

India-Guyana Bilateral Brief

Diplomatic relations between India and Guyana exist since 1965 when a Commission of India was established in Georgetown in May 1965 and was made a full-fledged High Commission of India in 1968 after the country got independence on May 26, 1966. In 1998, Guyana became a member of the Organisation of Islamic Countries (OIC) despite its Muslim population being as low as 6.4%, bringing it close to the Islamic world.

Joint Commission:

The fourth session of India-Guyana at the Ministerial level was held in Georgetown in May 2008. The fifth session of the Joint Commission was held at Georgetown on 22 April 2023 co-chaired by Dr. S. Jaishankar External Affairs Minister and Guyanese Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation Mr. Hugh Hilton Todd.

As a result of discussions held during the visit of President & Vice President of Guyana to India in January and February 2023 respectively, eight Joint Working Groups have been constituted to strengthen cooperation in Agriculture, Health & Pharma, Infrastructure Development, Energy, Ayurveda & Wellness, Technology Innovation, Defence and Human Resources & Capacity Building.

Foreign Office Consultations:

The third round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held between the two sides in June 2011 in Georgetown, Guyana. The fourth round of FOC took place in Georgetown on 28 November 2022. The Indian side was led by Secretary (East) Shri Saurabh Kumar and the Guyanese side by Ambassador George Talbot Director, Multilateral Affairs Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Secretary (East) also called on President Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali.

Bilateral Visits:

The last state visits have been that of President Bharrat Jagdeo to India in August in 2003 and our Vice President Shri Bhairon Singh Sekhawat's visit to Guyana in 2006. Going further back - Prime Minister Linden Forbes Sampson Burnham, Q.C. (1971); President Arthur Chung (1975); President Dr. Cheddi Jagan (1993) visited India and Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi (1968) and Vice President Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma (1988) undertook official visits to Guyana.

President Donald Ramotar visited India in January 2015. In September 2015, PM met President David Granger at New York on the sidelines of the UNGA. In September 2016, Guyanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Carl B. Greenidge and MOS Mr. M.J. Akbar met on the sidelines of UNGA. PM Moses Nagamootoo made a private visit to India from October 12-15, 2018 to inaugurate the World Tamil Economic Conference in Puducherry. Earlier also, PM Nagamootoo made private visits to India in October and November, 2016 on the invitation from private parties and had a luncheon meeting with MOS General (Retd.) V.K. Singh on October 6, 2016. Actg. Chancellor of the Judiciary made a private visit to India to attend the

19th International Conferences of Chief Justices of the World in Lucknow from November 14-20, 2018. Earlier in November 2017, Minister of Public Security Khemraj Ramjattan attended the same Conference.

Then President David Granger attended the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance in March 2018 at New Delhi and had bilateral meetings with Hon'ble PM, Minister of State for Power and New & Renewable Energy and Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change. A month earlier in January 2018, Second Vice President and Foreign Minister Carl B. Greenidge, accompanied by Natural Resources Minister, Raphael Trotman, visited India and had bilateral meetings with External Affairs Minister, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, MoS for Power and New & Renewable Energy. Minister within Ministry of Public Infrastructure Ms. Annette Ferguson visited India to attend the First General Assembly of the ISA and the 2nd Renewable Energy Global Investors' Meet & Expo (2nd RE-INVEST) in New Delhi from October 2-5, 2018. From India, Dr. Satya Pal Singh, MoS for Human Resources Development, Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation visited Guyana from 8-11 May, 2018 as a part of Special Outreach programme and met President, PM, Foreign Minister, Natural Resources Minister and Leader of Opposition.

During the first-ever Summit Meeting between our PM and leaders of the 14 CARICOM countries on the sidelines of the 7th UNGA in New York on September 25, 2019. The PM met with Dr. Karen Cummings, Guyanese Foreign Minister. On September 23, 2019, then EAM also met with the Guyanese Foreign Minister.

Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation Mr. Hugh Hilton Todd visited India from 26 April to 1 May 2022 to attend the Raisina Dialogue 2022. Foreign Minister Hugh Hilton Todd interacted with Hon'ble PM and also called on EAM. Both discussed taking forward traditional friendship and spoke about energy, digital, health and people-to-people connect. EAM said that Development partnership continued to advance and reflected India's deeper engagement with the CARICOM. Foreign Minister Todd also participated in two panel discussions (1) "Beachheads of Globalization: Investments, Debts and Aspirations" and (2) "Adaptation and Disaster Resilience." at the Raisina Dialogue. FM Todd also met top business leaders of India in an event organized by FICCI. FM Todd, in an interview with WION News Channel stated that "India helped us in achieving our developmental goals." Foreign Minister Todd also met EAM in the India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting held on the sidelines of UNGA in New York on 23 September 2022. Minister Todd also praised India in the Showcasing India-UN Partnership in Action event held at New York on 24 September 2022 by stating that small countries like Guyana would have benefited immensely from India's growth trajectory, as it has always been an economy that focuses on human development, putting humans ahead of any other form of development.

The President of Guyana Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali led a delegation to an official visit to India from 08-14 January 2023 as the Chief Guest for the 17th PravasiBharatiyaDiwas. He was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation Mr. Hugh Hilton Todd and Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Mr. Anand Persaud, in addition to a large business delegation. President Ali was conferred with the prestigious PravasiBharatiya Samman Award at the Valedictory Session on 10 January 2023 in Indore. President Ali met with President of India Smt. DroupadiMurmu and Prime Minister

Shri Narendra Modi, Minister of External Affairs Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Jairam Gadkari, Minister of Food Processing Industries Shri Pashupati Kumar Paras and Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas called on President Ali. Both sides held comprehensive discussions on a wide range of issues including cooperation in energy, infrastructure development, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology and innovation, defence cooperation, capacity building, and trade among other issues. President Ali also participated in the Global Investors Summit 2023 in Indore on 11 January. Apart from Indore, President Ali visited Delhi, Kanpur, Bangalore and Mumbai.

Vice President of Guyana Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo visited India from 20-25 February 2023 at the invitation of the Vice President of India. He was accompanied by Senior Minister within the Office of the President with Responsibility for Finance Dr. Ashni Singh and a high level official and business delegation. He also attended the World Sustainable Development Summit organized by The Energy Resources Institute in New Delhi from 22-24 February 2023. Dr. Jagdeo called on President of India and met Vice President of India. External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Ministers of Health and Family Welfare and Chemicals and Fertilizers Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, Petroleum and Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs Shri H.S. Puri called on him.

National Security Adviser to the President of Guyana Captain Gerry Gouveia led a delegation to participate in DefExpo held in Gujarat in October 2022. Chief of Staff of Guyana Defence Force, Brig. Godfrey Bess visited India to participate in Aero India 2023 in February 2023.

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha visited India for the Global Year of Millets Conference in New Delhi from 18-22 March 2023. He not only attended the Millets Conference but also met our Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister and Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying. The Guyanese Minister also visited Indian Institute of Rice Research; Indian Council of Agricultural Research; Central Potato Research Institute; Indian Agricultural Research Institute and Coconut Development Board in addition to personally interact with Indian experts in different agriculture disciplines to work in Guyana on commercial basis.

EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar, accompanied by an official and business delegation, paid an official visit to Guyana from 20-24 April 2023. During his visit, EAM met with the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly Mr Manzoor Nadir and Foreign Minister Hugh Todd. EAM along with the Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Guyana chaired the 5th session of the India-Guyana Joint Commission Meeting. EAM also participated in the first ever India-Guyana Business Roundtable and a Diaspora Event. EAM along with President Dr. Ali also inaugurated the Ocean-going Passenger-cum-Cargo Ferry, MV Ma Lisha on 23 April 2023 in Georgetown. The Ferry is built by M/s Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Ltd. as part of Government of India's Line of Credit-cum-Grant project for US\$ 12.73 million. EAM held wide-ranging discussions with the Guyanese leadership on bilateral, regional and international affairs.

Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony along with National Security Advisor Captain Gerry Gouveia and CEO of Guyana Office for Investment Dr. Peter Ramsaroop and a large business delegation visited India for the 9th edition of the India-LAC Conclave held on 3-4 August 2023 in New Delhi.

Hon. PM met President and Vice President of Guyana on the margins of CoP28 in Dubai on 1 December 2023 and discussed several issues of mutual interest.

Minister of Natural Resources VickramBharrat visited India for the Global South Energy Ministerial Roundtable on 7 February 2024 during the India Energy Week at Goa. He met Hon. Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas; Housing & Urban Affairs.

Prime Minister Brig (Ret'd) Mark Phillips visited India from 6-11 February 2024 and met Hon. EAM, Hon. Minister of Power, New & Renewable Energy in addition to attending inaugural session of the World Sustainable Development Summit organized by TERI in New Delhi. Prime Minister Phillips also met DG (CDRI) which Guyana recently joined.

UN & CARICOM

Guyana generally coordinates its approach to international organizations with other members of CARICOM. CARICOM's position is both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership should be expanded and it should accommodate CARICOM's (Small States) interests and reflect Africa's position.

Guyana was elected as a Non-Permanent Member of the UN Security Council in June 2023 and assumed functions in January 2024. Guyana will hold the presidency of UNSC for the month of February 2024.

Guyana also assumed Chair of CARICOM in January 2024 for six months term and would hold 46th Regular Meeting of the Conference of Heads of Government of CARICOM member countries in February 2024 in Georgetown.

Trade and Investment

Economic and trade relations between India and Guyana are structured through the Indo-Guyana Joint Commission which was set up in 1977, fourth and last of which was held in 2008 in Guyana. Total trade between Indian and Guyana in 2020-21 amounted to US\$ 46.97 million, a significant increase of 46% over the previous year. Indian exports to Guyana stood at US\$ 35.69 million while India's imports from Guyana being US\$ 11.28 million; increasing by 41.56% and 62.16%, respectively over the previous year. India's single largest export item is pharmaceuticals and its single largest import item from Guyana is usually wood and wood products. However, in 2020-21, India imported US\$4.06 million worth optical, photographic cinematographic measuring, checking precision, medical or surgical instruments and apparatus parts and accessories thereof; compared to US\$3.74 million in wood and wood products. Total India-Guyana trade in 2021-22 amounted to US\$ 223.36 million with exports of US\$ 66.41 million and imports of US\$ 156.96 million, a tremendous increase from US\$ 46.97 million in 2020-21. During 2022-23, the trade dipped to US\$ 66.37, which, however, picked up in 2023-24 to US\$ 105.97 with exports of US\$ 99.36 million and imports of US\$ 6.61 million.

(In US\$ Millions)

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24

India's Exports	25.21	35.69	66.41	62.15	99.36
India's Imports	6.95	11.28	156.96	4.22	6.61
Total Trade	32.16	46.96	223.36	66.37	105.97

Energy

An MoU on Cooperation in New and Renewable Energy was signed with Guyana on January 31, 2018 during the visit of Second Vice President and Foreign Minister Carl B Greenidge. Guyana has signed and ratified the Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance on January 30, 2018 during the visit to India of Second Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl B. Greenidge; President Granger attended the Founding Conference of ISA in March 2018. Given the huge potential for solar and hydro power in Guyana, the prospects of our technical and financial assistance on concessional terms in developing renewable energy sector holds huge promise. There are ongoing developmental cooperation projects including for solar lighting systems for the Cheddi Jagan International Airport and solar home lightening systems 30,000 homes of indigenous community in the interior regions of Guyana. Guyana's joining of the International Solar Alliance initiative by signing the Framework Agreement has provided another multilateral dimension to our cooperation in this sector.

Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL) purchased (first purchase) one million barrels of Liza crude oil from Government of Guyana's share of oil. Earlier a consortium of HPCL-Mittal Energy had purchased 1 million barrels in March 2021. Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Housing & Urban Affairs Mr. H.S. Puri met Guyanese Natural Resource Minister Mr. VickramBharrat in Abu Dhabi on 31 October 2022. A broad-based bilateral MoU for Cooperation in the Hydrocarbons sector is under consideration.

Guyana joined the Global Biofuel Alliance as initiating Found Member in July 2023. Guyana also joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

Education

Nine scholarships are being offered to Guyanese Student under the Commonwealth Scholarship Plan and 4 under ICCR scholarship schemes for studying Indian culture. A high level Technical Group has been formed between the two countries, which has held two rounds of discussion on long-term collaboration between India and Guyana.

Two Indian Universities - Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) and Jain "Deemed To Be" University, Bangalore - have been selected by the Ministry of Education of Guyana under the Guyana Online Academy of Learning (GOAL) to provide thousands of online scholarships to Guyanese and express happiness that over 4650 of the 6000 on-line Scholarships offered by the Government of Guyana, are from these two Indian universities in

2021, while in 2022 4590 slots were allocated to IGNOU, Jain 'Deemed To Be' and Texila universities and Sherlock Institute of Forensic Sciences. University of Petroleum & Energy Studies have also been added as a partner University.

ITEC

So far more than 800 Guyanese nationals have benefited from ITEC Programmes in various streams like IT, Telecom, Entrepreneurship, Administration, Renewable and Alternate Energy, Banking, Insurance, Finance including Accounts and Audit etc. 50 ITEC slots were allotted to Guyana in the year 2021-22 while 55 slots students joined e-ITEC courses in 2021-22. In 2022-23, 75 slots have been allotted to Guyana out of which 40 have been utilized so far in addition to 30 e-ITEC courses.

Allotment of 19 ITEC slots in 2021-22, 38 for the year 2022-23 and 46 for 2023-24 have opened opportunities for Guyana Defence Force to train under ITEC including for Army, for Air Force and for Navy.

Civil Aviation

Annexure B of the Air Services Agreement was signed between India and Guyana on 22 April 2023. During the ninth annual International Civil Aviation (ICAN) 2016 conference, which was held in Nassau, Bahamas, from December 5-9, 2016, both sides finalized the text of the agreement. The agreement allows unlimited number of flights to six airports in India: New Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Chennai. The new arrangement will encourage connectivity and passenger travel between India and Guyana.

Consular

India and Guyana have an Agreement on Visa Exemption for Holders of Diplomatic, Service and Official Passports. Guyana was included in the list of countries whose nationals are eligible for tourist visa on arrival in India w.e.f. 25th January 2015.

COVID-19

Under *Vaccine Maitri* initiative, India donated 80,000 doses of Covishield to Guyana on 7 March 2021. India also donated USD 1 million to Guyana in 2020 under India-UN Development Partnership Fund to upgrade its critical healthcare infrastructure to combat COVID19 which helped them to procure over 34 ventilators, thousands of protection equipment and emergency care medicines, etc. Besides, the Government of India provided 30,000 Hydroxychloroquine tablets to the Government of Guyana last year as a gesture of goodwill in support of its fight against COVID-19. India also funded US\$ 500,000 to prevent teenage pregnancy in Guyana in coordination with the UNFPA.

Culture

An MoU on Cultural Exchange Programme 2018-2021 was signed on January 31, 2018 during the visit to India of Second Vice President and Minister of Foreign Affairs Carl B. Greenidge. Majority of Indo-Guyanese population strictly follow religious practices brought with them during the time of indentureship. Though they have lost linguistic and family contacts with India, they play Indian music, watch Indian movies and soaps and wear Indian costumes during festive and religious occasions.

At the request of the previous Government of the People's Progressive Party/Civic (PPP/C), India has donated to Guyana a monument called "Indian Arrival Monument", commemorating arrival of first group of indentured labourers in Guyana on 5 May 1838. The Monument consisting of six bronze statues depict a Hindu man, a Muslim man, a Drum boy, a woman with bundle, a woman with tawa and cahary and a man with cutlass and rice plant, was successfully installed at the site at Palmyra Village in Berbice and was jointly inaugurated by President David Granger and the Director General of ICCR, Shri Akhilesh Mishra on May 5, 2019.

Director General of Indian Council of Cultural Relations Shri Kumar Tuhin visited Guyana on 14-16 October 2023 and held discussions with Minister of Culture, Youth & Sports, Minister of Human Services and Social Justice and Minister of Public Services to discuss further strengthening of cultural relations between the two countries.

The Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre in Georgetown, established in 1972, is one of the oldest Indian Cultural Centres abroad, and teaches Indian classical dance, yoga and music. They also organize cultural events around the year and takes part in events organized by local cultural organizations as part of its outreach programme. Many outreach programmes on dance, music and yoga were / are being organised across Guyana. Hindi and Sanskrit classes are being organised on fortnightly basis since May and September 2018, respectively apart from regular Hindi classes in Region 2 of Guyana since 2010. Holi (Phagwa) is one of the major festivals of Guyana. The Mission organizes Phagwa celebrations in a big way at the Swami Vivekananda Culture Centre every year where the President of Guyana, the Leader of the Opposition, Prime Minister, former Presidents and Prime Ministers, senior Cabinet Ministers, former and current MPs and all prominent Guyanese actively participate. The Mission also organises other cultural events like Hindi Diwas, PravasiBhrtiyaDiwas, ICCR Foundation Day, International Day of Yoga, 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, saree draping, cooking classes, Women's day, Garba celebrations, ITEC Day, and Birth Anniversaries of prominent Indian personalities on regular basis. The Mission has also been organizing a number of cultural events to celebrate Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Indian Community

Although about 40% of the population of Guyana is of Indian descent, the number of Indian nationals is about 1500 mainly restricted to members of the Mission, Indian Cultural Centre of the Mission, staff of Bank of Baroda and other international agencies, doctors, nurses, students of private medical institutions and workers employed by local companies, hospitals and University of Guyana. Besides above, a small Sindhi community holding different nationalities also lives in Guyana, most of them are in business.

Technical Cooperation & Developmental Projects

So far more than 800 Guyanese nationals have benefited from India Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programmes. In 2013, a Forestry team visited India on study tour. One ITEC Expert on deputation with Rice Board of Guyana completed sharing know how for four years.

India had extended concessional line of credit through EXIM Bank for Modernization of Sugar Plants, Construction of Cricket Stadium (grant of US\$ 6 million + LOC US\$ 19 million), Installation of Solar Traffic Lights (US\$ 2.1 million) and for purchase of pumps (US\$ 4 million). The other ongoing LoC projects are:

(i) East Bank-East Coast Road Linkage Project: LoC of US\$50 million was extended on 16 March 2016 for the East Bank-East Coast linkage road construction project. RITES was appointed as the DPR Consultant on 4 January 2018, they submitted DPR in December 2019 and bidding documents on 15-1-2020. This project with LoC of US\$50 million has been revised by the Government of Guyana (GoG) based on feasibility study report submitted by the PMC, M/s RITES Ltd. and cost estimated at an amount of US\$ 208 million. According to RITES, they changed the scope and plan of the project based on the instructions and requirement of GoG. The matter remained pending for some time till the new Government took over in Guyana in August 2020. MEA agreed to GoG's proposal to construct the road in two phases with Phase-I starting with already approved LoC of US\$ 50 million. EXIM Bank of India pre-qualified 4 Indian companies and the bidding process has started in June 2021 with last date for submission of bid as 3 August 2021. Pre-bid meeting held on 5 July 2021 which was attended by all 4 Indian companies. However, none of the companies submitted bids. EXIM Bank in consultation with GoG launched the re-bid process and received bids from three Indian companies. After evaluating the bids, GoG has recommended on 12 January 2022 to award the contract to the lowest responsive bidder, M/s Ashoka Buildcon Limited at a value of US\$ 109 million. GoG is bearing the difference in the cost offered by the elected bidder. The project is progressing smoothly and is expected to complete on schedule.

(ii) Acquisition of Ocean Ferry Vessel: GoI offered an LoC of US\$10 million and a Grant of US\$ 8 million to GoG on 17 June 2016 for procuring an Ocean going Ferry from India. The project remained pending for execution as the Government of Guyana awarded the contract to L2 company and L1 company, Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSEL) raised objection. After the new Government took over in Guyana in August 2020 the matter has got sorted out. The agreement for supplying an Ocean-Going Passenger and Cargo ferry vessel from India to Guyana in 18 months has been signed on 13-1-2021 between Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd. (GRSE) of India and the Ministry of Public Works of Guyana at a total cost of US\$ 12,733,403. EAM along with President Dr. Ali inaugurated the Ocean-going Passenger-cum-Cargo Ferry, MV Ma Lisha on 23 April 2023 in Georgetown.

(iii) Acquisition of Fixed and Mobile Pumps and Associated Structures and Spares: LoC of US\$ 4 million was extended in February 2017 for procurement and installation of high-capacity irrigation/drainage pumps for agricultural purposes and mitigation of flooding in Georgetown and its environs. The contract was awarded to M/s Apollo International Limited, Gurgaon on 6 August 2018 for US\$ 3,602,014 for supply of 9 fixed and 3 mobile drainage pumps over a period of 12 months. M/s Apollo International Limited has already supplied and

installed the pumps in various parts of Guyana. The Guyanese side has conveyed that some pumps supplied were not upto the required standards and specifications and required to be replaced. The issue is under discussions for resolution.

(iv) Up-gradation of three Primary Health Centres: LoC of US\$ 17.5 million was extended on 19 July 2017 for up-gradation of three Regional Hospitals at the West Demerara, Suddie and Bartica in Guyana. M/s Enarch Consultants Pvt. Ltd. of India has been appointed in June 2021 as the Project Management Consultant (PMC) to undertake consultancy services for the design and supervision of civil works and submission of DPR for upgrading three regional hospitals in Guyana at a cost of US\$ 2.11 million. M/s Enarch and the Ministry of Health of Guyana signed the contract on 3 June 2021 and M/s Enarch submitted the Feasibility Report (DPR). The Government of Guyana informed their policy decision to change the scope of work restricting it to one hospital at Bartica instead of three. The revised scope of work has been approved by Government of India and conveyed to the Government of Guyana. The DPR is under consideration of EXIM Bank of India.

(v) Procuring and Installing Solar Home Lighting System for 30,000 homes in the Hinterland Communities in Guyana under LoC US\$ 10 million. LoC of US\$ 7.29 million to the Government of Guyana for "Procuring and Installing Solar Home Lighting System for 30,000 homes in the Hinterland Communities" was approved on 1-6-2021. Rajasthan Electronics & Instruments Limited was recommended by Guyana for award of US\$ 8.387 million contract for the project. The distribution of Solar Home Energy (SHE) systems has been completed by TERI.

(vi) Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant at Cheddi Jagan International Airport: Out of US\$ 10 millions the balance of the LoC amount, i.e. US\$ 2.71 million, a separate proposal for acquisition and installation of a Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant at Cheddi Jagan International Airport in Georgetown at a cost of US\$ 2.5 million was approved by MEA under Gol LoC and the agreement has also been signed in March 2024.

June 2024