

Brief on India - Lesotho Relations

India and Lesotho established diplomatic relations on June 8, 1971. Initially, India's diplomatic representation to Lesotho was handled by its High Commission in Botswana and since 1996 it has been concurrently accredited to the High Commission in Pretoria, South Africa.

Following the visit of Prime Minister Mosisili to India in August 2003, Lesotho opened a resident Mission in New Delhi in 2005. India and Lesotho enjoy a strong relationship that has stood the test of time and is based on shared values and principles, underpinned by the noble objective of South-South cooperation.

Recent Interactions:

From Lesotho

A high level delegation led by Mr. Limpho Tau, Minister in PMO, responsible for defence and security attended Aero-India 2025 at Bengaluru and also held a bilateral meeting with Hon'ble Defence Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Mr. Lejone Mpotjoana, participated in the virtual Foreign Ministers' Session-I 'Charting a unique paradigm for Global South'. The Principal Secretary at the Ministry of Information, Communications, Science, Technology and Innovation, Mr. Kanono Leronti Ramashamole attended the session on 'DPIs for Development – A Global South Approach' at the 3rd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 August 2024.

Minister of Environment and Forests, Mr. Letsema Adonts attended the virtual Environment Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit which was chaired by Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change of India on 17 November 2023.

Minister of Finance and Development Planning, Dr Retšelisitsoe Matlanyane MP, virtually participated and delivered her remarks as one of the panelists in the Finance Ministers' Session on 12 January 2023 as part of the virtual 'Voice of the Global South Summit' on 12-13 January 2023 during India's G20 Presidency.

Minister of Education and Training of the Kingdom of Lesotho, Dr. Ntoi Rapapa, MP, accompanied by Deputy Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Education and Training, Mr. Ratsiu Majara, visited India in connection with the UNESCO-India-Africa Hackathon held from 22-25 November 2022 in Greater Noida, India.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr Keketso Sello, visited India from 19-24 September 2022 for attending the 9th Session of the Governing Body of the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA) in New Delhi.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Ms Matsepo Molise Ramakoe, visited India and met EAM on 1 June 2022. Later on 3 June 2022, she was conferred 'Honoris Causa' degree by G.D. Goenka University in India.

Deputy Minister in Prime Minister's office, Mr. Tsehlo Moses Ramarou, participated in the India Africa Defence Ministers' Conclave (IADMC) on 6 February 2020.

Minister of Agriculture and Food Security, Mr. Malaha Molapo, along with nine other officials from his Ministry visited India in August-September 2019 in connection with a study tour of major irrigation and agriculture infrastructures in India.

Deputy Prime Minister, Mr. Monyane Moleleki, accompanied by Minister of Small Business Development, Cooperatives and Marketing, Mr Chalane Letus Phori, and Deputy Minister of Foreign

Affairs & International Relations, Mr Halebonoe Setsabi, visited India to attend the 14th CII Exim Bank Africa Conclave held in New Delhi from 17-19 March 2019.

Minister of Water Affairs, Mr. Samonyane Ezekiel Ntsekele, accompanied by Commissioner of Water, Government of Lesotho, Mr Mokake Mojakisane, visited India to attend the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGSIC) in New Delhi from 29 September to 2 October 2018.

Minister of Health, Mr. Nkaku Kabi, Lesotho visited India from 30 June – 6 July 2018 and Deputy Minister of Health, Ms Manthabiseng Arcylia Pholeli, Government of Lesotho visited India on 2 September 2018 to follow-up on the MoU signed between Apollo Hospital, India and the Ministry of Health, Government of Lesotho.

His Majesty King Letsie III and his family visited India (a private visit) from 27 December 2017-2 January 2018.

From India

Shri Pabitra Margherita, Minister of State for External Affairs and Textiles [MoS(PM)] paid an official visit to the Kingdom of Lesotho on 21-22 July 2025. The visit to the Kingdom of Lesotho was the first Ministerial visit after a gap of 10 years following the first-ever Ministerial visit from India to Lesotho in July 2015. In Lesotho, Hon'ble Minister of State (MoS-PM) paid a courtesy call on His Majesty King Letsie III, and the Right Honourable Mr. Samuel Matekane, Prime Minister of Kingdom of Lesotho. The Hon'ble MoS also held bilateral meetings with the Mr. Mpotjoane Lejone, Hon. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Ms. Nthathi Moorosi, Hon Minister of Information, Communications, Science, Technology & Innovation, Dr. Ntoi Rapapa, Hon. Minister of Education & Training, and Mr. Ts'eliso Mokhosi, Hon. Minister of Labour and Employment during his visit in Maseru.

Hon'ble Minister of State (IC) Culture, Tourism & MoS for Civil Aviation, Dr. Mahesh Sharma visited Lesotho on 9 July 2015 as Special Envoy of Hon'ble Prime Minister to deliver invitations for the 3rd India-Africa Forum Summit to the leadership of the Government of Lesotho. During the visit, Minister met with the Prime Minister of Lesotho, Dr. Pakalitha Bethuel Mosisili, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Relations, Mr. Tlohang Sekhamane.

High Commissioner's recent visit to Lesotho

High Commissioner Shri. Prabhat Kumar visited Maseru, Lesotho on 15-17 January 2026. During the visit, High Commissioner Shri. Prabhat Kumar called on Minister of Health Selibe Mochoboroane, Hon'ble Minister of Home affairs Lebona Lephema, Hon'ble Minister of Information Nthathi Moorosi, Hon'ble Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Limpho Tau and Hon'ble Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Pitso Lesaoana. During these meetings, HC discussed the bilateral agenda for 2026 with the Ministers of Lesotho.

Joint Bilateral Cooperation Commission Meeting (JBCC)

The Agreement establishing the Joint Commission was signed in March 2004. First session of JBCC was held in New Delhi in March 2009. The fourth meeting of the JBCC was held in Lesotho on 1 October 2019. The 5th round of Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation was held in Maseru, Lesotho on 2 August 2023.

Defence

A high level delegation led by Mr. Limpho Tau, Minister in PMO, responsible for defence and security

attended Aero-India 2025 at Bengaluru and also held a bilateral meeting with Hon'ble Defence Minister, Shri Rajnath Singh. Chief of Defence Staff of the Lesotho Force Lt Gen Mojalefa Letsoela visited India from 17-21 October 2022 in connection with DefExpo 2022 (18-22 October) and also attended India-Africa Defence Dialogue on 18 October 2022. A number of officials of the Lesotho Defence Forces (LDF) have been trained in Indian defence training establishments. Lieutenant General ET Motanyane, Commander, LDF visited India along with other senior officers in October 2007. Mr. Moshoeshe David Sehloho, Principal Secretary, Defence & National Security, Lesotho visited New Delhi in August 2013 and met with the Defence Secretary and Deputy Chief of Army Staff, in addition to visiting Indian Military Academy, Dehradun. From India, Lt Gen JP Nehra, Deputy Chief of Army Staff, Indian Army visited Lesotho on 17-19 July 2014.

Agreements / MOUs

- (i) Agreement on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports was signed between two nations in December 2020.
- (ii) An MoU on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation was signed between India and Lesotho on 21 July 2025 in Maseru during the visit of Hon'ble MoS (PM).

India's Assistance in other areas

On 7 April 2025, 1000 metric tonnes of Rice and 1000 metric tonnes of Sorghum were formally donated by India to Lesotho as a gesture of goodwill and friendship between the two countries and to mitigate the devastating effect of food shortages caused by famine and other acts of nature.

A two-member delegation comprising Dr. Mapota Masoabi, Director, Clinical Services and Mr. Motaba Andrease Sebotsa, Head of the Medical Regulatory Authority visited India from 16-19 June 2025 as a part of the 2nd Edition of the Policy makers ' visit on Indian Pharmacopoeia (IP).

Under a tripartite agreement signed by India and Lesotho in October 2001, 4 Indian agricultural experts / technicians were deputed to Lesotho under FAO's special programme for Food Security in Low Income Food Deficit countries. Subsequently, an Indian Expert was deputed in January 2004 to render assistance for drawing up an irrigation master plan.

National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) and Basotho Enterprises Development Corporation (BEDCO) signed an MOU in January 2004 for Mutual Cooperation for the Development of Small Industries in Lesotho. This envisaged strengthening the capacity of BEDCO for development sustenance and growth of small enterprises in Lesotho, facilitating transfer of technologies from India to Lesotho, assistance in setting up a Common Facility-cum-Training Center to meet the skill and technology needs of small enterprises in Lesotho and facilitating enterprise-to-enterprise contacts with a view to promote Indian investment and industrial partnerships in Lesotho. The Indian Ministry of Textiles sent a team of experts to assess Lesotho's training needs in the textile sector.

Familiarization visit of journalists from East & Southern Africa region was organized by XPD Division from 12-18 December 2024. Two (2) journalists from Lesotho attended the visit.

An India-Lesotho Centre for Advanced Education in Information Technology has been set up by India at Lerotholi Polytechnic, Maseru on 29 November 2017, which is a fully funded Government of India project.

A two-member delegation from the Election Commission of India visited Lesotho on 29-31 January 2015 to provide Technical Assistance in different aspect of election management to the Independent Electoral Commission of Lesotho.

On 29 November 2017, 500 metric tonnes of rice were formally donated by India to Lesotho as a

gesture of goodwill and friendship between the two countries and to mitigate the devastating effect of food shortages caused by famine and other acts of nature.

In 2004, LOC of US\$ 5 million was provided to Lesotho for procurement of agricultural equipment from India. The project got completed in 2007.

In 2010, LOC of US\$ 4.7 million was provided for setting up of Vocational Training Centres in Lesotho. The project got completed in 2024.

Skill Development:

(i) For the Financial Year 2025-26, 70 ITEC Slots were offered to Lesotho out of which 51 seats were utilised. 08 participants from Lesotho attended the Special Training Programme For Yoga Trainers in 05-31 January 2026 organised by Swami Vivekananda Yoga Anusandhana Samsthana, Bengaluru.

(ii) For the Financial Year 2025-26, 35 ICCR scholarships were offered to Lesotho nationals which were completely utilised. ICCR scholarships for Lesotho nationals have been increased from 35 to 40.

Trade & Economic Cooperation

The bilateral trade between the two countries is minimal. India's import from Lesotho for 2024-25 is US\$0.98 million. Major item of Indian imports include iron and steel, oil and seeds, fruits, misc. grains. However, the figure for Indian exports for 2024-25 is US\$10.30 million. Major item of Indian exports include pharmaceuticals, rubber, plastic and machinery.

The Duty Free Tariff Preference (DFTP) Scheme announced by the Prime Minister at the India-Africa Forum Summit in New Delhi in April 2008 has been offered and accepted by Lesotho.

Indian Community

There are about 4000 Indian expatriates and PIOs in Lesotho working as teachers, accountants and other professionals. Some of them are engaged in business as well. The community has a reasonably high economic profile in the country. There is an Indian Association which organises periodic functions and has hosted several cultural events performed by ICCR troupes.

Culture

The IDY 2025 Yoga event celebrated at the Manthabiseng Convention Centre on 15th June in Maseru, Lesotho. The Yoga event was attended by more than 400 people of nationalities, students, Yoga practitioners and members of Indian community. The Hon. Minister of Labour & Employment H.E. Tseliso Mokhsi, Kingdom of Lesotho attended the IDY 2025 Celebration as the Chief Guest. Hon. Minister highlighted the importance of Yoga in our daily life and appreciated this ancient gift of India to the world. The Representatives from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and from other Ministries/Departments also attended the IDY 2025 event.

Consular Services Camp

Consular Services Camp for rendering CPV services to Indian nationals living in Lesotho are organized regularly by the High Commission in Lesotho.

April 2026