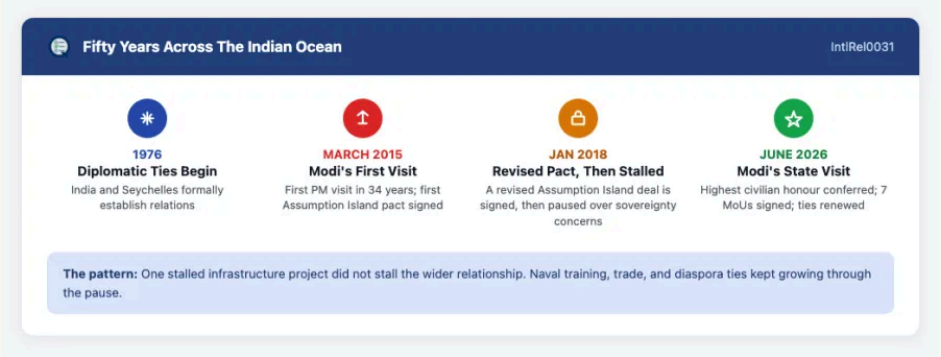
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India-Seychelles Relations

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India-Seychelles Relations

In 1986 a coup was brewing in Seychelles. An Indian warship sailed in, and the plot fizzled out. Forty years later an Indian Prime Minister was the guest of honour at the island nation's 50th National Day. In between came a naval-base deal that fell apart. This is the story of India and Seychelles.



Seychelles: 115 islands, and a huge stretch of ocean.

At a Glance

Four facts to hold on to.

01
1976

Seychelles became independent. India soon built ties.

02
115

Islands in the Seychelles archipelago.

03
1.35m km²

Ocean area Seychelles claims as its EEZ.

04
$175m

India’s special economic package for Seychelles.

EEZExclusive Economic Zone: the sea a country controls for fishing and resources.
Assumption IslandA remote Seychelles island once picked for an Indian facility.
Lamitiye“Friendship” in Creole; the India–Seychelles army exercise.
MAHASAGARIndia’s 2025 ocean-security vision for the Global South.

Part 1: Why a tiny nation matters

Must Know

A small country with a very big sea

- Seychelles became independent from Britain on 29 June 1976.
- It has 115 islands and about 121,000 people. It is Africa's smallest country.
- Its sea zone is 1.35 million square kilometres.
- The islands sit near busy shipping lanes. A stable Seychelles helps keep piracy, drug trade and illegal fishing in check. (Source: Wikipedia: Seychelles)

India's view

- An Indian-origin community lives there too, rooted mainly in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Hindus are about 5.4% of the population.
- India sees the western Indian Ocean as its neighbourhood.
- A friendly Seychelles gives India a partner there.
- India links this to its 2025 Vision MAHASAGAR. It stands for Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions.
- MAHASAGAR grows the earlier SAGAR idea into a Global South maritime plan.

Remember: Seychelles: independent 29 Jun 1976; 115 islands; EEZ 1.35 million km². MAHASAGAR launched March 2025.

> **Quick check 1.** Seychelles became independent from the United Kingdom in 1976. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Part 2: The story so far

Good to Know

1986: a warship and a plot

- In June 1986 President France-Albert René faced a coup plot.
- India sent the warship INS Vindhyagiri under “Operation Flowers are Blooming”.
- Later that year René sought shelter in Malé, at the Indian High Commissioner’s home. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi lent him a plane. (Source: Wikipedia: India–Seychelles relations)

Slow, steady help

- India sent its first resident High Commissioner to Victoria in 1987. Seychelles opened a mission in New Delhi in 2008.
- Under ITEC, Seychellois have trained in India since the early 1980s.
- From 2009, Indian Navy ships patrolled Seychelles’ sea zone. India also gave Dornier 228 aircraft and Chetak helicopters.
- In 2012 President Pratibha Patil visited. India gave a $50 million credit line and a $25 million grant.

Assumption Island: the deal that stalled

- In March 2015 Narendra Modi visited. It was the first Indian Prime Minister’s visit in 34 years.
- The two sides agreed to build facilities on Assumption Island, a coral island 1,135 km from Victoria. It had an airstrip, and plans for a jetty and housing.
- A coastal radar system began working in 2016.
- A revised deal followed in 2018. India also announced a $100 million defence credit.
- But the opposition said the island would become a foreign base. Protests grew, and the Assembly never approved it. (Source: Wikipedia: Assumption Island)

- The deal went cold. A 90-year lease of the island to a Qatari group was later reported. (Source: Wikipedia: Assumption Island)

> **Quick check 2.** India's Assumption Island facilities were completed and are working today. *(True or False?)* See answer ↓

Part 3: The 2026 revival

Great to Know

A new president, a new pact

- Patrick Herminie was sworn in as President on 26 October 2025.
- He visited India from 5 to 10 February 2026. Seven MoUs were signed.
- India announced a $175 million special economic package and ten ambulances.

- Herminie said there were no talks on leasing Assumption Island for a military base. Both sides agreed to work on a Coast Guard base.
- Protesters still marched in Victoria against it.
- India said it would revive Assumption only if Seychelles wished. (Source: AIR News)

Friendship on the ground

- Exercise Lamitiye means “friendship” in Creole. It has run every two years since 2001.
- The 11th edition ran from 10 to 22 March 2026 at the Seychelles Defence Academy.
- It was the first tri-services edition, with the Army, Navy and Air Force. (Source: UNI)

June 2026: the state visit

- Modi visited from 27 to 29 June 2026, as guest of honour at Seychelles’ 50th National Day.
- He was the first Indian Prime Minister to address its National Assembly.
- He received the new “Guardian of the Blue Horizon” distinction. He was its first recipient.
- The visit produced 19 outcomes, including nine MoUs. They covered extradition, digital banking, health, farming, space, a new hospital, UPI and AI/cyber cooperation.
- The $175 million package was set out as $125 million in concessional credit and $50 million in grants.
- India handed over a fast patrol vessel, five sets of Laser Radial-class boats, six ambulances and ten vehicles. INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak docked at Port Victoria. (Source: Daily Excelsior)

- Assumption stayed off the table. India’s Foreign Secretary said India would listen if Seychelles raised it. (Source: The Wire)

Latest: fish and the blue economy

- On 25 August 2026 the two sides met in New Delhi on fisheries and the blue economy.
- Seychelles asked for a dedicated fisheries and aquaculture MoU.
- They discussed tuna, hatcheries and fish-stock studies. (Source: OpenGov Asia)

Exam Edge

Previous Year Questions

Two UPSC questions on Indian Ocean groupings help here.

> **Think it through: Why did Assumption Island fail but the friendship survive?**
>
> A military base touches a small nation’s pride in its own land. Training, aid, health and trade do not. So the partnership shifted to the second kind.

Quick Q&A

When did Seychelles become independent?

29 June 1976.

What was Operation Flowers are Blooming?

India’s 1986 naval help against a coup plot.

What does Lamitiye mean?

Friendship, in Creole.

What honour did Modi receive in 2026?

Guardian of the Blue Horizon.

What stalled on Assumption Island?

The 2015 and 2018 facility deals.

Practice: India–Seychelles Relations

8 verified questions from this topic.

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Practice MCQs

1. In which year did India and Seychelles formally establish diplomatic relations?

A. 1976

B. 1965

C. 1991

D. 2005

See answer ↓

2. PM Modi's March 2015 visit to Seychelles was notable because it was the first Indian PM visit there in how many years?

A. 44 years

B. 14 years

C. 24 years

D. 34 years

See answer ↓

3. The Assumption Island project between India and Seychelles, first agreed in 2015 and revised in 2018, aimed to build what?

A. Shared naval facilities

B. A cross-border railway

C. A joint university campus

D. A joint fishing port

See answer ↓

4. Consider these two statements about India's Vision MAHASAGAR.

Statement 1: It was launched in March 2025.

Statement 2: It expands the earlier SAGAR doctrine to the wider Global South.

Which statement(s) is/are correct?

A. Only Statement 1 is correct

B. Only Statement 2 is correct

C. Neither statement is correct

D. Both statements are correct

See answer ↓

5. What made PM Modi's attendance at Seychelles' 50th Independence Anniversary celebrations on 29 June 2026 historic?

A. It marked India's first-ever state visit to Seychelles

B. He was the first Indian PM to attend Seychelles' Independence Day celebrations

C. He addressed the Seychelles National Assembly

D. He was the first foreign head of government ever invited to Seychelles

See answer ↓

6. Which two Indian Navy ships docked at Port Victoria during Seychelles' 50th Independence Anniversary events?

A. INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak

B. INS Sahyadri and INS Shivalik

C. INS Kolkata and INS Chennai

D. INS Vikrant and INS Vikramaditya

See answer ↓

7. Which of the following statements is/are correct?
1. LAMITIYE-2026 was a joint military exercise between India and Seychelles.
2. DUSTLIK was a joint military exercise between India and Azerbaijan.
3. Cyclone-IV was a joint military exercise between India and Israel.

Select the answer using the code given below.

A. 1, 2 and 3

B. 1 and 3 only

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1 only

See answer ↓

8. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) is best described as?

A. A purely bilateral India-USA naval forum

B. An exclusively economic trade body

C. A voluntary initiative promoting maritime cooperation among navies of Indian Ocean littoral states

D. A binding treaty enforced by the United Nations

See answer ↓

Answer Key

1. **A.** India and Seychelles formally established diplomatic relations in 1976. ↑ Q1
2. **D.** Modi's March 2015 visit was the first by an Indian Prime Minister to Seychelles in 34 years. ↑ Q2
3. **A.** Assumption Island was meant to host shared naval facilities. The revised 2018 deal later stalled over sovereignty concerns in Seychelles. ↑ Q3
4. **D.** Vision MAHASAGAR was launched in March 2025. It expands India's earlier SAGAR doctrine into a broader Global South framework. ↑ Q4
5. **B.** PM Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to attend Seychelles' Independence Day celebrations, held during the same visit already covered for its civilian-honour and MoU components. ↑ Q5
6. **A.** INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak docked at Port Victoria as part of the celebrations, alongside an Indian contingent (Assam Rifles, Navy personnel, and a Navy Marching Band) that joined the national parade. ↑ Q6
7. **D.** LAMITIYE-2026 is genuinely India-Seychelles. DUSTLIK is actually India-Uzbekistan, not Azerbaijan. Cyclone-IV is actually India-Egypt, not Israel. Only the first statement is correct. ↑ Q7
8. **C.** IONS is a voluntary maritime-cooperation initiative among Indian Ocean states' navies. ↑ Q8

Quick-check answers

1. **True.** ↑ 1
2. **False.** ↑ 2

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