

India-Trinidad and Tobago Bilateral Relations

The relationship between India and Trinidad and Tobago goes back to 30 May 1845, when the first ship 'Fatel Razack' carrying 225 Indian indentured workers reached the shores of Trinidad, then a British colony. Their numbers increased with subsequent arrival of more ships from India till 1917. The descendants of those indentured workers, now in their fifth or sixth generation, form nearly 40-45% of the total population of 1.36 million (2024), constituting an integral part of the economic, political and social fabric of the country. This year, the diaspora is celebrating 180 years of the arrival of the first group of their ancestors. The presence of a substantial population of Indian-origin (the largest ethnic group) has contributed immensely to close bilateral relations between the two countries.

2. India enjoys traditionally warm and cordial relations with Trinidad and Tobago. The bilateral relations were established on August 31, 1962. Since then, bilateral relations between the two countries have witnessed continued momentum with engagement at different levels. Trinidad and Tobago has a diplomatic Mission in India.

3. **Exchange of Visits:** There has been exchange of high-level visits between the two countries from time-to-time. From Trinidad & Tobago, Prime Minister Basdeo Panday paid a State Visit to India in January 1997, as Chief Guest on Republic Day. PM Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar paid a State visit to India from 05-14 January 2012. She was also Chief Guest at Pravasi Bharatiya (PBD) held in Jaipur and was conferred with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. PM Keith Rowley paid a working visit to Mumbai from 15-19 May 2024 during which he called on Governor of Maharashtra Shri Ramesh Bains and visited Reliance Industries' refining and petrochemical complex in Jamnagar.

4. From Indian side, PM Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee paid a State Visit to Trinidad and Tobago in February 1999. Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh led a high level delegation for CHOGM Summit in Port of Spain in November 2009. The leaders have also been meeting on the sidelines of multilateral forums from time-to-time. PM Shri Narendra Modi and PM Keith Rowley met in London on 19 April 2018 on the sidelines of the CHOGM Summit, in New York on 25 Sept 2019 on the sidelines of first India-CARICOM Leaders' Summit and again in Georgetown, Guyana on 20 Nov 2024 the margins of 2nd India-CARICOM Summit. PM Shri Narendra Modi is the first foreign leader to congratulate newly-elected Prime Minister of T&T Mrs Kamla Persad-Bissessar on April 29, 2025.

5. **President of T&T Chief Guest at PBD 2025:** H.E. Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo O.R.T.T, President of Trinidad & Tobago graced virtually the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) in Bhubaneswar as the Chief Guest, and delivered an address on the occasion. She was conferred with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) at the National Day Reception organized by the Mission on 26 January, 2025.

6. Among recent Ministerial visits, T&T Minister of Digital Transformation Mr Hassel Bacchus led a Technical Mission to India twice from 5-11 August, 2023 and again from 22-28 January 2024 for discussions on collaboration in the sector. Minister in the Office

of the Attorney General and Ministry of Legal Affairs Senator Ms Renuka Sagramsingh-Sooklal attended the Commonwealth Legal Education Association (CLEA) – Commonwealth Attorneys and Solicitors General Conference 2024 Meeting held in New Delhi in Feb 2024.

7. From Indian side, Shri Pabitra Margherita, MoS for External Affairs paid an official visit to T&T from 23-24 August 2024. He called on Prime Minister Keith Rowley and had bilateral talks with Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs Dr Amery Browne. MoS also visited the Parliament of Trinidad & Tobago (Red House) and paid a courtesy call on President of the Senate and Speaker of the House of Representatives. Prior to this visit, Shri Kumar Tuhin, Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) paid a visit to Trinidad & Tobago in October 2023. Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh, MoS for External Affairs visited T&T in April 2017.

8. External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr S. Jaishankar met Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs on the sidelines of the India-COFCOR Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Georgetown (Guyana) on April 21, 2023. Dr. Amery Browne participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 1.0) on January 13, 2023. Mr Cory Belfon, Permanent Secretary in Ministry for Digital Transformation participated in IT Ministers' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS 3.0) on August 17, 2024.

9. **Parliamentary Exchanges:** Parliamentarians of India and Trinidad & Tobago have traditionally enjoyed close relations. The Chair of the Speaker of the House of Representatives in T&T Parliament was gifted by Government of India in 1968. A 6-member delegation led by Speaker of Lok Sabha, Smt. Meira Kumar visited T&T in January 2012 to attend the Commonwealth Speakers & Presiding Officers Conference. The T&T Parliamentarians returned the visit in March 2012 when a 7-Member delegation jointly led by President of the Senate, Timothy Hamel-Smith and Speaker of the House of Representatives, Wade Mark. Four Members of Parliament of Trinidad visited India under the 10th Gen Next Democracy Network Programme conducted by ICCR from May 15-24, 2023.

10. **Cooperation during Pandemic:** In the middle of the pandemic, a consignment of medical aid was donated by Gol was handed over to Dr. Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of T&T at a virtual ceremony on 23 November, 2020. Under the Vaccine Maitri Initiative, Gol donated 40,000 doses of the AstraZeneca COVISHIELD vaccine to T&T. The consignment was received by then FM Dr. Amery Browne in the presence of Mr. Terrence Deyalsingh, then Minister of Health on 13 April 2021.

Institutional Dialogue Mechanisms

11. **Joint Commission Meeting (JCM):** The first meeting of the India-T&T Joint Commission Meeting was held in New Delhi in November 2011. The T&T delegation

was led by Minister of Foreign Affairs and Communications, Dr. Surujrattan Rambachan and the Indian side was led by EAM, Shri S.M. Krishna.

12. **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC):** India and Trinidad & Tobago held the first round of FOCs in Port of Spain on 1 July 2011. The second round of FOC was held in Port of Spain on 16 August 2021. It was co-chaired by Mrs. Riva Ganguly Das, Secretary (East), MEA, and Mr. Bruce Lai, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign & CARICOM Affairs of T&T.

13. **Important Bilateral Agreements and MoUs:** Over the years, the two countries have signed several agreements and MoUs (Annexure II) laying down the foundation for bilateral cooperation in diverse areas.

Development Partnership

14. **'HALT' India-UNDP Fund Project:** During the pandemic time, a US\$ 1 million project, 'Bringing High and Low Technology (HALT)' was announced for Trinidad & Tobago under India-UNDP Fund which was implemented through Pan American Health Organisation (PAHO). The project included 8 mobile healthcare robots, a telemedicine system, hand hygiene stations and Telemedicine equipment. The project was accomplished in August 2024.

15. **Agro-processing Machinery Project:** Following the meeting of EAM Dr S. Jaishankar with his CARICOM counterparts in Georgetown in April 2023, a US\$ 1 million was granted to T&T for supplying SME machinery. After conducting a feasibility study, it has been decided to supply machinery to an agro-processing facility of National Agriculture Marketing and Development Corporation (NAMDEVCO), a PSU under T&T's Ministry of Agriculture, Land & Fisheries. An MoU in this regard was exchanged between the Foreign Ministers of the two countries on the margins of the 2nd India-CARICOM Summit on 20 Nov 2024. The consignments are likely to reach Port of Spain soon.

16. **Donation of Rice and Edible Oil by HAFED:** During the visit of Chairman, HAFED (Haryana State Cooperative Supply & Marketing Federation Limited) in June 2024, it was decided to gift rice and edible oil to T&T. A container with 19,000 MT Rice and another with 12,500 Liter edible oil (Mustard & Soya bean) have arrived T&T in April 2025. The same were formally handed over by Mission to the Government of T&T on 21 May 2025.

17. **Capacity Building:** Facilities under ITEC programme were extended to T&T since long. Presently, 85 civilian ITEC slots are offered annually. India has also deputed agriculture experts in the fields of coconut and rice farming in the past. Dr. G.J.N. Rao, Rice Production Expert joined the T&T Ministry of Food Production on 25 August 2014 for one year. Earlier, Dr. Avvaru Sujatha, an Indian Entomologist specializing in the control of insect pests on coconut and mango was deputed in T&T for a year (Feb 2012-Feb 2013).

Economic & Commercial Relations

18. The Trade Agreement signed between India and T&T in January 1997 accords Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status to each other. Based on its economically influential role in the region and supported by regional and bilateral preferential trade agreements, T&T provides good opportunities to exporters from India to access the Caribbean region and beyond. There is potential for growth of bilateral trades in IT and IT-Enabled Services, Pharmaceuticals, Agriculture and Agro-Biotechnology, Renewable Energy (Wind & Solar), Tourism (including Medical Tourism), Textiles and Garments, Higher Education, Automobiles, Ayurveda and Wellness and Films, Music, etc.

19. The bilateral trade between India and T&T has grown significantly from the lows of COVID pandemic. It, however, has immense potential to further improve. It is believed that a sizeable amount of indirect trade takes place between the two sides through third countries in North America and Europe. **Major items of India's exports** to Trinidad & Tobago are: Vehicles, Rolling Stock, Parts and Accessories; Iron and Steel; Pharmaceutical Products; Plastic and Articles etc. **Major items of India's Imports from T&T** are: Mineral Fuels, Mineral Oils and Products of their Distillation; Bituminous Substances; Mineral Waxes; Iron and Steel; Ores, Slag & Ash; Aluminum etc.

Value (US\$ Millions)

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25
India's Exports	74.79	93.27	104.93	109.06	120.65
India's Imports	189.36	112.20	91.26	259.90	220.96
Total Trade	264.15	205.47	196.19	368.96	341.61

(Source: Department of Commerce, GoI)

Economic & Commercial visits

20. Mr. Mark Ramkerrysingh, Chairman, Elections and Boundaries Commission and Mr. Inshan Meajohn, CEO, T&T ICT Co. Ltd. (iGovTT) attended the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Summit held in Pune from June 12-14, 2023. The T&T Ministry of Digital Transformation sent delegations to attend the Global Fintech Fest in Mumbai (Sep 5-7, 2023) and the Resident Leaders' Programme conducted by Centre for Digital Public Infrastructure, Bengaluru (Nov. 2023).

21. **Adoption of UPI in T&T:** NPCI International Payments Limited (NIPL) of India exchanged an Agreement with the Ministry of Digital Transformation of Trinidad & Tobago on September 26, 2024 for developing a real-time and efficient Payments Platform similar to India's flagship Unified Payments Interface (UPI). Trinidad & Tobago is the first country in the Caribbean region to adopt the UPI platform.

22. A three-member delegation from T&T led by Dr. John C. Alleyne, Special Adviser (Agriculture) to PM met Dr. Himanshu Pathak, Secretary (DARE) & Director General, Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) in New Delhi on 19 Sep 2024 to discuss niche areas of interest such as Elite Germplasm and Plant Livestock, digital technologies in agriculture, small farm machinery, and Sustainable Agricultural Model Systems. The other members of the delegation were Mr. Denny Dipchansingh, Deputy Permanent Secretary (Ag.), Ministry of Agriculture, Land & Fisheries and Mr Ian Mitchell, CEO, National Flour Mills.

23. **Trade & Investment Convention 2024:** Mission participated in Trade and Investment Convention (TIC) organized by Trinidad and Tobago Manufacturers' Association in Port of Spain from 11-13 July 2024, and projected India's potential strengths, particularly in the tourism sector. Mission in collaboration with the Chaguanas Chamber of Industry & Commerce (CCIC) organized a Trade Promotion event to explore opportunities in pharmaceuticals sector in India on 19 March 2025, attended by Representatives of Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL), Trade Promotion Council of India (TPCI) and Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) in virtual mode.

People-to-People Relations

24. **Know India Programme (KIP):** There has been active participation of Indian diaspora youth from T&T in KIP over the years. More than 250 members of Diaspora have visited India under KIP, including 41 during 2023-24 and 24 in 2024-25.

25. **Cultural Centre:** The Mission has been engaged in active cultural diplomacy through its Cultural Wing, Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation (MGICC), which was set up in January 1997 under a bilateral Cultural Exchange Programme. It has been built on a 5-acre land gifted by the Government of T&T and is one of the largest cultural centres of ICCR abroad. Regular classes are conducted by India-based and local teachers in Indian classical music, dance, vocal and Yoga in several centres across the country. Presently, the Institute has one India-based teacher each for vocal music, Bharatanatyam and a Teacher of Indian Culture (TIC) for Yoga. The Institute organizes a variety of cultural events like music and dance performances, exhibitions and workshops. MGICC also offers annual scholarships under ICCR's General Cultural Scholarship Scheme.

26. A series of ICCR-sponsored cultural troupes have visited T&T in recent times giving performances across the country and have received enthusiastic response among the diaspora community. This includes a 9-member Bhojpuri folk dance troupe led by Shri Bhola Pandey in April 2024, 8-member Kathak dance troupe led by Dr. Samikhsa Sharma in Jan 2025 and a 10-member Rajasthani folk dance troupe led by Smt Rajkumari Pawar in March 2025. Another Bhojpuri folk dance troupe visited T&T on the occasion of Indian Arrival Day.

27. Yoga has gained immense popularity in the country over the years. The International Yoga Day (IDY) is celebrated on a large scale with participation of hundreds of Yoga enthusiasts from cross-sections of the society. The 10th IDY was celebrated with great enthusiasm and wide participation at historic Queen's Park Savannah ground on 19 June 2024 with the then FM Dr Amery Browne as the Chief Guest. Other important events, including ITEC Day, Ayurveda Day, World Hindi Day, Diwali and Holi celebrations, etc, are organized regularly with robust participation.

28. Two senior journalists from T&T attended familiarization trip organized by XPD Division of MEA in February 2024. Ms. Leslie Ann Wills-Caton, General Manager, Film/Film Commissioner, Trinidad & Tobago Trade Investment and Promotion Agency, participated in the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit (WAVES) 2025 held in Mumbai from 1-4 May 2025.

29. The 11th International Day of Yoga is scheduled to be organized on a large scale at the Queen's Park Savannah on 21 June 2025.

Promotion of Hindi

30. The prominent presence of Hindi in the local media space (Radio and TV) has added to the interest for Hindi in T&T. There is a marked growth in the desire among local population cutting across gender, age and ethnicity to learn Hindi. The Mission, in keeping up with this, organizes Hindi classes in across the country; distributes books and teaching material; cooperates with various cultural bodies through grants and dissemination of Hindi reading materials and software; and collaborates with local Hindi teaching institutions. At present, 8 local Hindi teachers are conducting classes in various places in Trinidad. A total of 270 students attended Hindi and Sanskrit classes during 2023-24 academic session and 297 in 2024-25. In 2023, four students from T&T availed scholarship to pursue a one-year certificate course at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra.

31. **Vishwa Hindi Sammelan:** EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar honoured Shri Ravindra Nath Maharaj (Ravi ji) with Hindi Samman at the 12th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan held in Nadi, Fiji from 15-17 February 2023. Prior to this, the 5th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan was organized in Port of Spain in April 1996.

32. **International Regional Hindi Conference (IRHC)** in collaboration with Hindi Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago Inc. (Hindi Nidhi), the National Council for Indian Culture (NCIC) and the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) was organized at Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Cooperation, Mt. Hope on 6-8 September 2024. The Conference brought together eminent scholars, linguists and enthusiasts of Hindi language and Indian culture from India as well as the Caribbean region including Guyana and Suriname. Mission celebrated Hindi Pakhwara on 8 October 2024 and the World Hindi Day on 10 January 2025 with participation of a large number of Hindi enthusiasts.

Community

33. **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) and Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards (PBSA):** There has been active participation of the Indian diaspora in the PBDs. Ms. Christine Carla Kangaloo, President of Trinidad & Tobago graced (virtually) the 18th PBD in Bhubaneswar as the Chief Guest, and was conferred with PBSA on behalf of the Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji at the National Day Reception organized by the Mission on 26 January 2025. In addition, Ms. Mickela Panday, Political Leader of the Patriotic Front, and Dr Indrani Rampersad, Educator and Women's advocate, were Speakers from T&T at Panels of the 18th PBD. Under familiarization visit by XPD Division, two Social Media Influencers from T&T also attended the PBD in Jan 2025.

34. Late PM Basdeo Panday was conferred upon PBSA in 2005 in Mumbai. In 2008, National Council of Indian Culture (NCIC) was awarded PBSA. Prime Minister Mrs. Kamla Persad-Bissessar attended PBD 2012 in Jaipur as Chief Guest and was conferred with the PBSA. In addition, the following dignitaries have been conferred upon PBSA: Minister Dr. Lenny Saith (New Delhi, 2010), former Minister of Finance Dr. Winston Dookeran (Bengaluru, 2017), and Justice Frank Seepersad (Indore, 2023).

35. **Indian Community:** The Non-Resident Indian Community in Trinidad and Tobago constitutes about 600 persons engaged in business, medicine, teaching and other professions. The Mission is in contact with the Indian Diaspora and has been actively promoting various schemes of the Government of India meant for them such as OCI scheme, KIP, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA), etc. The Mission provides regular and prompt consular services to the community.

36. The Government of Trinidad and Tobago has waived visa requirement for Indian nationals visiting T&T for tourism and business purposes for a period of three months. The Government of India has approved e-Tourist Visa for T&T citizens. The Mission organizes Open House for redressal of various grievances of applicants and extends emergency services from time-to-time.

June 2025