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**INDIA-MAURITIUS RELATIONS:  
DEEPENING LONG-STANDING TIES**

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## INDIA-MAURITIUS RELATIONS: DEEPENING LONG-STANDING TIES

### Context

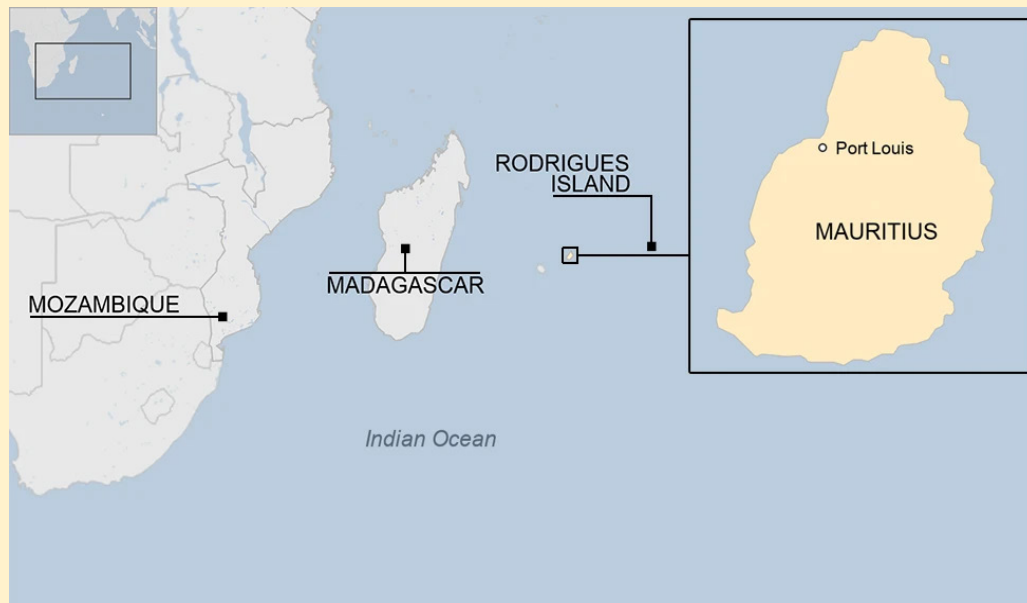
- PM Narendra Modi's visit to Mauritius as the guest of honor at its Independence Day celebrations highlights the **strategic depth of India-Mauritius relations** amid global geopolitical uncertainties.
  - ♦ The visit reaffirms India's commitment to **Mauritius' security, economic growth, and regional stability**.

### About India-Mauritius Partnership

- **Historical and Cultural Connections:** Mauritius is a **former British and French colony** that gained independence from British rule in 1968.
- Both countries share a historical connection dating back to the **19th century** when **Indian indentured laborers** were brought to the island under British rule.
  - ♦ Mahatma Gandhi's visit to Mauritius (Oct 29–Nov 15, 1901): Advocated education, political empowerment, and ties with India.
  - ♦ Today, **nearly 70% of Mauritius's population** traces its roots to India, and this **cultural affinity** has remained a **cornerstone of bilateral relations**.
  - ♦ Institutions like the **Mahatma Gandhi Institute** and the **World Hindi Secretariat** further nurture these cultural connections.
  - ♦ India's cultural influence is evident in Mauritius's language, cuisine, festivals, and traditions.

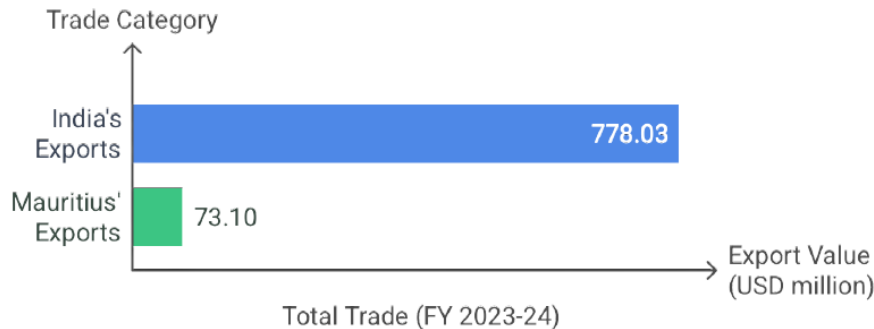
### Republic of Mauritius

- It is an island nation located in the Indian Ocean, approximately 2,000 kilometers off the southeastern coast of Africa.
- **Capital: Port Louis**



- **Political and Diplomatic Engagement:** Diplomatic relation was established in 1948.
  - ♦ Mauritius has consistently supported **India's position in international forums**, including at the **United Nations (UN) and the Commonwealth**.
  - ♦ India, in return, has backed **Mauritius's territorial claim over the Chagos Archipelago**, a matter of dispute with the United Kingdom.
- **Economic and Trade Relations:**
  - ♦ **Trade:** It has grown in the last 18 years, from USD 206.76 million in 2005-06 to USD 851.13 million in 2023-24.

- ◆ **Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA):** The **first such agreement between India and an African nation**, granting preferential market access.



- ◆ **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** Mauritius was the **second largest source of FDI** into India for **FY 2023-24, after Singapore**.
  - Since the signing of the Double Taxation Avoidance Convention (DTAC), FDI inflows from Mauritius have dropped from USD 15.72 bn in 2016-17 to USD 6.13 bn in **2022-23**.
- ◆ **Financial Assistance:** India has provided multiple lines of credit, including a \$100 million defense credit line.
- ◆ **Special Economic Zones (SEZs):** India is helping Mauritius develop infrastructure for economic growth.
- **Development Assistance:**
  - ◆ **Metro Express Project:** Improving public transport in Mauritius.
  - ◆ **Social Housing Project:** Affordable housing for citizens.
  - ◆ **Health Sector Support:** Assistance in building hospitals and providing COVID-19 vaccine aid during the pandemic.
- **Strategic and Defense Cooperation:** Mauritius holds strategic importance for India as a sentinel of the western Indian Ocean.
  - ◆ **Maritime Surveillance:** India assists Mauritius in patrolling its waters to counter piracy and illegal fishing.
  - ◆ **Infrastructure Development:** India has contributed to the construction of a new naval dockyard in Mauritius.
    - India has assisted in setting up radar networks to enhance maritime monitoring.
    - India is developing infrastructure on the **Agalega Islands**, improving air and naval connectivity
  - ◆ **Defense Equipment Supply:** India continues to supply defense equipment under favorable credit terms.
  - ◆ **Anti-Piracy Operations:** Joint efforts to combat piracy and illicit activities in the region.
- **Vision SAGAR and Regional Growth:** India's Vision **SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region)** emphasizes regional cooperation and maritime security.
  - ◆ Mauritius, as a close maritime neighbor, plays a pivotal role in this vision.

### Emerging Areas of Cooperation

- **Digital Economy and FinTech:** India is assisting Mauritius in developing digital payment systems modeled after **India's UPI (Unified Payments Interface)**.
  - ◆ Cybersecurity cooperation is being strengthened to counter digital threats in the financial sector.
- **Renewable Energy and Climate Change:** India is helping Mauritius transition to clean energy solutions, including solar and wind power projects.
  - ◆ Mauritius is a member of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, an initiative led by India to promote solar energy adoption.
- **Space Cooperation:** India has offered satellite technology and remote sensing capabilities to Mauritius for disaster management, weather forecasting, and maritime security.

### Key Challenges

- **Tax Treaty Amendments:** India's revision of the **Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA)** with Mauritius has reduced its attractiveness as an FDI gateway.
- **Growing Chinese Influence:** China is increasing its economic footprint in Mauritius, particularly through investments in infrastructure and trade, potentially challenging India's strategic leverage.
- **Security Threats:** Rising maritime piracy and illegal fishing in the Indian Ocean demand stronger maritime cooperation.

### Road Ahead: Future Prospects

- **Expanding Trade Agreements:** Strengthening CECTA by including more sectors like IT and healthcare services.
- **Boosting Defense Ties:** Increasing India's role in Mauritius' defense modernization and joint military drills.
- **Strengthening Regional Cooperation:** Mauritius can act as a bridge for India's deeper engagement with Africa and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

### Conclusion

- The India-Mauritius partnership is a model bilateral relationship, built on shared history, economic cooperation, and strategic alignment.
- As India expands its Indo-Pacific strategy and Africa outreach, Mauritius remains a crucial partner in achieving regional stability and economic growth.
- With increasing collaboration in trade, defense, digital economy, and climate change, this partnership is set to grow stronger in the years to come.

Source: TH

### Mains Practice Question

[Q] Examine the historical, cultural, and strategic factors that have shaped the enduring relationship between India and Mauritius. How can it further deepen long-standing ties and promote mutual growth and cooperation in the region?

