

India-Botswana: Bilateral Brief

Botswana, a landlocked country in Southern Africa, shares borders with South Africa, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. About 70% of its territory is covered by the Kalahari Desert. Since its independence on 30 September 1966, Botswana has remained a stable democracy, transforming itself from one of the world's poorest nations to an upper middle-income economy, largely due to the discovery of diamonds in 1967. Botswana is the world's leading producer of rough diamonds by value and the second-largest by volume. In 2023, Botswana's rough diamond production stood at 25 million carats (up from 24 million in 2022). However, in value terms, diamond exports fell from USD 6.4 billion (2023) to USD 4.4 billion (2024). India is among the principal destinations for Botswana's rough diamond exports.

Diplomatic Relations

India established diplomatic relations with Botswana immediately after its independence and opened its High Commission in Gaborone in 1987. Botswana reciprocated with the opening of its High Commission in New Delhi in 2006. Relations are marked by shared democratic values, mutual respect, and close cooperation across multiple sectors.

Bilateral Visits

High-level visits have reinforced the friendly ties between the two countries.

- From Botswana:
 - President Festus Mogae visited India in May 2005 and December 2006.
 - Former President Mokgweetsi E.K. Masisi visited India in June 2012 (as Minister of Presidential Affairs) and October 2015 (as Vice President).
- From India:
 - Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari (2010)
 - Vice President Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu (2018)
 - Hon'ble President of India Smt. Droupadi Murmu (2025)
- Recent engagements:

- FM Dr. Lemogang Kwape met EAM in Kevadia (Oct 2022).
- Defence & Security Minister Thomas Mmusi attended Interpol Assembly in New Delhi (Oct 2022).
- Health Minister Dr. Edwin Dikoloti visited India (Nov–Dec 2022).
- Youth, Sports & Culture Minister Mr. Macdonald Rakgare, Minister Bogolo Kenewendo, and MP Simon Moabi attended ICCR’s Gen Next Democracy Network (Jan 2023).
- Minister of Minerals & Energy Lefoko Moagi visited Mumbai and Delhi (Apr 2023).
- On sidelines of the Third South Summit in Kampala (Jan 2024), MoS V. Muraleedharan met FM Kwape.
- Minister of Sports and Arts, Mr. Jacob Kelebeng, visited India to attend the World Audio-Visual & Entertainment Summit (WAVES 2025) in Mumbai (May 2025)
- Minister of Transport & Infrastructure Mr. Noah Salakae visited India (December 2025)
- Foreign Minister Mr. Phenyio Butale visited India in January 2026, for signing of MoU with K.P. Group and to attend the SGCCI Global Village event organised by Southern Gujarat Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Gujarat
- Speaker of the National Assembly of Botswana, Mr. Dithapelo L. Keorapetse visited India to attend the 28th CSPOC, in New Delhi
- Assistant Minister of Communication and Innovation, Mr. Shawn Ntlhaile visited New Delhi to attend the AI Impact Summit in February 2026

Bilateral Mechanisms

The 4th Foreign Office Consultations were held in Gaborone on 14 December 2023, covering political, economic, defence, agricultural, and cultural cooperation. Other bilateral frameworks include the Joint Ministerial Committee (JMC) and a wide range of MoUs covering visa exemption, culture, trade, taxation, agriculture, education, and science & technology.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is a strong pillar of bilateral ties. India offers ICCR and ITEC scholarships, which are highly popular in Botswana. In the year 2025-26, 54 Botswana students were selected for ICCR scholarships (from over 500 applications). In the past decade, more than 1,500 students and professionals (civilian and Defence) have benefited from various capacity building programmes. Eleven researchers from Botswana have also availed the C.V. Raman Fellowship for advanced research in India. For the year 2026-27, 75 scholarship slots have been provided for students from Botswana to pursue

higher studies in India under the ICCR's 'India-Africa Maitri Scholarship Scheme'.

Trade and Investment

Diamonds dominate bilateral trade. Botswana exports rough diamonds to India, while Indian exports to Botswana include pharmaceuticals, machinery, iron & steel, and electrical equipment. There is considerable scope for India to expand exports in healthcare, pharmaceuticals & medical devices, digital technologies, agriculture, textiles, mining (copper, nickel, uranium), renewable energy, tourism, insurance, automobiles, tyres, ICT solutions and entertainment industries.

Bilateral Trade (USD million, Dept. of Commerce):

Year	India's Exports	India's Imports	Total Trade
2018-19	178.31	974.48	1152.79
2019-20	178.74	744.00	922.74
2020-21	172.69	461.72	634.41
2021-22	278.87	527.96	806.83
2022-23	171.27	459.97	631.24
2023-24	109.26	326.75	436.01
2024-25	173.44	332.90	506.34
2025-26	105.59	309.98	415.57

Investments

- **Banking:** Bank of Baroda is operating in Botswana since 2001 with 4 branches. The total volume of business in Botswana for the year 2025-26 is estimated at Rs. 4000 Crores.
- **Diamonds:** About 30 Indian-owned cutting & polishing firms operate in Botswana, including M. Suresh, KGK, Aurostar, Arjav, Dia-Rough, Urostar, Karp Impex, and others, providing employment and skills training.
- **Infrastructure & Energy:**
 - RITES Ltd. has presence in Gaborone. On 19 December 2025, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure for the Development of Railways and Related Infrastructure and Information Technology Services.

- Mahindra operates through franchises.
- Jindal Steel & Power is implementing a 600 MW coal-fired power project (300 MW already under agreement with BPC). The groundbreaking took place in Oct 2023.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 17 December 2025, between KP Group and the Government of Botswana for large-scale renewable energy and power infrastructure development, with the company ready to invest up to Rs 36,000 crore. The MoU envisages to upgrade power transmission, adding of around 5 gigawatt of renewable energy capacity in Botswana, which includes high-voltage transmission lines and cross-border connectivity.

Humanitarian Assistance

In response to the floods in Gaborone and other parts of Botswana, the Government of India extended relief aid valued at USD 50,000 (BWP 700,000), consisting of medicines and essential supplies.

Cultural & Sports Exchanges

Cultural diplomacy has been vibrant:

- Botswana women's cricket team trained in Bangalore (Nov 2023)
- Botswana scouts delegation joined Republic Day Youth Exchange (Jan 2024)
- A 20-member troupe participated in Surajkund International Crafts Mela in February 2024
- Botswana men's cricket team trained in Karnataka (Aug 2025)
- Botswana national badminton team visited India for a high performance training camp in January 2026
- A 19-member cultural troupe participated in the 39th edition of Surajkund Mela 2026, held in Faridabad, Haryana

Indian Diaspora

The Indian community in Botswana numbers around 10,000 and is engaged in retail, services, healthcare, education, construction, and hospitality. Diaspora members - primarily from Gujarat, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, and Tamil Nadu -play an important role in Botswana's economic and social life. Around 20 Indian associations are registered in Botswana with India Association of Botswana (IAB), Kerala Samajam, Gujarati Samaj and Telugu Association of Botswana (TAB) being the prominent ones. Indian festivals such as Diwali, Holi, and Onam are celebrated widely, with enthusiastic participation from Batswana friends and local dignitaries.

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