

BILATERAL BRIEF-KENYA

Historical overview

- The presence of Indians in East Africa is documented in the 'Periplus of the Erythraean Sea' or Guidebook of the Red Sea by an ancient Greek author written in 60 AD. A well-established trade network existed between India and the Swahili Coast predating European exploration. India and Kenya share a common legacy of struggle against colonialism. Many Indians participated and supported the freedom struggle of Kenya.
- India established the office of Commissioner for British East Africa resident in Nairobi in 1948. Apa Saheb Pant was the first Commissioner. Following Kenyan independence in December 1963, a High Commission was established resident in Nairobi. India has an Assistant High Commission in Mombasa.
- In contemporary times, India and Kenya share a robust and multi-faceted partnership marked by regular high-level visits, increasing trade and investments, defence and security cooperation, health and digital public infrastructure, cultural cooperation as well as extensive people to people contacts.

High Level Visits

- There have been periodic high-level visits between both sides. From Indian side, the visits to Kenya have been by Vice President Dr. S Radhakrishnan in 1956, Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi for Kenyan Independence celebrations in 1963 followed by visits in 1970 and 1981, PM Morarji Desai in 1978 and of President Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy in 1981.
- From the Kenyan side, visits to India have been by President Moi in 1981 and in 1983 (NAM Summit), President Uhuru Kenyatta in 2017 and President William Ruto in 2023.

Recent High Level Bilateral visits

- **Visit of PM Modi:** The State visit of PM Narendra Modi to Kenya on 10-11 July 2016 gave a new impetus to bilateral partnership. Seven (MoUs)/Agreements in the fields of defence, housing, trade and developmental assistance were signed. PM handed over 30 field ambulances for the use of the Kenya Defence Forces. Five business to business MoUs were also signed on the side-lines of the business event. PM addressed a gathering of over 20,000 Indian community members in Nairobi. President Kenyatta joined him during the diaspora interaction. PM delivered a special lecture to a large gathering of students at the University of Nairobi and visited United Nations Office at Nairobi. India announced gifting of a state-of-the-art made in India cancer therapy machine – Bhabhatron II – to Kenyatta National Hospital, grant of US\$ 1 million for the refurbishment of the Mahatma Gandhi graduate library of the University of Nairobi and holding of the first ever Festival of India in Kenya.

- **Visit of President Kenyatta:** President Uhuru Kenyatta paid a State Visit to India from 10-12 January 2017. The visit was preceded by him attending the Vibrant Gujarat Summit 2017 on 10 January. MoU on Cooperation in the agriculture sector and allied sector and LoC for US\$100 million for agricultural mechanization was signed during the visit. Earlier, President Uhuru Kenyatta attended the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit and held bilateral meeting with PM Modi in October 2015.
- **Visit of President William Ruto:** President William Ruto paid a State Visit to India from 4-6 December 2023. Five MoUs/agreements were signed during the visit in the areas of Sports, Digital Solutions, Culture, Standards, and Education. President Ruto attended the India-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum on 5 December 2023 and also met with select business leaders of Indian companies. Announcements made and documents issued during the visit included - India-Kenya Joint Statement, Joint Maritime Vision Statement titled BAHARI; Kenya's decision to join ISA and the GBA; a LoC of US \$ 250 million for Agriculture modernization; Customized training program for 20 Space Scientists in ISRO; A geo-spatial information portal for Kenya with Indian remote sensing data and; increase in ICCR scholarships from 48 to 80 per year.

Recent Ministerial Visits from India

- There have been regular Ministerial visits from India to Kenya, reflecting the depth of high-level political engagement and sustained momentum in the bilateral partnership.
- In recent years, high-level engagements have continued at a steady pace: Speaker of Lok Sabha Om Birla visited Kenya from 16–18 January 2023, accompanied by a parliamentary delegation, and held meetings with the Kenyan leadership and presiding officers of Parliament; Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs V. Muraleedharan visited Kenya from 22–23 November 2023, accompanied by a 30-member CII business delegation, during which he co-launched the India–Kenya Business Council (IKBC); Raksha Rajya Mantri Sanjay Seth visited Kenya from 22–24 June 2025, during which he jointly unveiled the India–Africa Commemorative Pillar at Taita Taveta with the Kenyan Cabinet Secretary for Defence to honour fallen soldiers and reinforce defence cooperation; Minister of State for External Affairs and Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh visited Kenya from 09–13 December 2025 to attend the 7th United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA).

Recent Ministerial Visits from Kenya

- There have been regular high-level visits from Kenya to India, underscoring strong political engagement and expanding sectoral cooperation across multiple domains.
- In recent years, high-level engagements have continued at a steady pace: Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi and Principal Secretary John Tanui participated in the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit in August 2024; Principal Secretary for Diaspora Affairs Roseline Njogu visited India from 12–15 November 2024 for a benchmarking study;

Principal Secretary for Shipping and Maritime Affairs Geoffrey Kaituko visited India in November 2024 for Sagarmathan Dialogue; Attorney General Dorcas Oduor led a delegation from 13–18 January 2025 for a capacity building programme; Cabinet Secretary for ICT William Kabogo Gitau visited India in May 2025 for WAVES 2025; a high-level delegation led by Mercy Wanjau visited India from 18–21 November 2025 for engagement on Aadhaar and digital governance; Chief Justice Martha Koome visited India from 21–27 November 2025; Cabinet Secretary for Health Aden Duale visited India from 17–19 December 2025 for the WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine; Speaker Moses Wetangula led a delegation from 14–16 January 2026 for the Commonwealth Speakers’ Conference; Cabinet Secretary for ICT William Kabogo Gitau led a delegation in February 2026 for the AI Impact Summit, during which the Implementation Framework Agreement for the DigiLocker pilot was signed; and Prime Cabinet Secretary Musalia Mudavadi visited India in March 2026 for the Raisina Dialogue, holding bilateral talks with the External Affairs Minister.

Bilateral Trade

- India is one of Kenya’s top trading partners with the trade relations encompassing various sectors of the economy. Until 2014-15, India was Kenya’s largest trading partner with bilateral trade of US\$ 4.235 billion. According to data from the Department of Commerce, Government of India, the value of trade in FY 2024-25 stood at US\$ 3.452 billion. Of this, the value of Indian exports to Kenya was US\$ 3.134 billion while that of imports from Kenya to India was US\$ 318.74 million. Main Indian exports to Kenya in the period included petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, machinery, cereals, sugars & confectionery, plastics & articles, vehicles, electrical machinery & equipment, organic chemicals and paper & paperboard. Main Kenyan exports to India on the other hand were tea, coffee, soda ash, edible vegetables, copper and articles, fertilisers, metal scrap, miscellaneous chemical products, lead and articles and zinc and articles. The following table summarizes the bilateral trade figures.

Year	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
EXPORT	3,273.66	3,174.83	3,133.69
%Growth	24.38	-3.02	-1.30
% Share of India’s Export	0.7259	0.7263	0.7163
IMPORT	116.68	176.34	318.74
%Growth	-19.73	51.13	80.76
%Share of India’s Import	0.0163	0.0261	0.04419
TOTAL TRADE	3,390.34	3351.17	3452.43
%Growth	22.08	-1.16	3.02

TRADE BALANCE	3,156.98	2998.49	2814.95
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(Source: Department of Commerce, India, Figures in USD million)

- An India-Kenya Trade Agreement was signed in 1981, under which both countries accorded Most Favoured Nation status to each other. The India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was set up at Ministerial level in 1983 as a follow-up to the Agreement. The JTC has met nine times since, the last in August 2019 in New Delhi in which then Cabinet Secretary (Minister) of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives Mr. Peter Munya co-chaired the meeting with the Commerce and Industry Minister (CIM) of India Mr. Piyush Goyal.
- According to the Kenya Investment Authority (KenInvest), India is the second largest investor in Kenya. Over 60 major Indian companies have invested in various sectors including manufacturing, real estate, pharmaceuticals, telecom, IT & ITES, banking and agro-based industries. Indian investments have resulted in creation of thousands of direct jobs to Kenyans. Indian pharmaceutical companies have a substantial presence in Kenya. A bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) was signed in 1989. Revised DTAA was signed in July 2016 and came into force on 30 August 2017.
- India Kenya Business Council (IKBC) was launched on 22 November 2023 in Nairobi during the India-Kenya Business Forum that was graced by Hon'ble Shri. Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India (GoI), Mr. V Muraleedharan and Hon'ble Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Investments, Trade & Industry, Government of Kenya, Ms. Rebecca Miano.
- Government of India consented to Kenya's request for market access for its avocados. In a ceremonial flag-off, the first cargo of Kenyan avocados to India was dispatched from Nairobi as diplomatic cargo to the High Commission of Kenya in New Delhi on 16 September 2023.
- EXIM Bank of India established office in Nairobi on 30 May, 2024.
- Many Kenyans travel to India for medical treatment of critical ailments every year. It is understood that 90% of international medical travel from Kenya is to India.

Development Cooperation and assistance

- India offers development assistance to Kenya in the form of loans and credit. The recent developments include a loan agreement to extend US\$ 15 million to IDB Capital Limited (now renamed as Kenya Development Corporation – KDC) for development of SMEs in July 2016. A Line of Credit agreement of US\$ 29.95 million for upgradation of Rift Valley Textiles Factory (RIVATEX East Africa Limited) was signed in July 2016. The upgraded facility was inaugurated by the then President Uhuru Kenyatta on 21 June, 2019. A Line of Credit (LOC) agreement of US\$ 61.60 million has been extended for power transmission and substation projects.
- President Kenyatta commissioned an Advanced Telecobalt Cancer Therapy Machine – Bhabhatron II & Digital Radiotherapy Simulator – Imagin, gifted by India, at the Kenyatta

National Hospital in Nairobi in August 2017. In May 2020, High Commissioner handed over the second tranche of essential medicines worth USD 1.54 million to Government of Kenya. The first tranche was handed over in July 2018. In August 2020, a gift of consignment of medicines related to COVID19 was handed over by Acting High Commissioner.

- Under Vaccine Maitri, Kenya was given 1.12 million doses of Covishield in March 2021 (1.02 million under COVAX alliance and 100,000 as gift). A MoU for establishing a tertiary care hospital in Eldoret, Kenya was signed between Apollo Hospital and Baler Healthcare, Kenya. Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane laid the foundation stone on 27 September 2024 at Kenyan Navy Base, Mtongwe of the CT scan infrastructure and Machine which has been donated by Government of India.
- During the State Visit to India of President of the Republic of Kenya, H.E. Hon. William Samoei Ruto from 04-06 December, 2023, Government of India agreed to extend a USD 250 million Line of Credit (LoC) to Government of Kenya (GoK) for Agricultural Mechanization projects in line with Kenya's national development priorities. The proposed facility is intended for supporting agriculture, one of the key pillars of the India-Kenya bilateral partnership.
- High Commissioner and Vice Chancellor of the University of Nairobi signed an MoU for renovation of the Mahatma Gandhi Graduate Library at the University of Nairobi on 3 Oct 2016. The library, renovated at a cost of US\$ One million was inaugurated during the visit of Dr. S. Jaishankar, External Affairs Minister of India in June 2021.
- A water hyacinth harvesting machine gifted to Kisumu country was jointly inaugurated by the High Commissioner and Governor of Kisumu County in November 2022.
- India gifted 15 parachutes to Ministry of Defence of Kenya in August 2023.
- On 14 May 2024, High Commissioner handed over 2nd tranche of 40MT of humanitarian assistance supplies that included medical supplies and other equipment donated by Government of India for flood-affected Kenyans. Earlier on 10 May 2024, Indian Naval Ship Sumedha, which as the first responder in IOR, handed over food, relief & medicine supplies for flood victims to the Government of Kenya.
- Defence Secretary Shri Giridhar Aramane, during his visit to Kenya, laid the foundation stone on 27 September 2024 at Kenyan Navy Base, Mtongwe of the CT scan infrastructure and CT Scan Machine which has been donated by Government of India. Total cost of the project is USD 12,31,210/-.
- Kenya is offered 240 civilian slots for training in various fields under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme and roughly 80 ICCR scholarships. Apart from this, many Kenyan students go to India under the Study in India programme and as self-financing students.

Regional and Multilateral Cooperation

- India and Kenya cooperate closely in regional and multi-lateral fora. Kenya is important member of the AU Committee of 10 Heads of State responsible for preparation of common African position on UNSC reforms. India and Kenya are also founding members of IORA.

People to people contacts

- A bilateral Cultural Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1981. Mission, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture of India and the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts of Kenya organized the first-ever Festival of India in Kenya named "Urafiki Utsav" from 10 October to 28 November 2016. Six cultural troupes from different parts of India performed in five cities of Kenya. Since 2016, under the sponsorship of ICCR, Indian artists are participating as adjudicators for the Kenya Music Festival. Mission distributed grants-in-aid from Ministry of Culture of India to 16 Kenyan organizations promoting Indian culture.
- A 20-member cultural troupe along-with 4 Government officials from Kenya visited India to participate in 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela at Faridabad, organized by State Government of Haryana in collaboration with Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi held in February 2018. In February 2019, Kenya again participated in Surajkund International Crafts Mela. South Indian Cultural Festival was organized in May, 2019 in which Cabinet Secretaries of Ministry of Sports & Culture and of Ministry of Defence, Governors of Machakos and Laikipia Counties, Principal secretary of Ministry of Foreign Affairs graced the occasion with participation of more than 300 guests from Indian diaspora, Diplomatic corps, prominent Kenyans and media.
- India is the fifth largest source of inbound tourists for Kenya. More than 130,000 Indian tourists visited Kenya in 2025.
- The Kenya-India Friendship Association (KIFA) was set up in 1981. 'Bharatwallah Alumni Association' (an alumni association of Kenyan students who had studied in India for the last over 50 years) was formally launched in May 2016. The PM interacted with Bharatwallah Alumni Association in July 2016. Indian origin MPs Dr. Swarup Ranjan Mishra and Mr. Abdul Rahim Dawood visited New Delhi to attend the First PIO-Parliamentarians Conference on 9-10 January 2018. Ms. Champa Varsani and Mr. Darshan Chandaria visited South Africa to participate in the Gandhi-Mandela Youth Summit as part of Commemoration of 125th Anniversary of the Pietermaritzburg Railway Station incident on 6-7 June 2018.
- Late Kenyan Nobel Peace laureate and environmentalist Prof. Wangari Maathai had been conferred the 2005 Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding as well as the 2006 Indira Gandhi Award for Peace, Disarmament and Development. Prof. Rachel Gesami of Kenya joined as Nelson Mandela Chair at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi in February 2018. An MoU on establishment of an ICCR Chair on Indian studies between ICCR and University of Nairobi was signed in March 2015.

- India and Kenya enjoy non-stop air connectivity between Nairobi - Mumbai on Kenya Airways (twice daily) and Indigo Airlines (daily). Air India flight from Nairobi to Delhi has been temporarily suspended.

Indian Community and Diaspora in Kenya:

- Indians were trading with the Swahili coast since early historical times as evidenced by ancient works. With the region coming under Omani rule particularly Mogadishu, Mombasa and Zanzibar, Indian presence remained part of Swahili kaleidoscope. With the advent of Portuguese and finally British, Indian involvement became deeper. A large number of Indians came since 1895 to build the British railway line from Mombasa to Uganda. Kenyan Indians were also active participants in Kenya's pre-independence period included the labour leader Makhan Singh, M. A. Desai and Pio Gama Pinto. Indian MP Diwan Chaman Lall joined Jomo Kenyatta's defence team which included two other persons of Indian origin, F R S DeSouza (later Kenya's Deputy Speaker) and A R Kapila, at his 1953 trial.
- A vibrant community of persons of Indian origin, presently numbering around 80,000, including an estimated 20,000 Indian citizens, continues to play an important role in Kenya's socio-economic fabric. The Hindu Council of Kenya serves as an umbrella body representing various Hindu religious and cultural institutions. There are several associations representing different communities within the Indian diaspora, as well as numerous places of worship, schools and social institutions. Several Kenyans of Indian origin have distinguished themselves as lawyers, judges, doctors and academics, including in the higher judiciary, with former Chief Justices Chunilal Madan and Abdul Majid Cockar.
- Five persons of Indian origin from Kenya have been awarded the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman: Mr. Manilal Premchand Chandaria, Mr. Pheroze Nowrojee (now deceased), Mr. P.V. Sambasiva Rao, Dr. Prakash M. Heda, and Dr. FRS De Souza (now deceased).

[March, 2026]