

INDIA-ARGENTINA BILATERAL RELATIONS

Political Relations

India and Argentina, the two vibrant democracies separated by two oceans irrespective of the direction one takes, are bound by shared values, mutual respect, understanding and respect for rule of law. The two friendly countries have enjoyed cohesive and strong relations spread across wide spectrum of sectors which have deepened over decades. India-Argentina diplomatic relations were elevated to the level of **Strategic Partnership** during the State Visit to India of the then President of Argentina in February 2019.

2. Multi-faceted relations between the two countries have strengthened over the years and encompass political, economic, defence, mining, cultural and scientific & technological cooperation. India opened a Trade Commission in Buenos Aires in 1943, which was later converted into one of the first Embassies of India in South America, in 1949. Argentina had established a Consulate in Kolkata in the 1920s, which was shifted to Delhi as an Embassy in 1950. Argentina has a Consulate General in Mumbai since April 2009.

Bilateral Exchanges

3. There have been exchanges at the highest level between the two countries. President Alberto Fernandez participated in the 18th G20 Summit held in September 2023 in New Delhi. Earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Fernandez held first bilateral meeting on 26 June 2022 on the sidelines of G7 Summit in Munich, Germany. From India, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi visited Buenos Aires to attend G20 Summit in November 2018. Earlier VVIP visits to Argentina include those of PM PV Narasimha Rao in 1995 for G15 Summit; State Visit of President Gyani Zail Singh in 1984; PM Smt. Indira Gandhi in 1968; and VP Dr S Radhakrishnan in 1954.

4. VVIP visits from Argentina include State Visit of President Mauricio Macri in February 2019; Private visit of Vice President Ms. Gabriela Michetti in March 2019; State Visit of President Ms. Cristina Fernández de Kirchner in 2009; President Carlos Menem in March 1994 for G15 Summit; President Raul Alfonsín in 1985 as Chief Guest on Republic Day; President Reynaldo Begnone in 1983 to attend NAM Summit and President Arturo Frondizi in December 1961.

5. EAM visited Buenos Aires on 25-26 August 2022 for bilateral Joint Commission Meeting with Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero. He also met President Fernandez. EAM also had meetings with FM Cafiero on 1 March 2023 and 24 April 2022 during latter's visit to Delhi for G20 Ministerial and Raisina Dialogue respectively, besides a telephonic conversation on 14 January 2022. EAM had also met the then Foreign Minister Felipe Solá on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Matera, Italy, on 30 June 2021 and the two had a telephonic conversation on 5 May 2020. Minister of State for External Affairs Shri V Muraleedharan paid a bilateral visit and

held meetings with the then Argentine Foreign Minister and Vice Foreign Minister in Buenos Aires on 29 August 2019.

6. Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar held a video conference (VC) with Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries of Argentina on 20 November 2020. Delegations led by Dr. V. K. Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog, in October 2019 and Mr. Shri Alok Tandon, Secretary Mines, in August-September 2021 visited Buenos Aires and the Provinces of Jujuy and Catamarca respectively for exploration of partnerships in the mining sector, particularly lithium.

7. From Argentina, Minister of Defence Jorge Taiana visited India in July 2023, the first ever bilateral visit by a Defence Minister of Argentina. He held talks with Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh on increasing defence cooperation between two countries, including measures to enhance defence industrial partnership. Minister of Science, Technology & Innovation Daniel Filmus paid an official visit to India in February 2023.

8. There have also been several visits during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. Ms. Ayelén Mazzina, Minister of Women, Gender and Diversity visited Gandhinagar in August 2023 to attend G20 Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment. Ms. Kelly Olmos, Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security attended the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting in July 2023 at Indore. S&T Minister Daniel Filmus attended the G20 Research Ministers' Meeting in July 2023 in Mumbai. FM Santiago Cafiero visited India in March 2023 for the G20 FMM in New Delhi. Economy Minister Sergio Massa visited Bengaluru in February 2023 for the G20 Finance Ministers Meeting and also held bilateral meeting with Finance Minister Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman.

9. Various mechanisms of institutional bilateral dialogue have been reinvigorated. The sixth round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in Delhi on 24 November 2021 after the previous round on 10 September 2020 in virtual mode. After an interregnum of 29 years, the third meeting of Joint Trade Committee took place on 20 October 2020 via video conference. The second meeting of ISRO-CONAE (Argentine Space Agency) Joint Committee, under the Agreement on cooperation on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space signed in 2009, was held on 2 December 2020, also virtually. The first meeting of Joint Working Group on Agricultural Cooperation was held virtually on 1 July 2020. The second meeting of Joint Coordination Committee under bilateral Agreement for cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was held in Buenos Aires on 1-3 August 2023.

10. Mission has made tremendous outreach efforts resulting in visit of six young politicians from across the political spectrum, to participate in ICCR's Gen-Next Democracy Program in January 2023 and eight journalists from mainstream media under XP Division's familiarization program in 2023.

Economic and Commercial Relations

11. India-Argentine bilateral trade has rapidly grown in the last four years, more than doubling from USD 3 billion in 2019 to USD 6.4 billion in 2022. India maintained its status as 4th largest trading partner of Argentina, second year in a row in 2022. Argentina continued to have among the highest trade surpluses with India,

12. Major items of India's exports to Argentina include petroleum oils, agro chemicals, yarn-fabric-madeups, organic chemicals, bulk drugs and two-wheelers. Major items of India's imports from Argentina include vegetable oils (soybean and sunflower), finished leather, cereals, residual chemicals and allied products and pulses.

13. Several Indian companies have established operations in Argentina with a total investment of over USD 1 billion. These include TCS, Mahindra Comviva, Infosys, AEGIS-Essar, Crisil, UPL, Advanta Seeds, Bajaj Motorcycles, TVS, Royal Enfield, Hero Motors, Glenmark, Godrej and Sri Sri Tattva. Argentina's investment in India stands at approximately USD 120 million. Argentine companies with presence in India include Globant and OLX in IT services and TECHINT in the manufacturing sector.

14. Agreements to promote cooperation in oil and gas sector was signed between OVL Ltd and YPF (Argentine public sector company) in February 2023; first ever commercial agreement in defence sector was signed between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Argentine Air Force in February 2023 for supply of helicopters spares and engine maintenance. The two PSUs, HAL and FAdeA, signed a cooperation agreement in June 2023.

15. A bilateral business chamber, India-Argentina Business Council (IABC), was formally launched on 14 October 2020 by the then Minister of Productive Development Matias Kulfas and Ambassador Dinesh Bhatia. The Council, a non-profit organization comprising leading industries, exporters and importers in Argentina, is currently composed of over 30 companies. IABC, together with the Embassy, organized the first Business Forum on 25 March 2021 and also hosted a business seminar on 26 August 2022, which was attended by more than 60 leading Argentine and Indian companies during EAM's visit to Buenos Aires.

Trade and Investment Promotion Events

16. There has been regular exchange of visits between the two countries including participation of Government officials and businessmen in focused events by trade and export promotion agencies, delegation level visits in specific sectors, participation in exhibitions, buyer-seller meets (BSM) and B2B meetings. Mission has organized, coordinated and participated in multiple interactions with FICCI, CII, FIEO, Electronics and Software Council of India (ESC), PHDCCI, Argentine Chamber of Commerce and Services (CACS), Argentine Chamber of Software Industry (CESSI), Latin American Integration Association (ALADI), Exim Bank, various Argentine Banks, Coffee promotion events, besides BSMs for members of Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts, Electronics & Software Council of India and CESSI and Chemical and Allied Products Export Council (CAPEXIL). Mission has maintained active interactions with representatives of Indian companies in Argentina and Indian companies interested in expanding business in Argentina.

17. Some of the recent endeavours include participation of Indian companies, coordinated by FICCI, in 2023 edition of ExpoMedical, the largest Medical Devices exhibition in LAC region; visit of a 22-member delegation of Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) of India to Argentina from 27 March to 02 April 2023 and their

participation in International Sunflower Seed and Oil Conference held at Buenos Aires from 29-30 March; Festival of India in conjunction with International Day of Yoga in 2023; and buyer-seller meet for 15 Indian companies in basic chemicals, cosmetics and dyes, coordinated by CHEMEXCIL, on 2 October 2023. CHEMEXCIL also signed an MOU for cooperation with its Argentine counterpart CAPQ.

18. Mission also hosted a high-level delegation from Uttar Pradesh State Government led by Shri Brajesh Pathak, Deputy Chief Minister and Dr Sanjay Kumar Nishad, Minister of Fisheries to Buenos Aires from 13-15 December 2022 and organized a Roadshow for them.

Cultural Relations

19. The admiration for and impact of Indian culture, yoga, meditation, philosophy, spiritualism, dance and music in Argentina perhaps transcends that in any other country. Indian organisations such as Art of Living, Brahmakumari, Rama Krishna Mission, Sivananda Yoga and ISKCON among others have extraordinary followings.

20. Foreign Minister Felipe Solá participated in Gandhi@150 celebrations in Buenos Aires on 02 October 2020. Further, President Alberto Fernández addressed a letter to Prime Minister Modi on the occasion. Earlier, on 2 October 2019, the then Vice President Ms. Gabriela Michetti was the Chief Guest at a function held at the Embassy in Buenos Aires to celebrate Gandhi@150.

21. The Embassy has been organizing cultural programs, including 'India Weeks' and 'India Days' in prominent cities and provinces of Argentina where Ambassador Dinesh Bhatia has been making presentation on "India i.e. Bharat." India tourism promotion activities are also held periodically in the capital city and provinces of Argentina. Mission also organized various activities in Buenos Aires to promote Mission LiFE initiative of Prime Minister Modi, including activities like walkathon, beach cleaning and swachhta campaigns.

22. All nine editions of International Day of Yoga (IDY) have seen large scale and enthusiastic participation in Buenos Aires as well as in provinces. The 9th IDY celebrations on 20 June 2023 were held at Polideportivo of the most iconic Argentine Football club, BOCA Juniors. The event was immensely successful witnessing participation of more than 10,000 people during the day. In 2018, an event titled 'Yoga for Peace' organized by Art of Living was attended by PM Modi with participation of over 4000 people and 600 people performing Yoga simultaneously. Mission has successfully conducted Yoga capacitation projects in training academies of Argentine Federal Police as well as those of Buenos Aires City Police and Buenos Aires Provincial Police.

23. The Indian Embassy curated an online event titled 'India and Argentina in the New World Order: Dialogue among Indian and Argentine Think Tanks', co-organized with Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) and Center for Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth (Spanish acronym: CIPPEC), held on 6 November 2020. EAM Dr S Jaishankar and FM Felipe Solá delivered remarks in the Closing Session. Spread across five sessions, the Dialogue witnessed

participation by several distinguished members of the think tank community from India and Argentina. The live streaming across platforms, simultaneously in English and Spanish languages, garnered over 1000 viewers globally.

24. The Embassy co-organised the 7th Ayurveda Day celebrations on 05 November 2022 at Medical Association of Argentina under the theme 'Har Din Har Ghar Ayurveda.' It was attended by more than 250 participants including Ayurveda experts, doctors, nutritionists and influencers highlighting the holistic approach of Ayurveda to wellbeing. In 2021, celebrations on 02 November under the theme "Ayurveda and Nutrition" and in 2020, virtual Ayurveda Day celebrations with three events were well received.

25. As part of celebrations of 160th birth anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, the Mission published a book titled "Rabindranath Tagore: Visiones desde America Latina" in collaboration with CARI (Argentine Council for International Relations), the largest Argentine think tank. The Book was jointly launched on 16 September 2021 by Ambassador and Jose Octavio Bordon, CARI President. Events to commemorate the birth anniversary of Tagore are hosted by the Mission every year at Tagore's bust, installed in 2019 at Parque Rosedal (Rose Park), Buenos Aires.

26. Gurudev Tagore had visited Argentina in 1924 and stayed for two months as the guest of Ms Victoria Ocampo, a well-known literary personality, writer and feminist. A joint production feature film, Pensando en el (Thinking of Him) on his visit was the closing film at the International Film Festival of India, Goa in November 2017.

27. Ms. Victoria Ocampo was given an honorary doctorate by the Viswa Bharati University and this was handed over by Prime Minister Smt Indira Gandhi during her visit to Argentina in 1968. Ms Maria Rene Cura, an Argentine writer and close associate of Ms Victoria Ocampo was a renowned Indologist and was awarded the Padma Shri for her Indology work in 1984. Mr Raul Prebisch, the renowned Argentine economist was conferred Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding in 1974.

28. In 2015, at the first World Indologists Conference held in Delhi, 100-year-old Indologist Dr. Fernando Tola represented Argentina and was selected for the Presidential Award of Certificate of Honour in 2016 in recognition of his outstanding contribution to the cause of Sanskrit.

Technical and Development Co-operation

29. India has extended 40-45 slots annually under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) scholarships for capacity building courses to Argentina with total number of ITEC alumni reaching about 300. In 2020-21, 26 Argentines participated in e-ITEC programs. Besides, 12 Argentine diplomats have attended Professional Courses for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) and two Argentine diplomats have attended Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Program, conducted by SSIFS. Four Argentine candidates have attended the fully funded 8-week training program named 'UNNATI (UNISpace Nano-satellite Assembly & Training by ISRO, two from Jan-March 2019 and another two from Oct-December 2022.

30. An India-Argentina Center of Excellence in IT was inaugurated by Ambassador Dinesh Bhatia and Education Minister Jaime Perczyk on 18 April 2023 at National University of Hurlingham. CDAC has deputed a Technical Adviser from India to the CEIT.

Indian Community

31. There are around 2600 NRIs / PIOs in Argentina. Majority of these live in the capital city of Buenos Aires, including professionals working with Indian companies and multinational corporations such as Cognizant Technologies, IBM, JP Morgan, etc. A large number of earlier migrants who have been in Argentina for 3-4 generations are in provinces of Salta and Jujuy. There are two Gurudwaras in Greater Buenos Aires and one in Rosario de la Frontera, Salta province.

Useful links

Embassy's website: www.indembarg.gov.in

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