

India-Bolivia Bilateral Brief

Political Relations

India and Bolivia enjoy friendly and cordial relations. The bilateral exchanges, trade and investment are promising with potential for increasing mutually beneficial cooperation. Both sides are working to improve the level of engagement and forge a partnership in sectors like minerals, infrastructure development, health & pharmaceuticals, Information Technology, capacity building and development cooperation. The Indian Embassy in Lima is concurrently accredited to Bolivia since April 1981. Bolivia opened a resident Mission in New Delhi in 2012. There are two Honorary Consuls General in Bolivia in La Paz and Santa Cruz.

VVIP Visit: Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji paid the first ever State Visit to Bolivia from 28-30 March 2019. This historic visit opened a new chapter in the ties between India and Bolivia. Eight bilateral Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding were signed covering a range of areas. US\$100 million line of credit (LoC) was announced for developmental projects of interest to Bolivia. Annual ITEC slots allocation was doubled to 10 and it was announced to gift two busts of Mahatma Gandhi for installation in La Paz and Santa Cruz.

At an outreach event during the VI BRICS Summit in July 2014, PM along with other BRICS leaders interacted with Presidents of South American countries, including Bolivia, organized by host Brazil.

Bilateral Exchanges: Shri Rajen Gohain, MOS for Railways paid an official visit to Bolivia on 20-21 April 2018. This was the first Ministerial visit from India to Bolivia. Opportunities for cooperation in various sectors including railways, pharmaceuticals, mining, energy, IT, etc. and resolution of outstanding issues were discussed. Bilateral Ministerial contacts have taken place on the sidelines of meetings of international organizations. EAM had a bilateral meeting with his Bolivian counterpart Rogelio Mayta on 5 August 2021 in Tehran. A bilateral meeting between the External Affairs Minister and Bolivian Foreign Minister was held in September 2022 in New York on the sidelines of the 77th UNGA. Bolivian Minister for Developmental Planning Mr. Sergio Armando Cusicanqi visited India from 3-4 August 2023 in order to attend the CII-LAC Business Conclave.

Bolivia's Minister for Development Planning, Mr. Rene Orellana paid a three day visit to New Delhi during March-April 2016 and met with Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh and Minister for Railways Shri Suresh Prabhu and attended a business seminar 'Doing Business with India' organised by CII. Defence Minister of Bolivia, Mr. Reymi Ferreira visited Goa from 28 to 30 March 2016 to participate

DEFEXPO 2016 at the invitation of the Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar. In June 2016, Joint Secretary (LAC) visited Bolivia for bilateral consultations.

The first India-Bolivia Foreign Office Consultations were held in La Paz on 20 November 2014. The Indian side was led by Shri R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary (AMS & CPV). The Bolivian side was led by Mr. Juan Carlos Alurralde, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. Special Secretary also called on Mr. David Choquehuanca, Foreign Minister of Bolivia.

India and Bolivia signed a Cultural Agreement in December 1997 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in November 2001. During the VVIP Visit in March 2019, 8 bilateral Agreements/MoUs, including those on Visa Exemption for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders, Cooperation between FSI and Bolivian Diplomatic Academy, Bi-oceanic Railway Corridor, Cultural Exchange Programme, Geology and Mineral Resources, establishment of Centre of Excellence in ICT, Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy and Cooperation in Space Exploration and Use were signed. In addition, Bolivia signed ISA Framework Agreement. The first meeting of the India-Bolivia Joint Working Group on Traditional Systems of Medicine was held virtually on 12th October 2021.

Commercial Relations

The trade between India and Bolivia has been growing and there is scope for improvement. In the Financial Year 2021-22, the total trade was US\$2,190.5 million registering a 74% growth, with India's exports at US\$117.95 million and imports at US\$2,072.54 million. During April to September of FY 2022-23, the two-way trade grew by 89.75% to US\$1,713.38 million.

According to Bolivian data for 2021, India was the fourth largest global trading partner, largest export destination and 7th largest source of imports for Bolivia. India's exports include automobiles, machinery, pharmaceutical products, iron and steel, rubber products, yarn, textiles and fibers, organic and inorganic chemicals. Bolivian exports mainly include gold, fertilizers, mineral waste, leather and wood. A 28-member Pharmexcil delegation visited La Paz on 26-27 August 2019 for BSM and interacted with authorities and potential business partners. An 80-member Pharmexcil business delegation representing 62 Indian pharma companies visited the Bolivian city of Santa Cruz on 4-5 August 2022.

India's Development Assistance to Bolivia

India gifted medical aid of 6.2 tonnes of essential medicines, including 300,000 Hydroxychloroquine tablets and protective gear to Bolivia on 7 August 2020. Bolivia is a beneficiary of India's development assistance and is keen to make India as its development partner. India offers 10 slots per annum under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Bolivian experts attended specialized courses offered by India under ITEC on prevention of infection, policy development

during the pandemic times, and exchange of experience and best practices to manage Covid-19 pandemic. A number of ITEC alumni from Bolivia participated in the ITEC Day 2020 virtual celebrations on 15 September 2020. A Bolivian national participated in the course on the teachings of Buddha, Vipassana and its application to research and mental health. Bolivian diplomats have been attending the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) conducted by FSI. MoU on cooperation between FSI and Bolivian Diplomatic Academy was signed in March 2019.

A project involving lighting of Tiwanaku Archaeological Site on the shores of Lake Titicaca was completed with Government of India's assistance of US\$ 31000 under the "Aid to LAC" budget. It was inaugurated by the Foreign Minister of Bolivia on 21 June 2017. Tiwanaku holds a great spiritual and historical significance for the people of Bolivia. India extended support for financing a rural water management project in Beni Province of Bolivia under IBSA fund. Solar lighting of Plazuela del Niño (Children's Park) was undertaken with Government of India support at Sucre. In March 2019, India and Bolivia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up of a Centre of Excellence in IT at Cochabamba with India's assistance. India offered a line of credit of US\$100 million for developmental projects of interest to Bolivia.

Cultural: A bust of Mahatma Gandhi gifted by Government of India was unveiled in La Paz on 31 August 2021 by the Mayor of La Paz and Ambassador of India. ICCR sponsored the visit of Indian classical music group led by Apratim Mazmudar in September 2019. ICCR supplied Mahatma Gandhi bust for installation at Trinidad in Beni province and La Paz city of Bolivia.

International Day of Yoga (IDY) has been celebrated in Bolivia every year. The 9th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz in June 2023 with enthusiastic participation.

Consular: India has extended e-Visa facility to Bolivians with effect from 5th August 2015. Visa Exemption Agreement for diplomatic and official passports was signed in March 2019.

Indian Community: Indian community in Bolivia, including PIOs, is around 60. Indian community is engaged in retail trade, transportation, agriculture, service sector, etc. An India Bolivia Friendship Association called Asociacion de Amistad Bolivia India (AABI) was formed in 2017.
