

## **Strengthening the India–Seychelles Cultural Partnership: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit (27–29 June 2026)**



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit to Seychelles (27–29 June 2026) marked a defining moment in the evolution of India–Seychelles relations, elevating the bilateral partnership to a new level of strategic, developmental, and cultural engagement. Coinciding with the Golden Jubilee of Seychelles' Independence and the fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations (1976–2026), the visit transcended ceremonial diplomacy to become a powerful reaffirmation of five decades of mutual trust, shared democratic values, and enduring friendship. Invited as the Guest of Honour for the Independence Day celebrations, Prime Minister Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to participate in Seychelles' national celebrations and the first to address the National Assembly of Seychelles, underscoring the exceptional warmth and significance attached to India's relationship with the island nation.

The visit acquired further symbolic and diplomatic importance with the conferment of Seychelles' highest civilian honour, the "Guardian of the Blue Horizon" Presidential Distinction, upon Prime Minister Modi. This recognition reflected not only his personal contribution to strengthening bilateral relations but also India's emergence as a reliable maritime partner, development collaborator, and first responder in the Indian Ocean Region. More broadly, the honour acknowledged India's sustained commitment to supporting Seychelles' national development priorities through capacity building, infrastructure development, maritime security cooperation, healthcare, education, digital connectivity, and climate resilience.

Anchored in India's MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision, the visit reaffirmed India's long-term commitment to advancing a secure, stable, prosperous, and inclusive Indian Ocean Region. It highlighted New Delhi's approach of placing the priorities of partner countries at the centre of regional cooperation while promoting sustainable development, the blue economy, maritime domain awareness, disaster preparedness, and collective security. Simultaneously, the visit reinforced India's broader engagement with the Global South by demonstrating how development partnerships, cultural ties, people-to-people exchanges, and institutional cooperation can complement strategic and security collaboration. In doing so, the visit positioned India–Seychelles relations as an important model of contemporary South–South cooperation, where historical goodwill, mutual respect, and shared regional interests converge to address emerging geopolitical and developmental challenges.

## Cultural Relations

The Indian diaspora constitutes one of the strongest pillars of the India–Seychelles partnership, serving as a vibrant human bridge that reinforces historical, cultural, and economic ties between the two countries. Approximately 11% of Seychelles' population is of Indian origin. More than 6,000 Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) are Seychellois citizens, while over 9,000 Indian nationals reside and work in the country, making significant contributions to its economy, public services, trade, tourism, education, and healthcare. Their enduring presence has helped preserve deep civilizational linkages while fostering greater people-to-people engagement. The annual Seychelles–India Day has evolved into one of the country's most prominent cultural celebrations, featuring Indian classical and folk performances, culinary festivals, exhibitions, yoga, and community events that highlight the rich cultural heritage shared by both nations. Cultural exchanges are further strengthened through regular performances by Indian Council for Cultural Relations-sponsored artistic troupes and a wide range of educational and cultural initiatives. Recognizing culture as an important dimension of diplomacy, both governments have accorded high priority to strengthening cultural cooperation. During the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of Seychelles' Independence in 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended as the Guest of Honour and presented the Seychellois leadership with exquisite traditional Indian handicrafts—including Bidriware, Maheshwari silk, and Kanchivaram silk—symbolizing India's rich artistic heritage and reflecting the shared commitment of both countries to preserving their cultural traditions, craftsmanship, and environmental heritage.

The visit highlighted the strong human and cultural foundations of India–Seychelles relations. Prime Minister Modi visited the Navasakti Vinayagar Temple in Victoria, paid floral tributes at the Mahatma Gandhi Statue, and interacted with members of the vibrant Indian diaspora, describing them as a living bridge connecting the two nations. Addressing the National Day celebrations, he thanked the Government and people of Seychelles for their warmth and hospitality. Both countries reaffirmed that their partnership is founded not only on strategic cooperation but also on shared history, democratic values, cultural affinity, and enduring people-to-people ties nurtured over generations.

The visit also carried immense symbolic significance. A Joint Commemorative Logo marking 50 years of diplomatic relations was unveiled, reflecting the enduring friendship between the two countries. Prime Minister Modi became the first Indian Prime Minister to address the National Assembly of Seychelles, where he underscored the importance of democracy, parliamentary cooperation, and people-centric governance. The Seychelles leadership described the visit as a reaffirmation of the long-standing friendship and strategic partnership between the two nations. Prime Minister Modi further observed that while the first fifty years of bilateral relations had been shaped by trust and mutual progress, the next fifty years would be driven by innovation, sustainability, and shared prosperity.

#### Bilateral Partnership:

During the visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held comprehensive bilateral discussions with President Dr. Patrick Herminie, covering the full spectrum of India–Seychelles relations. Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepening cooperation across a wide range of sectors, including healthcare, education, digital transformation, renewable energy, maritime security, defence, sustainable development, and capacity building. They also exchanged views on regional and global developments, with particular emphasis on the evolving security challenges in the Indian Ocean Region, including piracy, illegal fishing, drug trafficking, and other transnational maritime threats. India reiterated its commitment to supporting Seychelles' national development priorities, while both countries reaffirmed their shared democratic values, mutual trust, and enduring strategic partnership founded on decades of close cooperation and people-to-people ties.

Maritime security remained the cornerstone of the bilateral partnership. Both countries agreed to deepen cooperation in Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA), Coastal Surveillance Radar Systems, Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) surveillance, anti-piracy operations, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR),

defence training, and capacity building. These initiatives reaffirmed their shared commitment to safeguarding the security, stability, and sustainable development of the Indian Ocean Region. Marking the historic occasion, contingents of the Assam Regiment, the Indian Navy, and the Indian Navy Marching Band participated in Seychelles' Golden Jubilee National Day Parade, symbolizing the close defence ties and longstanding friendship between the two countries. Indian Naval Ships INS Tarkash and INS Ikshak also docked at Port Victoria, underscoring the enduring naval partnership and reinforcing India's position as Seychelles' preferred maritime security partner and a reliable net security provider in the Western Indian Ocean.

The visit further consolidated India's position as Seychelles' most trusted development partner. Several Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements were concluded across a wide range of sectors, including UPI-enabled digital payments, health, agriculture, shipping, space cooperation, extradition, capacity building, and a ₹1,250 crore Line of Credit. India also announced additional assistance for food security, infrastructure development, vocational training, healthcare, and maritime security, reaffirming its long-standing commitment to Seychelles' national development priorities. A significant outcome of the visit was Seychelles' formal accession to the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), underscoring the shared commitment of both countries to climate resilience, sustainable infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction.

Environmental and climate cooperation emerged as one of the defining pillars of the visit. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred Seychelles' highest civilian honour, the "Guardian of the Blue Horizon" Presidential Distinction, becoming the first leader to receive the award. The honour recognised his global leadership in promoting the Blue Economy, climate action, sustainable ocean governance, Mission LiFE, the International Solar Alliance (ISA), environmental conservation, and the developmental aspirations of Small Island Developing States (SIDS). Accepting the award, Prime Minister Modi dedicated the honour to all nations committed to protecting the environment and combating climate change, describing it as a recognition of the collective global commitment to building a greener and more sustainable future. Reflecting this shared vision, India and Seychelles agreed to further deepen cooperation in the Blue Economy, renewable energy, marine resource management, climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and sustainable development, thereby reinforcing their strategic partnership and advancing a resilient, secure, and environmentally sustainable Indian Ocean Region.

## **Conclusion**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State Visit to Seychelles (27–29 June 2026) marked a defining moment in the evolution of India–Seychelles relations, transforming a long-standing friendship into a comprehensive strategic partnership for the twenty-first century. The visit reinforced India's strategic presence in the Western Indian Ocean and operationalised the MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions) vision as the guiding framework for a secure, prosperous and inclusive maritime neighbourhood. Through expanded cooperation in maritime security, defence, digital public infrastructure, connectivity, climate resilience, the Blue Economy, healthcare, capacity building and sustainable development, both countries reaffirmed their commitment to addressing shared regional challenges while advancing mutual growth and resilience.

Beyond the signing of agreements and the announcement of new initiatives, the visit underscored the enduring strength of the bilateral relationship, rooted in democratic values, historical ties, cultural affinity and vibrant people-to-people connections. It reaffirmed India's role as Seychelles' trusted development partner and a reliable stakeholder for Small Island Developing States (SIDS), while highlighting the strategic importance of the Western Indian Ocean in India's Indo-Pacific engagement. As India and Seychelles commemorate fifty years of diplomatic relations, the visit laid a strong foundation for the next phase of cooperation—one driven by innovation, sustainability, maritime security, digital transformation and shared prosperity—positioning the partnership as a model of inclusive, people-centric and future-oriented cooperation across the Indian Ocean Region.