

## **India – Fiji Bilateral Brief**

### **Background:**

India-Fiji relations are based on mutual respect, cooperation and strong cultural and people-to-people ties. India's links with Fiji began in 1879 when Indian labourers were taken to Fiji under the indenture system by the British to work on sugar-cane plantations. Between 1879 and 1916, around 60,553 Indians were taken to Fiji. The indenture system was abolished in 1920. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian traders started arriving in Fiji.

2. Prior to Fiji's independence in 1970, India had a post of Commissioner since 1948 to look after the interests of people of Indian origin. It was upgraded to High Commissioner after Fiji's independence. High-level visits began since the independence of Fiji which included PM Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara to India (1971) and PM Indira Gandhi to Fiji (1981). Following the 1987 coups, both the High Commission of India and the Indian Cultural Centre in Fiji were closed in May 1990; the High Commission reopened in March 1999, and the Cultural Centre in February 2005. Fiji opened its High Commission in New Delhi in 2004. Fiji's population includes ~300,000 persons of Indian origin (37%) and ~2,300 Indian nationals (2024), mainly in IT, finance, education, healthcare, and hospitality.

3. Over the years, as a major development partner of Fiji, India has supported Fiji in its nation building efforts across key sectors and in the area of capacity building.

### **Political Relations:**

4. Visit of PM Narendra Modi to Fiji (19 Nov 2014): The bilateral relationship reached a historic milestone with Prime Minister Modi's landmark visit to Fiji in November 2014, which also marked the convening of the First FIPIC Summit. Three MoUs were signed with Fiji on a co-generation plant (LOC support), diplomatic training, and allocation of land for diplomatic missions.

5. Visit of EAM to Fiji (14-17 Feb 2023): EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar visited Fiji to attend the 12<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference in Nadi. In Suva, he signed a Visa Waiver Agreement, launched the India-UN Development Partnership Fund solarisation project at the State House, inaugurated the renovated Girmit Gallery, unveiled a bust of Sardar Patel at India House, and engaged with the Indian diaspora.

6. EAM's Meeting with PM Rabuka (15 Feb 2025): EAM Dr. S Jaishankar met with Fiji PM Sitiveni Rabuka on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference.

7. Visit of MoS (PM) (10-12 May 2025): Shri Pabitra Margherita visited Fiji as Guest of Honour at the Girmit Day Commemoration in 2025. During the visit, an MoU on Fiji's recognition of the Indian Pharmacopoeia was signed.

8. Visit of MOS (RRS) (14-16 May 2023): MOS Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh and Praful Patel, Administrator of Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Lakshadweep, visited Fiji for the 144<sup>th</sup> Girmity Day in Suva.
9. Visit of the Hon'ble President Smt. Droupadi Murmu (5-7 Sept 2024): At the invitation of Fijian President Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere (FPK), Hon'ble Rashtrapatiiji (HR) paid a two-day State visit to Fiji. This was the first-ever visit by an Indian Head of State to Fiji. HR held meetings with the President and PM of Fiji.
10. Visit of PM of Fiji to India (Mar 2018): PM Bainimarama visited India and participated in the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance held in New Delhi on 11 Mar 2018.
11. Launch of FIPIC (19 Nov 2014): The Forum was inaugurated by PM Modi during his visit to Fiji in 2014, and saw participation of 14 Pacific Island Countries. India announced development assistance initiatives in various fields including, climate change, trade, economy, tele-medicine and tele-education, IT, Grants for community development projects, human resource development, etc.
12. FIPIC-II Summit (21 Aug 2015): India organized the 2<sup>nd</sup> FIPIC Summit at Jaipur hosted by PM Narendra Modi. Fijian delegation, led by PM Josaia Vorenqe Bainimarama, attended the Forum.
13. FIPIC-III Summit (22 May 2023): The 3<sup>rd</sup> Summit was held in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea on 22 May 2023 co-chaired by PM Narendra Modi and PNG PM James Marape. Fijian delegation led by PM Sitiveni Rabuka attended the Summit. This was the first meeting between the two PMs. On behalf of the Fijian President, Mr. Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere, PM Rabuka bestowed PM Narendra Modi with the highest honor of Fiji, Companion of the Order of Fiji (CF).
14. Interaction with PSIDS at New York (24 Sept 2019): On the sidelines of the 74<sup>th</sup> UNGA, PM Narendra Modi met Pacific Islands Developing States (PSIDS) leaders in New York in 2019.
15. India-Pacific Islands Sustainable Development Conference (IPI-SDC) (25-26 May 2017): India organized the IPISDC in Suva hosted by MoS Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd).
16. Fiji is a Founding Member of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) and a member of the Global Biofuel Alliance (Nov 2024).
17. Cooperation in the field of sharing successful Digital Solutions: On 12 Nov 2024, India and Fiji signed an MoU aimed at advancing digital transformation through the exchange of successful, population-scale digital solutions.

### **Defence Cooperation:**

18. MOU on Defence Cooperation was signed in 2017. The Defence Minister of Fiji visited India in February 2025 to participate in AERO India 2025. A bilateral meeting was held between the Defence Ministers during the visit.

19. In Sept 2022, INS Satpura made a goodwill visit to Suva.

### **Commercial and Economic Relations:**

20. Bilateral trade consisting largely of Indian exports to Fiji has been growing. Bilateral trade figures of the last four financial years (1 Apr-31 Mar) are as under:

Year	Exports to India	Import from India	Balance of Trade
2020-21	1.33	46.90	45.57
2021-22	0.49	57.96	57.47
2022-23	0.10	80.02	79.92
2023-2024	1.19	76.28	75.09
2024 – 2025	1.54	84.67	83.13

*(Source: Department of Commerce, GOI) in US\$ Million*

21. **Public Sector Undertakings of India in Fiji:** Four GOI undertakings, viz, New India Assurance Company Ltd. (since 1954), Life Insurance Corporation of India (since 1956), Bank of Baroda (since 1961), Water and Power Consultancy Services Ltd (Since 2015) are functioning in Fiji.

### **Development Partnership:**

22. Development cooperation is a key pillar of India's partnership with Fiji, in areas such as agriculture, capacity building, education, health, IT, MSMEs, clean energy, and HADR. Some of the areas are as below:

- i. Under the US\$1.31 million regional Solarisation Project (2020), largely funded by India and implemented in partnership with the UN and the Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), photovoltaic systems were installed at Fiji's State House, the Great Council of Chiefs Meeting Hall, the Kubuna Paramount Chief's residence, and Prime Minister's official residence, boosting climate resilience.
- ii. Through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund, India also supports climate resilience and parametric insurance, while assisting Fiji's sugar industry and youth farming initiatives.

- iii. India has provided Fiji with medical supplies, vehicles, soil testing labs, and children's medicines, alongside community projects such as Jaipur Foot camps benefiting ~600 people.
- iv. India established the Mahatma Gandhi Centre of Excellence in IT (2021) at Fiji National University and is helping set up the Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) at University of South Pacific.
- v. India has been a consistent partner in Fiji's electoral process, providing vehicles and indelible ink for elections since 2014.
- vi. As an early responder, India extended HADR support, notably after Cyclone Winston (2016) and Cyclone Yasa (2020), and supplied 100,000 Covishield vaccines (2021).
- vii. India doubled ITEC slots to 110 after PM Modi's 2014 visit and, at FIPIC-III (2023), announced 1,000 Sagar Amrut Scholarships for Pacific Islands (100 annually for Fiji). Fiji also benefits from 20 ICCR scholarships each year, including those for Indian culture and music.

### **Health Cooperation:**

23. Many Fijians travel to India for advanced treatment. Apollo Hospitals Group signed an MoU with Fiji National University in 2013 for training, capacity building and telemedicine, and set up a hub in Suva in 2018; MIOT maintains a small set-up in Suva with visiting specialists. An Agreement on Healthcare Cooperation (2005) continues to guide engagement. In May 2025, an MoU on Pharmacopoeial Cooperation was signed.

24. During the FIPIC-III Summit held in Port Moresby in May 2023, PM Shri Narendra Modi announced that India will be establishing a 100-bedded Super Specialty Hospital in Fiji. This hospital will be equipped with trained staff, modern facilities and infrastructure, and it will serve as a lifeline for the entire Pacific region. The project is underway.

### **Cultural Relations and People-to-People Ties:**

25. Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre: Established in 1972 as India's first cultural centre abroad, SVCC offers classes in music, dance, Hindi, and Yoga, and regularly organises cultural programmes and events.

26. Hindi Conference: The First Regional Hindi Conference was held in Suva in January 2020, followed by the 12<sup>th</sup> World Hindi Conference in Nadi in February 2023, inaugurated jointly by the Fijian President and EAM.

27. Girmity Day: As part of *Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav*, commemorative stamps on the occasion of 143<sup>rd</sup> Girmity Day were issued in 2022. Girmity Remembrance Day was observed

in New Delhi on 14 May 2022 with MoS Dr. Rajkumar Ranjan Singh as Chief Guest, who also attended the 144<sup>th</sup> Girmity Day in Fiji on 15 May 2023 as Guest of Honour. The 146<sup>th</sup> Girmity Day celebrations (May 2025) in Fiji were attended by Shri Pabitra Margherita, MoS for External Affairs and Textiles.

28. International Day of Yoga (IDY): Since 2015, IDY has been celebrated annually in Fiji with wide participation, including by Fijian PM and Deputy PM.

29. Yoga Centres: As part of PM's 12-point FIPIC Action Plan, Yoga Centres were set up in Labasa (2024) and Seaqaqa (2025).

30. Tamil Teaching Programme: Two teachers were deployed from India for the India-funded Tamil language teaching programmes in Fiji launched in 2024.

31. Pravasi Bhartiya Divas (PBD) / Pravasi Bhartiya Samman (PBS): In January 2025 at the 18<sup>th</sup> PBD, Swami Sanyuktanand of Fiji Sevashram Sangha received the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Award from President Smt. Droupadi Murmu for exceptional community service. Fiji's Sai Prema Foundation received the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) in 2021. Other PBSA awardees from Fiji include: former PM Mahendra Chaudhry (2004), golfer Vijay Singh (2005), late Sir Moti Tika Ram (2007), late Y.P. Reddy (2010), Girmity Council (2010), Ramakrishna Mission (2014), and late Vinod Patel (2017).

32. Know India Programmes (KIP): During the last five years, a large no. of Indo-Fijians have visited India through Know India Programme.

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