

# Biz & bonding mark Indo-Mauritius meet in Kashi

## India to get toehold in Chagos, home to Diego Garcia base

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New Delhi: India announced a special economic package for Mauritius, which included a strong strategic component in the form of 'in-principle' agreements for redevelopment of the port in capital Port Louis and development and surveillance of the Chagos Marine Protected Area, a vast expanse of Indian Ocean that's home to the US-UK Diego Garcia military base. The announcement followed PM Narendra Modi's bilateral meeting with his counterpart Navinchandra Ramgoolam in Varanasi.

The two countries signed several other agreements aimed at helping Mauritius improve infrastructure and healthcare, augment maritime security and enhance defence preparedness, while allowing India to expand its footprint in Indian Ocean. The projects announced under the package, along with budgetary assistance of \$25 million, are together worth \$680 million.

The PM said that both sides will work towards enabling trade in local currencies. Modi also said the projects, based on both grant and grant-cum-line of credit basis, are designed to support Mauritius' needs and priorities, adding India will advance projects such as the Chagos Marine Protected Area, ATC Tower at the international airport and the expansion of highways and ring roads.

"This package is not assistance. It is an investment in our shared future," said Modi in his media remarks after the meeting, adding Mauritius was not a partner but family for India. The PM also announced signing of an agreement for cooperation in the field of hydrography, saying that over the next five years, the countries will work together on joint surveys, navigation charts, and hydro-

graphic data of the Mauritius EEZ. The Mauritius EEZ has expanded significantly after its recent treaty with the UK established its sovereignty over the Chagos archipelago. Foreign secretary Vikram Misra said India was Mauritius' preferred partner in the latter's pursuit of protecting and securing its interests in the region.

"It has many more responsibilities now. It needs maritime resources, and to be able to fully develop and exploit those resources, it will need assistance, and India is its preferred partner," said Misra. India had strongly backed the transfer of Chagos sovereignty to Mauritius through the treaty that also allowed the UK to retain control of Diego Garcia island from where UK and US operate a key military base.

In his remarks after the meeting, Ramgoolam appreciated India's support, saying, "We want to visit the Chagos Islands, including Diego Garcia, to plant our flag. The British offered us a vessel, but we said we preferred one from India because, symbolically, it would be more meaningful."

Modi also said a free, open, secure, stable, and prosperous Indian Ocean is a shared priority. "In this context, India remains fully committed to strengthening the security of Mauritius's EEZ and enhancing its maritime capacity," said the PM, adding India has always stood as a first responder and a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region.

The PM congratulated Ramgoolam for the Chagos Agreement, calling it a historic milestone for Mauritius' sovereignty.

India has always supported decolonisation and the full recognition of Mauritius' sovereignty," he said, adding that Mauritius was a key part of India's Neighbourhood First policy and Vision Mahasagar.

## INDIA, MAURITIUS AGREEMENT PACT

PM Narendra Modi and Mauritian PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam agreed in principle to jointly implement the following projects in the island nation:

- Projects/Assistance to be undertaken on grant basis**
- New Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital
  - AYUSH centre of excellence
  - Veterinary school and animal hospital
  - Provision of helicopters
- Note** | The estimated costs of these projects and assistance would be around \$215 million

- Projects/Assistance to be undertaken on a Grant-cum-Line of credit basis**
- Completion of construction of the new ATC tower at SSR International Airport
  - Development of Motorway M4
  - Development of Ring Road Phase-II
  - Acquisition of port equipment by CHCL



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Mauritian PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam during their bilateral talks in Varanasi on Thursday

**STRATEGIC PROJECTS**

- Redevelopment and restructuring of the port in Mauritius
- Assistance in the development and surveillance of the Chagos Marine Protected Area

- Note** | India will extend budgetary assistance of \$25 million in the current financial year

## Our ties based on shared values & common vision: Ramgoolam

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Varanasi: Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi for joint document on enhanced strategic partnership, Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam highlighted constructive discussions on the exclusive economic zone and technical cooperation from India. During his joint statement after the bilateral meeting with Modi here on Thursday, he said this visit reaffirmed that the ties between Mauritius and India are not defined merely by history or geography but by shared values and a common vision.

Recalling Modi's Mauritius visit in Mar to attend its 57th anniversary of independence, Ramgoolam expressed gratitude for grand reception he was given by people of Varanasi on his arrival with a delegation of his cabinet colleagues and officials. "The welcome we received in your constituency enabled us to understand why you get elected with big margins from here," he said, addressing Modi.



Mauritius PM and wife Veena Ramgoolam during Ganga Aarti

Ramgoolam mentioned the constructive discussions and decisions taken during the meeting and said Mauritius lacked surveillance system needed for the exclusive economic zone. Mauritius needed technical cooperation from India to build capacity for surveillance and added that discus-

## Mauritian PM to visit Ram temple today

Ayodhya: Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam will visit the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Friday. After the Bhutan PM's visit last week, Ramgoolam will be the second head of state from another country to visit Ayodhya and offer prayers at the Ram temple. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will welcome Ramgoolam in the temple town, said officials. The Mauritian PM will arrive at Ayodhya airport from Varanasi at 11am.

sions to work together on the issue of climate change. The memorandum of understanding in fields of community development, farming, education, energy science and technology, marine science and space research will yield positive results in years ahead.

## Mauritius team holds talks for long-term investment in UP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Varanasi/Lucknow: A high-level business delegation from Mauritius engaged in a significant trade and investment dialogue with Invest UP on Thursday. The delegation aimed to deepen economic ties and foster long-term investment partnership between Uttar Pradesh and Mauritius.

They brought together leading Indian business associations to explore collaborations in key sectors like renewables, infrastructure, ports, roads, healthcare, pharma, financial services, tourism, and AI.

Welcoming the 28-member delegation, Invest UP CEO Shashank Chaudhary said, "Over 56% of UP's population falls within the working-age group, providing a substantial demographic dividend."

He added that UP's unmatched connectivity supported by a robust network of expressways, five international airports (including the upcoming Noida International Airport, one of Asia's largest), and 36 domestic airports, underlined that the state offers 34+ sectoral policies with some of the most attractive incentives in India.

Calling upon the Mauritius delegation to leverage these advantages, he invited them to explore Uttar Pradesh's Fortune Global and India-500 Investment Promotion Policy 2023 and the UP Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy 2022. The Mauritius delegation was led by Sanjay Bhunjun.

PS Gangadhar, joint secretary, Govt of India, said that Mauritius is one of the largest sources of trade and FDI for India.

## 'Prosperous Indian Ocean a shared priority'

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His 125th birth anniversary being celebrated this year will continue to inspire us to take our relations to new heights, the PM said. While announcing a special package for Mauritius, the PM said "it's not assistance but an investment in our shared future".

Mentioning that India has always stood as the first responder and a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region, Modi said India is fully committed to strengthening the security of the Mauritian Exclusive Economic Zone and enhancing its maritime capabilities, as a free, open, and prosperous Indian Ocean is a shared priority of both nations.

"The re-fitting of the Mauritius Coast Guard ship is being undertaken in India. In addition, 120 of their officers are also being trained in India. Today, an agreement has been concluded on cooperation in the field of hydrography. Over the next five years, we will work together on



GRAND WELCOME PM Narendra Modi welcomed with flower showers upon his arrival in Varanasi on Thursday

joint surveys, navigation charts, and hydrographic data of the EEZ," PM Modi said.

Committing to Mauritius' development, Modi said the special economic package has been designed to support the needs and priorities of the island nation. These include building an ATC Tower at SSR International Airport, expansion of highways and ring roads, generating new employment opportunities, and further enhancing healthcare facilities. After establishing the first Jan Aushadhi Kendra outside In-

dia in Mauritius, he said, India is cooperating in establishing an AYUSH Centre of Excellence, a 500-bed Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam National Hospital, as well as a Veterinary School and Animal Hospital in the island nation. India is supporting Mauritius in its energy transition by extending support to establish a 17.5 MW floating solar power plant at Tamarind Falls, while 16 of the 100 electric buses being provided to Mauritius were already delivered. The IIT-Madras and the Indian Institute of Plan-

tation Management have entered into agreements with the University of Mauritius to elevate partnership in research, education, and innovation to new heights, he said, congratulating the Mauritian PM on the conclusion of the Chagos Agreement and termed it a historic milestone for Mauritius' sovereignty. After the introduction of UPT and RuPay cards in Mauritius last year, Modi said, "Now, we will work towards enabling trade in local currencies."

Regarding partnership in the field of human resource development, Modi said, "Over 5,000 Mauritian students have already received training in India. During my visit in March, it was decided to provide training to 500 civil servants, and the first batch is currently undergoing training in Mussoorie. We have also decided to establish a new Directorate of Science and Technology in Mauritius. Soon, the training modules of Mission Karmayogi will also be launched in Mauritius."