

**Embassy of India**  
**Budapest**  
**India – Bosnia & Herzegovina Bilateral Relations**

Relations between India and Bosnia & Herzegovina (BiH) are warm and friendly. BiH sees India as a multi-cultural and multi-religious democracy. BiH attaches importance to good relations with India and the need to further develop and strengthen all round cooperation including economic and cultural. Diplomatic relations with BiH were established in 1995.

The first ever visit by a Bosnian Foreign Minister took place in May 2003. FM Mladen Ivanic visited India and had meetings with PM, EAM, Commerce Minister as also Minister for Tourism & Culture. An interactive session with CII was also held. BiH Minister for Justice as well as Minister for IT and Transport visited India to sign Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty and Air Services Agreement in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Mr. Edin Dilberovic, Assistant Minister of BiH, visited India for 2nd Foreign Office Consultations in April 2011.

Mr. Mirko Sarovic, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, visited India in October 2012 to participate in the International Seminar on Energy Access. Dr. Zlatko Lagumdžija, Foreign Minister, accompanied by a business delegation, visited India in March 2013 and met with EAM, MOS for External Affairs and Minister of New and Renewable Energy. Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mr. Mato Franjicevic, led a delegation to India in December 2016 and held a meeting in the Department of Commerce in India. Dr. Ahmet Santic and Dr. Suad Arnautovic, members of Central Election Commission, visited India in January 2017. An MoU between Election Commission of India and Central Election Commission of BiH was signed during the visit. As a follow up to the MoU, a five-member delegation of the Election Commission of India visited Sarajevo in March 2018 to impart training to the members and employees of the BiH CEC. Mr. Ismir Jusko, Minister of Communications and Transport, visited India from November 12-16, 2017.

From India, Smt. Preneet Kaur, the then Minister of State for External Affairs, accompanied by a high-level CII business delegation, visited BiH in July 2012 on a first-ever Ministerial visit. She held discussions with Chairman of Presidency, Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Finance and Treasury, and for Foreign Trade and Economic Relations. The first ever visit at the Cabinet Minister level took place in July 2016 when Shri Suresh P. Prabhu, Minister of Railways, visited BiH. He had meetings with Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mr. Mirko Sarovic, with Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Amer Kapetanovic, and as also with the Prime Minister of Federation of BiH, Mr. Fadil Novalic. He also met with Mr. Mirsad Isakovic, Member of BiH-Asia Parliamentary Friendship Society. Dr. Nasim Zaidi, Chief Election Commissioner, visited BiH in September – October 2016 to oversee local elections as Head of Mission of Association of World Election Bodies leading a team of international observers.

India and BiH also hold Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs). The first round of FOCs was held in December 2002 in Sarajevo, the second round in New Delhi in April 2011 and the third round in Sarajevo in April 2014.

India provided humanitarian assistance of US \$ 100,000 to BiH in May 2014, when unprecedented floods struck the country and more than 60 lives were lost and about 100,000 houses and other properties were destroyed. BiH is also grateful for the presence of Indian police observers numbering around one hundred officers, that were part of United Nations Mission in BiH (UNMIBH), which has since been wound up.

**Important Bilateral Treaties and Agreements:**

1. Agreement on Trade Cooperation signed in 2002;
2. Agreement on Establishment of Joint Business Council signed between the Foreign Trade Chamber of BiH & FICCI in 2003;
3. Bilateral Investment Promotion & Protection Agreement signed in 2006; (a new BiT has been proposed)
4. Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty signed in 2009;
5. Air Services Agreement signed in 2010;
6. Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons in December, 2012. [The Instruments of Ratification have been exchanged in May 2017].
7. Memorandum of Understanding between Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Foreign Trade Chamber of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FTC BiH) in 2013.
8. MoU on Cooperation between the Central Election Commission of BiH and Election Commission of India, signed in January 2017

**Commercial and Economic Relations:**

The bilateral trade figures are given below:

**Bilateral trade**

(In US\$ millions)

| Year (Jan-Dec) | Indian Exports to BIH | Indian Imports from BIH | Total Trade |
|----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|-------------|
| 2022 Jan-Sep   | 385.1                 | 2.4                     | 387.5       |
| 2021           | 139.4                 | 2.4                     | 141.8       |
| 2020           | 68.8                  | 3.9                     | 72.7        |
| 2019           | 75.7                  | 10.0                    | 85.7        |
| 2018           | 78.2                  | 8.1                     | 86.3        |
| 2017           | 71.8                  | 6.5                     | 78.3        |
| 2016           | 75.7                  | 3.2                     | 78.9        |
| 2015           | 59.7                  | 1.4                     | 61.1        |

Source: Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, BiH  
 Trademap.org

Some of the items of BiH exports to India are mineral fuels, articles of paper, aluminium structures, articles of wood, inorganic chemicals, toys, sports equipment, wool, animal products, and glass and glassware. From the Indian side, some of the articles of export are Coffee, Tobacco, Stone products, Aluminium, Textile articles, Footwear, Articles of Iron and steel, Glassware, Organic chemicals, Carpets and other textile floor coverings, Motor Vehicle accessories etc. Business opportunities exist in areas of automobile components, metal processing, hydro-energy, wood processing, mining, food-processing, tourism, traditional medicine, higher education (IT and Medicine), pharmaceutical and construction industries. Since BiH is expected to join the EU during the next few years, a manufacturing base in BiH could be useful for interested Indian companies.

A Joint Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation (JTEC) has been set up. The second meeting of the JTEC took place in September 2006. The third meeting of the JTEC took place in Sarajevo in September 2012. A representative of FICCI also accompanied the delegation. Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations, Mr. Mato Franjicevic, led a delegation to India in December 2016 and held a meeting on the Department of Commerce in India. India was one of the "Focus Countries" at the 8th Edition of the Sarajevo Business Forum 2017, held on May 22-23 and participated with a delegation of 34 businessmen. India again participated in the International Business and Investment Conference' on April 25-26, 2018 in Sarajevo. A 15-member Indian delegation comprising Vice-Chancellor and doctors from Sri Ramachandra Medical College and Research Institute, (SRMC), Chennai and Mr. Suhas Mantri, BiH's Honorary Consul to Maharashtra and Goa visited the event. Mission again participated in the 10th edition of the Sarajevo Business Forum Mission on 17-18 April 2019. Themed on 'One Region One Economy' the event saw the participation of President of Slovenia, H.E. Borut Pahor, Vice-President of Turkey, H.E. Fuat Oktay, Prime Minister of Malaysia, YAB Tun Dr. Mahathir Mohamad (Video message) and Presidency members of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Nearly 300 projects in the field of tourism, education, agriculture and wood industry etc. were showcased.

India participated in the 39th Sarajevo Tourism Festival from October 18-21, 2017, as a Partner Country. The inaugural ceremony was attended by Prime Minister and other Ministers of Federation of BiH. In 2018, India Tourism Frankfurt represented India. Embassy also participated at the 8th and 9th Scholarship Fairs organized at the University of Sarajevo in 2017 and 2018. The Embassy of India participated in the 22nd International Economic Fair in Mostar (9-13 April 2019). Embassy had also participated in 2016 and 2018 editions of the event. Embassy's stand was inaugurated by H.E. Mr. Mirko Sarovic, Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ambassador of India Mr. Kumar Tuhin. The stand was visited by a large number of persons, including dignitaries like the Director General, Asia and Africa Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs; senior officials from the business and trade departments of the Government of BiH; other exhibitors and members of public. On the sidelines of the event, Ambassador held a meeting with the Foreign Investment Promotion Agency (FIPA) of BiH and visited the 'Intera' Technology Park. A two-member delegation, of Mr Prashant Goyal, Joint Secretary and Mr Prasanna V. Salian, Joint Director from Ministry of Finance, Government of India attended European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) annual meeting in Sarajevo, from 8-9 May 2019.

### **Indian Investments**

There have been investments by companies owned by Indian nationals / Persons of Indian origin, to

the extent of about \$ 250 million. These investments are perceived to be from India. The Ispat Group (Global Steel Holdings Limited) made a 51% equity investment in November, 2003 in the only coke and fertilizer plant in the BiH-Global Ispat Koksana Industrija doo Lukavac (GIKIL) with an investment of approximately US\$ 10 million. However, the Ispat Group has faced difficulties relating to their investments with the arrest of President of the Supervisory Board, Mr. Pramod Mittal and two other colleagues on the charge of illegal withdrawal and money laundering. They left Bosnia on a bail and payment of penalty over US \$ 11 million. The Company was subsequently taken over by Tuzla Canton authorities and a new local management board was elected without Indian influence. Arcelor Mittal has acquired a steel mill in Zenica (Federation of BiH) and some mining sites in Omarska (near Prijedor) in Republika Sprska (one of the two entities in BiH) with a total investment of approximately US\$ 200 million. These two are the largest industrial units in the country employing about 2000 persons. About 6 Indians are employed in these enterprises.

There has also been investment by a PIO(American Indian) and Indian entrepreneur duo in Karajina Insurance. However, the investment seems to have ended in some conflicts with the investors Naveen Aggarwal, Neete Gupta, and Usha Industries, Inc filing a dispute with the UNCTAD over Claims arising out of the alleged freeze of the claimants' shareholding in the insurance company Krajina and other actions allegedly taken by Bosnian regulatory agencies to prevent the claimants from exercising their majority ownership rights in Krajina, after the claimants had accused the Bosnian authorities of fraudulent misrepresentations in the offering prospectus on which they had relied when purchasing the shares, which the company lost.

### **Cultural relations:**

There are two associations, 'BiH – India Friendship Society' based in Sarajevo and 'BiH-Indian Association' based in Mostar, which organize various cultural events regularly. India was the *Focus Country* in the 7-week long prestigious **Sarajevo Winter Festival** from 12 – 16 March 2015. During the course of India's participation an array of activities, viz., Yoga & Ayurveda presentations and workshops, Santoor concerts by well-known artists Pt. Bhajan Sopori and his troupe (sponsored by ICCR), a photo exhibition themed 'Vibrant India', and a documentary film festival were organized. India inaugurated the Sarajevo Winter Festival in February 2017, with performance on the theme 'The Dance of Weaves – Silk in India', by the troupe of Ms. Pratibha Prahlad, world renowned Bharatnatyam dancer. The theme of the Festival was 'Sarajevo Substance – Silk Road Art', which focused mainly on Silk Road countries. In February 2018, Embassy of India participated in the Opening Ceremony of the Sarajevo Winter Festival titled "The Other Face of the World". and showcased Indian fusion music. In February 2019 the Embassy again participated in the Sarajevo Winter Festival titled "Noise & Fury" with a stand-alone Indian cultural programme consisting of a fusion of three art forms: Bharatanatyam, Kathak and Odissi.

**International Day of Yoga (IDY):** In the last 6 years Embassy of India has been celebrating Yoga Day in several cities of BiH in collaboration with local yoga schools and teachers, municipality, universities and cultural centres. In 2019 the 5th IDY and cultural festival was held in the 6 cities of Banja Luka, Foca, Mostar, Sarajevo Tuzla, and Zenica. In 2020 due to the pandemic, a virtual celebration was organised in collaboration with several Yoga Teachers from leading Yoga schools in BiH. The Yoga leaders did a live yoga throughlive streaming on the social media platforms of the

Embassy on June 21st and also sent their videos. Embassy had organised several webinars on 'Yoga' and few women from BiH participated in a special 'Yoga Session' organised for them in June 2020. These events enabled to connect online in large numbers. For this occasion, Essay and Poster Contests were organised for students of Universities and schools and there was active participation from Sarajevo and Banja Luka. In several contests on other occasions like Bharat Ko janiye Quiz, Gandhi@150, Constitution Day, good participation has been observed. The Bosnian Indian Friendship Society(BIFS) has been actively engaged in promoting and coordinating events of the Mission. IDY 2022 was organised in coordination with the BIFS in Sarajevo.

**Virtual Yoga Course:** From January 2021, Embassy of India started a virtual yoga course for people of BiH, where local Yoga teacher would be conducting the classes on common yoga protocol. For special sessions and workshops on ancient Indian philosophy, Indian culture and scriptures, Indian yoga teachers would also be conducting sessions on behalf of the Mission.

**6th Indian Film Festival:** Keeping in mind the restrictions during covid times, this year's Indian Film Festival has been organised in collaboration with leading TV Channels. In Sarajevo, the Channel Partner has been OBN Television. Besides showcasing 'incredible India' promotional videos, OBN Channel showcased five award winning Indian films in January 2021 as announced on December 7th where Channel Head Davorin Simunic was present. The films are Indu Sarkar, Saaho, Thinking of Him, Jhalki and The Silence.

The Embassy also organised **AYUSH Days** in Mostar and Sarajevo on January 31 and February 1, 2018 respectively. The Embassy also promoted Ayurveda and States of India on the sidelines of the Republic Day on January 30-31st, 2019 in Sarajevo.

**150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi:** Mrs. Selma Muhedinovic -Silajdzic, prominent singer of Bosnia and Herzegovina sang "Vaishnav Jan Toh" bhajan in her voice to a global chorus and paid tribute to Gandhiji. EAM sent a letter of appreciation to Mrs. Selma Muhedinovic-Silajdzic for rendition of the hymn "Vaishnav Jan Toh".

### **Scholarships:**

India has provided slots to BiH nationals for training under the Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. There is growing interest from people in BiH to take advantage of this training. The Government of India bears all expenses including return international passage, visa, accommodation etc under this programme. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH also sends its diplomats to attend the courses organised by the Foreign Service Institute of Ministry of External Affairs of India. 12 candidates from BiH availed the ITEC programme between 2015-2023.

### **Indian Community:**

Only a few Indians, mainly working for Ispat Coking plant in Tuzla and Arcerlor Mittal mines and plant in Prijedor comprise the Indian community in Bosnia & Herzegovina.

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