

Mauritius



Official name :Republic of Mauritius
Form of government: Republic with one legislative house (National Assembly [691])
Head of state: President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim
Head of government :Prime Minister: Pravind Jugnauth
Capital: Port Louis
Official language: English
Official religion : none
Monetary unit : Mauritian rupee

(Mau Re; plural Mau Rs)
Population 1,263,000
Total area:(sq mi) 788
Urban-rural population :
Urban: (2015) 39.7%
Rural: (2015) 60.3%
Life expectancy
Male: 71.2 years
Female: (77.9 years)
Literacy:
Male: (2009) 90.6%
Female: (2009) 85.3%
GNI per capita: (U.S\$) 9,610

Introduction

The Republic of Mauritius is located off the eastern coast of Africa in the Indian Ocean, and about 500 miles east of Madagascar. The population density in Mauritius is the highest of African countries and is among the highest in the world. It was also once home to the famed dodo bird.



It comprises the islands of Mauritius and Rodrigues plus two smaller island dependencies. Mauritius also claims sovereignty over the Chagos Archipelago (including Diego Garcia), some 1,250 miles to the northeast, although this claim is disputed by Britain.

Land and Climate

The island of Mauritius is volcanic in origin and is almost entirely surrounded by coral reefs. The highest point, Little Black River Peak at 2,717 feet (828 meters), is in the southwest. The Grand River is the island's major river, supplying most of its hydroelectric power. The subtropical climate has fairly uniform temperatures throughout the year.

Plants and Animals

The vegetation includes some 600 indigenous species, even though little original forest is left. The animals includes the sambar (a long-tailed, dark brown deer), tenrec (a spiny insectivore), and mongoose, as well as a variety of birds and insects. The island was once the sole home to the dodo, a flightless bird that was extinct by 1681. Efforts began in the late 20th century to save several other species of native birds that were close to extinction.

People

Mauritius has a highly diverse population. After slavery was abolished in 1835, the British replaced the African sugarcane laborers with people of Indo-Pakistani origins, in what was termed the "Great Experiment." Descendants of these now make up about two thirds of the population. About one fourth of the population is Creole (of mixed French and African

descent), and there are communities of Chinese and Franco-Mauritians. Although English is the official language, it is spoken by a very small percentage of the population. Creole, a French-based dialectic, is spoken by about four-fifths of the population. Mauritians commonly speak two, three, or even more languages, and the educational system supports a wide range of language instruction. Mauritius has a relatively highly educated population. About 85 percent are literate. Mauritius has two state-funded universities.

Half of the population is Hindu. Roman Catholics and Muslims form other religious groups. English is the official language, but French and Creole are also spoken.

Economy



Over half of the country's land is farmed. The chief crop is sugarcane. Other crops are potatoes, tomatoes, bananas, tea, and tobacco. Beginning in the 1970s the government of Mauritius took steps to modernize the country by decreasing the reliance on agriculture and increasing the development of new industries. Manufacturing in Mauritius now accounts for about one fifth of the gross domestic product. Factories process sugar from the chief crop and produce textiles, metals, and food, metal, and chemical products.

Services are also important to the economy. The country saw significant growth in the tourism industry during the 1970s. By the early 21st century the country was a relatively prosperous center for banking, financial services, and tourism. More than two fifths of the labor force is employed in these areas.

Early history

Mauritius was long uninhabited, though it was probably known to Arab seafarers from the 10th century or earlier. It was visited by the Portuguese in the early 16th century, but they did not settle the island. The Dutch took possession of it from 1598 to 1710, called it Mauritius for the governor Maurice of Nassau, and attempted to settle the island in 1638–58 and again in 1664–1710. Abandoning their attempts, they left it to pirates.



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In 1721 the French East India Company occupied Mauritius, which was renamed Île de France. Settlement proceeded slowly over the next 40 years. The French authorities brought African slaves to the island and established sugar planting as the main industry, and the colony prospered.

At the beginning of the 19th century, when England and France were at war, privateers based on Île de France were a continual threat to British and Indian merchant vessels. In 1810 the British captured the island. When the war ended in 1814, the British took over the island and reinstated the name Mauritius was reinstated. but, in circumstances quite unique for a British colony, the customs, laws, and language remained French.

Mauritius prospered in the 1850s, but competition from beet sugar caused a decline. Then the Great Depression of the 1930s changed the situation drastically, culminating in labour unrest in 1937. World War II did not improve the Mauritian economy, and after 1945 economic reforms were introduced. Political and administrative reforms were also initiated, which led to independence.

Modern History

Mauritius became an independent state within the Commonwealth on March 12, 1968, with a governor-general on the island representing the British monarch as the head of state. In 1991 the legislature voted to

transition to a republican form of government, and on March 12, 1992, Mauritius became a republic, with a president as head of state.

Mauritius does not maintain an active military force, although it does have a small paramilitary force that includes a coast guard unit. Despite some unrest, the country has, on the whole, seen political success: Since independence, Mauritius, unlike most African former colonies, has sustained an open, free, democratic, and highly competitive political system. Elections have been held on a regular basis with the losing parties giving way to the winners. Its limited military structure has meant that it has been spared the difficulty of military coups.

And In 2014 the long-serving politician in the Militant Socialist Movement (MSM)– and once ousted president - Sir Anerood Jugnauth – came into power again as prime minister.

FUN FACTS:

- The long extinct Dodo bird is the national bird of Mauritius
- The island became an important base on the trade routes from Europe to the East before the opening of the Suez Canal.
- A prominent tourist attraction is the 'seven coloured earth' in Chamarel, where the sand is found in seven different colors within a very small space.
- Sega music – originated among the slave populations of Mauritius – is now considered the national music of Mauritius. When performing the sega folk dance, Mauritian dancers move their entire body but their feet never leave the ground.

