## Embassy of India

## Panama

## Brief on India-Costa Rica Relations

India and Costa Rica enjoy cordial and warm relations, which are being strengthened by the growing commercial engagement between the two countries.

Following India’s appointment of an Honorary Consul in San Jose in 1995, Costa Rica reciprocated by opening an Honorary Consulate in New Delhi in 1996. In 2007, Costa Rica announced its decision to open its Embassy in India. It opened its Embassy in New Delhi in April 2010 and sent a senior official as Charge d’ Affaires in June 2010. Ambassador of Costa Rica assumed office in New Delhi in June 2011. Present Ambassador, Mr. Ubaldo Garcia Ruiz, assumed office in June 2014. The Indian Embassy in Panama is concurrently accredited to Costa Rica. Ambassador Shamma Jain presented Credentials to President Guillermo Luis Solis in September 2014.

**Important Bilateral Visits:**

**From India:**

1. Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Smt. D. Purandareswari visited Costa Rica in April 2013
2. Secretary (West) Shri M. Ganapathi visited Costa Rica for Foreign Office Consultations in August 2012.
3. Secretary (West), Shri V. K. Grover, visited San Jose in February 1996 to discuss issues relating to the NAM and the UN.

**From Costa Rica:**

1. The Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Trade, Ms. Anabel Gonsalez, visited India on 05 March, 2013.
2. Minister for Foreign Trade, Ms. Anabel Gonzalez, accompanied by 25 Costa Rican entrepreneurs visited India from 19-23 March 2012 to participate in IndiaSoft 2012 in Hyderabad and also had meetings with Commerce Secretary, MOS for Finance, FICCI, CII, Nasscom in New Delhi and Business community in Bangalore.
3. Foreign Minister Rene Castro visited India from October 19-23, 2010 for bilateral discussions and to inaugurate Costa Rican Embassy in New Delhi.
4. Foreign Minister Bruno Stagno along with SICA (Sistema de la Integracion Centroamericana) FMs in June 2008
5. Vice Foreign Minister Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira visited India on February 1-5, 2004 as part of the SICA delegation.
6. Foreign Minister Fernando Narango visited India from February 27 to March 5, 1997, which was the first ever visit by any Foreign Minister from Costa Rica to India.

#### Bilateral Agreements:

1. MoU on Regular Foreign Office Consultations 2008
2. MoU for setting up of Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Costa Rica 2009
3. MOU on Economic Cooperation in April 2013
4. MOU for Cooperation between FSI and Costa Rican Diplomatic Academy is being pursued.

#### GoI’s Development assistance:

India’s assistance to Costa Rica include, donation of photovoltaic equipment worth Rs.1.85 mn in 1997 for setting up a solar energy research laboratory for training purposes at the University of Heredia under the ITEC programme, donation of a telephone exchange to Costa Rica’s telecom operator ICE in 1998, and a relief assistance of US$ 25,000 to help rehabilitate flood victims in 1996. India also donated 18 Bajaj 3-wheelers in December 2005 to be used by the police department of San Jose. India donated $ 100,000 for relief and rehabilitation of victims of Hurricane Tomas in November 2010.

An MOU for the setting up of a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology in Costa Rica was signed in September 2009.

**Indian Companies**: Five leading IT companies, viz Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant, TCS, and CSS Corp are operating in San Jose. It is learnt that two additional IT firms are expected to set up office soon. Costa Rica has emerged as a niche market for manufacturing of high-end medical devices, IT hardware and software, and logistics and BPOs services.

70 Costa Rican students and teachers from public and private universities were selected for training under a cooperation programme between the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Costa Rican Coalition for Development Initiatives and Infosys, and they underwent training at Infosys in Mysore from January13-March 24, 2014.

**Economic & Commercial Co-operation**:

The eco-friendly policies of Costa Rica motivated the country to import 50 Reva electric cars duty-free. Other exports include textiles, tubes, pharmaceuticals, and agro-chemicals. Scorpio SUVs are imported in small quantities. Bajaj three-wheelers and two-wheelers are assembled in Costa Rica by MASESA, the leading importer and distributor of motorcycles in the country. India’s imports from Costa Rica include printed circuits, wood and wood products, leather and hides and oil seeds. Havells Sylvania group from India, which manufactures electrical products, has its Latin America headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica, as well as a factory.

**India-Costa Rica trade in US $ mn.**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Exports** | **Imports** | **Total trade** |
| 2011 | 65.53 | 204.16 | 269.69 |
| 2012 | 74.28 | 219.72 | 294.00 |
| 2013 | 81.09 | 203.99 | 285.08 |
| 2014 (upto Oct) | 55.47 | 121.74 | 177.21 |

(Source: Department of Commerce)

India’s main export items include pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, vehicles other than railways, electrical machinery, and miscellaneous products. India’s imports are comprised of Intel chips, wood and articles of wood, electrical machinery and equipment, edible fruits and nuts, optical medical or surgical instruments, coffee, tea, glass and glassware.

A 19-member business delegation from the Costa Rican Export Promotion Council, CRECEX, participated in the India International Trade Fair 2007 organized in New Delhi on 14-27 November 2007. Three Costa Rican software companies participated in India Soft 2008 organized by ESC in Hyderabad in March 2008. A delegation from the Electronics and Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) participated in the Costa Rican technology Fair—Costa Rica Technology Insights—in February 2008. A delegation of 6 IT Costa Rican Companies participated in India Soft in February 2009. A delegation of six business houses organized by the Plastics Export Promotion Council of India (Plexconcil) visited San Jose in March 2010 to promote a range of primary, intermediate and finished plastics products. An 8 Member delegation of software companies led by the Electronics and Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) of India participated in Costa Rica Technology Insight (CRIT) 2011 as well as June 2012. Capexil organized a Buyer Seller Meet at San Jose in November 2012. A CII delegation, led by MOS (C&I), visited Costa Rica in April 2013.

Mr. Luis Alberto Munoz, Vice President of a prominent Spanish newspaper of Costa Rica *La Republica* visited India from 15-21 October 2014 under ‘Familiarization Visit of Journalists from LAC Region’, organized by the External Publicity Division of the Ministry.

**ITEC:**

The programme is popular in Costa Rica and the ITEC slots are being utilized for a variety of courses. Costa Rica was allotted 25 ITEC slots for the years 2011-12 and 2012-13. After a mid-term review, five more slots were allotted for 2013-2014. In view of the growing worldwide demand for ITEC slots, Costa Rica has been allotted 15 slots for 2014-15.

#### Culture:

#### President Oscar Arias wrote the prologue for, and launched the Spanish version of Gandhiji’s autobiography in Costa Rica in September 2008.

There is a great deal of interest in India’s history and cultural heritage in Costa Rica and much of the credit for this goes to Prof Hilda Chen Apuy who visited India on a UNESCO scholarship in the 1950’s and introduced studies on Indian History, Philosophy and Sanskrit at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose. She also writes extensively on India. Prof Hilda’s articles on India are being published by the Public Diplomacy Division of our Ministry.

Ms. Wen Hsu, a prominent illustrator and author of children stories, visited India under Familiarization Programme, for eminent illustrators and literary personalities of XP Division, from 27 December 2014 to 6 January 2015.

Co-operation in the cultural sphere has included performances of Indian cultural troupes, which have been visiting Costa Rica from time to time.

### Visa & Consular Matters:

In July 2006, Costa Rica relaxed its visa regime by removing India from Consultada [prior reference] category and allowing visitors from India to enter Costa Rica without visa for a period of 30 days. However, in December 2006, the visa regulations in respect of visitors from India were again revised and India was put in the Consular [visa on application] category. Costa Rica started issuing visa for 30 days to Indians without making a reference to the Costa Rican Ministry in San Jose. In August 2007, the visa regime for Indians wishing to visit Costa Rica was further relaxed when Indian nationals with valid US or Schengen visas were allowed to enter Costa Rica without a Costa Rican Visa.

# Indian Community:

Indian Community consists mostly of IT professionals, taking advantage of the proximity to the US. Costa Rica is also more bilingual than most of the other Latin American countries. The Indian community includes businessmen, NGOs and the Missionaries of Charity. There are two Indian restaurants run by Indians. The Costa Rica Indian Association (CRIA) ([www.crindian.org](http://www.crindian.org/)) was established in 2010 and has been very active in organizing various social and cultural programmes, as well as trade promotion activities.

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