengthened in **white shipping, blue economy, and hydrography**.
- **Developmental Support:** India announced its **first-ever rupee-denominated Line of Credit** to support Mauritius in replacing its water pipelines.
  - India will help Mauritius establish a **police academy and a maritime information-sharing center**.
  - The Mauritius President inaugurated the **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Public Service and Innovation**, a health center, and 20 Indian-funded community projects.
- **New Parliament Building:** India will construct a new Parliament building for Mauritius, which India described as a **gift from the "Mother of Democracy"**.
- **Multilateral Engagements:** India reaffirmed its commitment to working with Mauritius in

regional and international forums like the [Colombo Security Conclave](#), [IORA](#), and the [Indian Ocean Conference](#).

## Historical Connection Between India and Mauritius

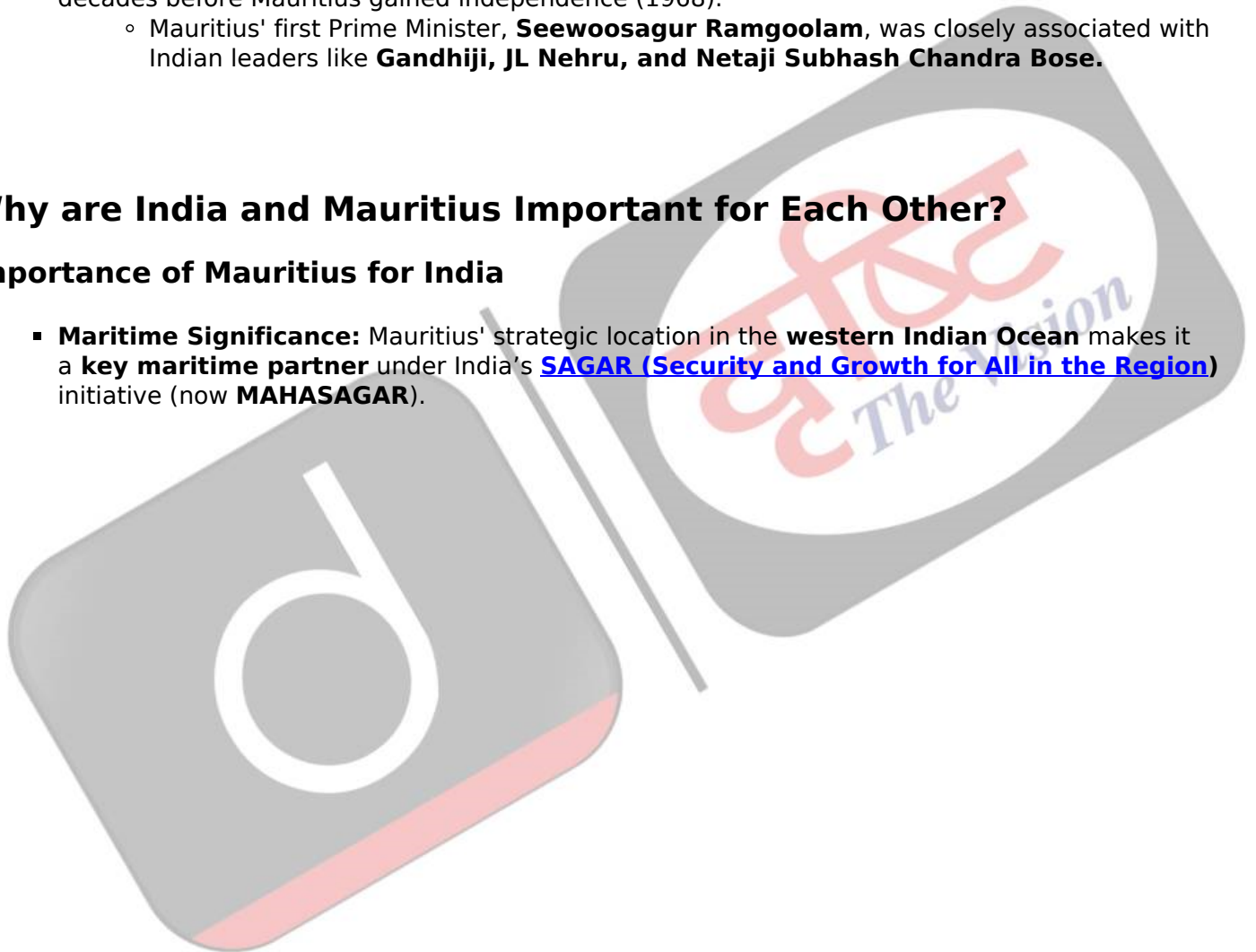
- **Pre-Independence of India:** The first Indians in Mauritius arrived during **French colonial rule** (1700s) as **artisans and masons** from Puducherry (Mauritius was once a **French colony**, before being taken over by the **British**).
  - Under **British rule**, about **500,000 Indian indentured workers** migrated between **1834 and the early 1900s**, with **two-thirds settling in Mauritius**.
  - **Mahatma Gandhi** visited Mauritius in **1901**, advocating **education and political empowerment** for the Indian community.
  - As a tribute to Gandhi, Mauritius celebrates its **National Day on 12th March**, marking the **Dandi March**.
- **Post-Independence of India:** India and Mauritius established **diplomatic ties in 1948**, two decades before Mauritius gained independence (1968).
  - Mauritius' first Prime Minister, **Seewoosagur Ramgoolam**, was closely associated with Indian leaders like **Gandhiji, J.L. Nehru, and Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose**.

## Why are India and Mauritius Important for Each Other?

### Importance of Mauritius for India

- **Maritime Significance:** Mauritius' strategic location in the **western Indian Ocean** makes it a **key maritime partner** under India's [SAGAR \(Security and Growth for All in the Region\)](#) initiative (now **MAHASAGAR**).

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- **Countering China's Presence:** With China's expanding presence in the Indian Ocean, India's strong ties with Mauritius help **safeguard** securing Sea lines of communication (SLOC) and India's **strategic interests**.
- **Economic Relations:** Mauritius is a **gateway for India's trade and investment in Africa**, being part of the [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\)](#).
  - India is one of Mauritius's **largest trading partners**, and Mauritius is the **2nd-largest FDI source** into India (FY 2023-24) after Singapore.
- **Cultural Links:** About **70%** of Mauritius population are of Indian origin that help promote **Indian culture, language, and heritage**.
  - Mauritius shares strong cultural ties with India, with grand **Maha Shivratri** celebrations and **Ganga Talao** as a revered Hindu pilgrimage site.

### Importance of India for Mauritius

- **Leading Development Partner:** India has been Mauritius's **key development partner** since its independence (1968), providing **USD 1.1 billion** in the last decade alone.
  - India has supported Mauritius in implementing key infrastructure projects, including the **Metro Express, Supreme Court Building, Hospitals**, etc.
- **Maritime Security Assistance:** India is Mauritius's key security partner, supporting [EEZ](#) protection through **naval patrols, joint maritime surveillance, and hydrographic surveys**.
- **Disaster Assistance:** India has been Mauritius's first responder in crises, providing aid during [Cyclone Chido \(2024\)](#), the [Wakashio Oil Spill \(2020\)](#), and the [Covid-19 pandemic](#).

- **Capacity Building:** Mauritius is a key beneficiary of India's [Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation \(ITEC\) program](#), with 4,940 Mauritians trained since 2002.
  - India also offers customized training to **civil servants** of Mauritius through [National Centre for Good Governance \(NCGG\)](#).

**Click Here to Read:**

- [What are the Key Facts Regarding the Chagos Archipelago?](#)
- [What is Agelega Project?](#)

## Conclusion

India and Mauritius have **reinforced their strategic partnership** through agreements in trade, security, and development. India's "**Mahasagar**" vision and infrastructural support strengthen regional cooperation, counter external influences, and enhance economic ties. Their shared **history, cultural bonds, and geopolitical alignment** make this partnership crucial for regional stability and prosperity.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

How does India's strategic partnership with Mauritius contribute to its maritime security and regional influence in the Indian Ocean?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### **Prelims**

**Q. With reference to 'Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC)', consider the following statements: (2015)**

1. It was established very recently in response to incidents of piracy and accidents of oil spills.
2. It is an alliance meant for maritime security only.

**Which of the statements given above is/ are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (d)**

**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. Why indentured labour was taken by British from India to other colonies? Have they been able to preserve their cultural identity over there? (2018)

## World Air Quality Report 2024

Source: DTE

### Why in News?

The **World Air Quality Report 2024**, released by Swiss company IQAir, ranked **India as the 5th most polluted country** globally.

### What are the Key Findings of the World Air Quality Report?

- **India:** India is the **5th most polluted country in 2024**, improving slightly from 3rd place in 2023.
  - **Polluted Cities:** Delhi remains the **most polluted capital** globally with a Particulate matter (PM) 2.5 concentration of **91.6  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$**  (micrograms per cubic metre).
    - 6 of the world's 10 most polluted cities and 13 of the top 20 are in India, with **Byrnihat** (Assam-Meghalaya border) topping the list at a **PM2.5 concentration of 128.2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** .
      - Other polluted cities include **Mullanpur** (Punjab), Gurugram, **Faridabad**, Bhiwadi, and **Noida**.
    - **PM2.5 Reduction:** India saw a **7% decrease** in PM2.5 levels, averaging **50.6  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$**  in 2024, down from **54.4  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$**  in 2023.
      - However, this is still **10 times higher** than the **World Health Organization (WHO's) recommended safe limit** of **5  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** . **35% of Indian cities** reported PM2.5 levels exceeding this limit.
    - **Pollution Sources:** Major contributors include **vehicle emissions, industrial pollution, and the burning of biomass**.
      - **Northern India faced extreme pollution levels** with crop stubble-burning contributing to **60% of PM2.5 levels**.
  - **Global:** The most polluted countries by annual average PM2.5 levels are Chad (**91.8  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** ), Bangladesh (**78  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** ), Pakistan (**73.7  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** ), and Congo (**58.2  $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$** ).
    - The report highlights that **most of the global population** is breathing polluted air, with **only 12 countries, regions, or territories** reporting PM2.5 concentrations below the **WHO's recommended limit**.

### Air Pollution

- Air pollution is the contamination of air by **chemical, physical, or biological agents that alter its natural composition**.
  - Major sources include combustion, vehicles, industries, and fires. Pollutants like PM, CO, O<sub>3</sub>, NO<sub>2</sub>, and SO<sub>2</sub> cause respiratory diseases and high mortality.
- WHO reports that **99% of the global population breathes polluted air, with low- and middle-income countries most affected**.
  - Prolonged PM2.5 exposure **cuts life expectancy by 5.2 years in India**, linked to **1.5**

million annual deaths between 2009-2019, as per the *Lancet Planetary Health Study*.

- [WHO Air Quality Guidelines \(AQG\)](#) aim to help governments reduce air pollution and improve public health.

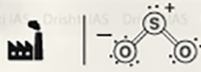
#### Recommended 2021 AQG levels compared to 2005 air quality guidelines

Pollutant	Averaging Time	2005 AQGs	2021 AQGs
PM <sub>2.5</sub> , µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual	10	5
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	25	15
PM <sub>10</sub> , µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual	20	15
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	50	45
O <sub>3</sub> , µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Peak season <sup>b</sup>	-	60
	8-hour <sup>a</sup>	100	100
NO <sub>2</sub> , µg/m <sup>3</sup>	Annual	40	10
	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	-	25
SO <sub>2</sub> , µg/m <sup>3</sup>	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	20	40
CO, mg/m <sup>3</sup>	24-hour <sup>a</sup>	-	4



# Air Pollutants

## Sulphur Dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>)



It comes from the consumption of fossil fuels (oil, coal and natural gas). Reacts with water to form acid rain.

**Impact:** Causes respiratory problems.

## Ozone (O<sub>3</sub>)



Secondary pollutant formed from other pollutants (NO<sub>x</sub> and VOC) under the action of the sun.

**Impact:** Irritation of the eye and respiratory mucous membranes, asthma attacks.

## Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>)



Emissions from road transport, industry and energy production sectors. Contributes to Ozone and PM formation.

**Impact:** Chronic lung disease.

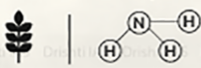
## Carbon Monoxide (CO)



It is a product of the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing compounds.

**Impact:** Fatigue, confusion, and dizziness due to inadequate oxygen delivery to the brain.

## Ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>)



Produced by the metabolism of amino acids and other compounds which contain nitrogen.

**Impact:** Immediate burning of the eyes, nose, throat and respiratory tract and can result in blindness, lung damage.

## Lead (Pb)



Released as a waste product from extraction of metals such as silver, platinum, and iron from their respective ores.

**Impact:** Anemia, weakness, and kidney and brain damage.

## Particulate Matter (PM)



**PM10:** Inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller.

**PM2.5:** Fine inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 2.5 micrometers and smaller.

**Source:** Emitted from construction sites, unpaved roads, fields, fires.

**Impact:** Irregular heartbeat, aggravated asthma, decreased lung function.

**Note:** These major air pollutants are included in the Air quality index for which short-term National Ambient Air Quality Standards are prescribed.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Prelims

In the cities of our country, which among the following atmospheric gases are normally considered in calculating the value of the Air Quality Index? (2016)

1. Carbon dioxide
2. Carbon monoxide
3. Nitrogen dioxide
4. Sulphur dioxide
5. Methane

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only  
(b) 2, 3 and 4 only  
(c) 1, 4 and 5 only  
(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

### Mains

Describe the key points of the revised Global Air Quality Guidelines (AQGs) recently released by the World Health Organisation (WHO). How are these different from its last update in 2005? What changes in India's National Clean Air Programme are required to achieve revised standards? (2021)

## APAAR ID

[Source: TH](#)

The [Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry \(APAAR\) ID](#), aims to **standardize student records**. However, concerns over **implementation, data privacy** have sparked debates among activists.

- **APAAR ID:** Introduced under the [National Education Policy 2020](#) and aligned with the [National Credit Framework](#), it aims to establish a "**One Nation, One Student ID**" system to streamline academic records and facilitate transitions between educational levels.
  - APAAR assigns a **12-digit ID**, linking academic records to [DigiLocker](#) and [Academic Bank of Credits](#) for storage and verification.
  - **Schools** record data, while **Higher Education Institutions & Skill Institutes** access verified academic records for admissions and recruitment.
- **Concerns About APAAR ID:** APAAR's Aadhaar linkage is causing issues due to spelling mismatches, necessitating updates.
  - While the Education Ministry claims APAAR is voluntary, **Central Board of Secondary**



**Education's push for 100% enrolment of APAAR raises** concerns of implicit mandates, contradicting the Supreme Court ruling in **Justice (Retd.) K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2019)**, which held that Aadhaar cannot be required for basic education access.

- The Advocacy groups are concerned about **risks in handling minors' sensitive personal** data without robust data protection.
  - The **Data Protection Act, 2023** (not yet enforced) mandates that consent **must be free, informed, and unambiguous**, which activists argue is being ignored.



Read more: [APAAR: One Nation One Student ID Card](#)

## Mycelium Bricks

[Source: TH](#)

In the face of **climate change**, the construction industry is seeking **low-carbon alternatives**, and **mycelium bricks** have emerged as a promising innovation.

- **Mycelium Bricks:** Created from **fungal spores**, husk, and sawdust, **mycelium bricks form a lightweight, fibrous structure** with a low environmental impact compared to traditional fired clay bricks, which emit nearly **300 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> annually**.
  - They are **biodegradable, fire-resistant, lightweight, and good heat insulators**, making them suitable for interior panelling, filters, and electronics.
  - Potential applications include interior panelling, liquid filters, sports equipment, and

electronic components.

- **Challenges Hindering Adoption:** Mycelium bricks have low **load-bearing capacity**, **high moisture absorption**, and a **short lifespan** due to biodegradability and vulnerability to **termites**, making them less durable than **concrete**.
  - **Tropical weather conditions**, **high humidity**, and **lack of infrastructure** in India make large-scale **manufacturing expensive and impractical**.
- **Potential Solutions:** **Flame retardants** and **Ultra Violet Coatings** can improve fire resistance and durability, while **R&D** and **policy support** can enhance competitiveness with **clay bricks**.



Read more: [Energy Efficiency in Construction Sector](#)

## PM-YUVA 3.0

[Source: PIB](#)

The **Ministry of Education** launched **PM-YUVA 3.0 (Young, Upcoming and Versatile Authors )-Prime Minister's Scheme for Mentoring Young Authors**.

- It aims to train **young authors (below 30 years)** to promote **reading, writing, and book culture** while projecting **Indian literature globally**.
- **Themes:**
  - Contribution of **Indian Diaspora** in Nation Building
  - Indian Knowledge System
  - Makers of Modern India (1950-2025)
- **National Book Trust (NBT)**, under the Ministry of Education, is the **implementing agency**.

- Books to be published by **NBT** and translated into **multiple Indian languages** under **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat**.
- It aligns with **NEP 2020** to support **empowerment of young minds** and prepares future leaders.

**Read More:** [YUVA Scheme for Young Writers](#)

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## Railways' Work Under Mission Amrit Sarovar

**Source:** [TH](#)

The **Indian Railways** has been integrated into the **Mission Amrit Sarovar** initiative to aid in **water conservation** by constructing and rejuvenating ponds across the country.

- Indian Railways will **desilt, excavate, or create water bodies** near railway lines in coordination with district authorities and the **Ministry of Rural Development**.

**About Mission Amrit Sarovar:** It was launched in **April 2022** to construct or rejuvenate **75 ponds per district**. As of **October 2024**, over **68,000 ponds** have been completed.

- It ensures long-term water availability through **community participation**, and climate resilience to secure **sustainable water resources**.
- It is an initiative of the **Ministry of Rural Development** and **Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG-N)** is the Mission's technical partner.
- It is implemented through convergence with schemes like **MGNREGA**, **15th Finance Commission Grants**, **PMKSY**, and state programs.

**Read More:** [Mission Amrit Sarovar](#)

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