

India-Venezuela Relations

India and Venezuela have always enjoyed cordial relations. There is a similarity of views on major international, political and economic issues. Besides actively promoting bilateral relations, the two countries cooperate in multilateral forums. The countries marked the 60th Anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2019. Resident Embassies have been in Caracas and New Delhi for over four decades. Venezuela has emerged as one of India's largest oil suppliers.

Political

A major thrust to the bilateral relationship was imparted by former President Hugo Chavez's State Visit to India on 4-7 March 2005. He held bilateral talks with former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh and former President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. Six Agreements/MoUs were signed, including on setting up of a Joint Commission and cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector.

Former Foreign Minister of Venezuela, Mr. Nicolas Maduro (now President) visited India to attend the First Meeting of the India-CELAC Troika Foreign Ministers held in New Delhi on 7 August 2012. India was led by former External Affairs Minister, Shri S.M. Krishna. Mr. Maduro also held bilateral talks with EAM and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

Shri V.S. Sampath, former Chief Election Commissioner of India visited Caracas from 27 August to 1 September 2012 to attend an International Seminar on "Innovation and Technological Vanguard: Automated Voting Systems". The Election Commission of India (ECI) and the National Electoral Council (CNE) of Venezuela signed an MoU during the visit. The President of CNE visited India in January 2010 to attend the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of ECI and again in 2011.

The then President and the then Prime Minister of India condoled the passing away of President Hugo Chavez on 5 March 2013. Shri Sachin Pilot, former Minister of State for Corporate Affairs represented India at the State funeral of President Chavez. Shri Pilot paid his condolences to President Chavez's mother, Mrs. Elena Frias de Chavez and to the then Acting President, Mr. Nicolas Maduro.

External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj met former Executive Vice President Mr. Jorge Arreaza on 22 April 2015 on the sidelines of Asia Africa Summit 2015 in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen. (Dr.) V. K. Singh visited Caracas on 24-25 May 2015. He held meetings with former Vice President, Mr. Jorge Arreaza, Foreign Minister Dr. Delcy Rodriguez and former Oil and Mining Minister, Mr. Asdrubal Chavez and the President of the national oil company of Venezuela, PDVSA, Mr. Eulogio del Pino.

External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj had a pull aside with Foreign Minister Dr. Delcy Rodriguez in New York on 30 September 2015 on the sidelines of UNGA session.

Former Venezuelan FM Dr Delcy Rodriguez led a 14 member delegation including Oil Minister Mr.Eulogio del Pino and Vice Minister Mr.Felix Plasencia to visit India during 17-18 August 2016. Dr. Rodriguez handed over an invitation from President Maduro for India's participation in the 17th NAM

Summit. The delegation had meetings with EAM Smt Sushma Swaraj and MOS for Petroleum and Natural Gas (Independent Charge) Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

The 17th NAM Summit was held in Margarita Island in Venezuela during 17-18 September 2016. Former Vice President Shri Hamid Ansari represented India at the Summit whereas MOS for External Affairs, Shri M.J. Akbar and Ambassador/ PR to UN led the Ministerial and SOM respectively. Terrorism and UN reforms were the focal areas of India's intervention at the Summit. Former VP had a bilateral meeting with President Maduro.

Venezuelan FM Mr. Jorge Arreaza signed the International Solar Agreement on November 6, 2017. President Maduro ratified the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement on March 6, 2018. Venezuela sent a high-level delegation to the International Solar Alliance Founding Conference in New Delhi on March 11, 2018, led by FM Mr. Jorge Arreaza and accompanied by Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. Vielma Mora and Petroleum Minister, Mr. Manuel Quevedo. On the sidelines, the delegation met the Indian Commerce and Industry Minister, Shri Suresh Prabhu and Petroleum Minister, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj met the FM of Venezuela Mr. Jorge Arreaza on the sidelines of Mid-term Ministerial meeting of NAM on 5 April 2018. President of the Supreme Court, Mr. Maikel Moreno participated in the 19th International Conference of Chief Justices of the World held in India from 14-20 November 2018 in Lucknow.

The Ministerial Meeting of the Coordination Bureau of the NAM took place in Caracas on July 20 and 21, 2019. India was represented by a 3-member delegation, headed by Shri Syed Akbaruddin, Ambassador/ Permanent Representative of India to the UN.

In Baku, Azerbaijan, on October 24, 2019 Venezuelan FM Mr. Jorge Arreaza, met with the EAM of India, Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar. The meeting was framed in the XVIII Preparatory Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs for the Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), held since October 21, 2019. The high authorities discussed the commercial and economic agreements between the two nations.

Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu held discussions with President of Venezuela Mr. Nicolás Maduro on the sidelines of the 18th NAM Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan on October 26, 2019. The Vice President congratulated President Maduro on the successful tenure as NAM chairperson. The two leaders held discussions on a wide range of issues of mutual interest.

Venezuelan Executive Vice President Dr. Delcy Rodríguez visited India on October 29, 2019 along with Minister of Economy and Finance, Mr. Simón Zepa to attend the 2nd International Solar Alliance General Assembly. On October 30, 2019, she met the Indian EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar. Both the sides discussed matters related to bilateral and international cooperation.

60 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Venezuela were celebrated in collaboration with the Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Caracas on 16th December 2019.

Commercial A memorandum of understanding on the establishment of an Indo-Venezuelan Joint Commission was signed during President Chavez's visit to India in 2005. Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, former Minister of State (Foreign Affairs) led the Indian delegation for the first session of the Mixed Commission in August 2005 in Caracas. The second JCM, led by Shri Salman Khurshid, former EAM and Mr. Elias Jaua, former Foreign Minister of Venezuela was held in New Delhi on December 20, 2013. 9 Vice-Ministers of Venezuela dealing with Petrochemicals, Foreign Trade, Agriculture, Food, Health, Air and water transport, Telecommunications, IT and Postal Services, Culture and Education accompanied Mr. Jaua.

Shri Murli Deora, former Minister of Oil and Natural Gas visited Venezuela in May 2010 to witness the signing ceremony of the Carabobo oil project. During the call of Shri Deora with former President Chavez, the latter agreed to supply more crude to India.

Shri Jyotiraditya Scindia, former Minister of State for Trade and Industry, together with a 20-member IIC business delegation, made an official visit to Venezuela on July 8-9, 2012. Bilateral talks were held with the Venezuelan Minister of Commerce, the Minister of Health, Deputy Foreign Minister and Vice President of PDVSA.

Mr. Rafael Ramírez, former Minister of Petroleum and Mining and President of PDVSA visited India and held wide-ranging discussions with former Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Shri Veerappa Moily on September 24, 2013.

Minister of State (independent charge) for Oil and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan met former Oil and Mining Minister Mr. Asdrúbal Chavez on June 4, 2015, in Vienna.

Former PDVSA President, Mr. Eulogio Del Pino visited India on 15-16 June 2015. He met Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen. (Dr.) V.K. Singh.

Mr. Manuel Quevedo, Oil Minister of Venezuela visited India to attend an energy event (PETROTECH) on 11 February 2019. He also met Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas (independent charge), Shri Dharmendra Pradhan.

The main items of India's exports are mineral fuels and oils and products of their distillation; bituminous substances, pharmaceutical products, cotton, nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances, electrical machinery and equipment; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, articles of apparel and clothing accessories and miscellaneous chemical products.

The main items of India's imports from Venezuela are mineral fuels and oils and products of their distillation, bituminous substances; mineral waxes, iron and steel, aluminium, edible vegetables and certain roots and tubers, copper and articles thereof, lead and articles thereof, zinc and articles thereof, wood and articles of wood; electrical machinery and equipment and parts thereof; sound recorders and reproducers, television image and sound recorders and reproducers, raw hides, skins and leather,

boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances; edible fruit and nuts; plastic and articles thereof, organic chemicals, miscellaneous chemical products, articles of iron or steel.

The bilateral trade figures for the past five years are as below:

Period	Imports from Venezuela		Exports to Venezuela		Total trade	
	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs
2018-19	7,258.95	5,080,946.23	164.77	115,404.78	7,423.72	5,196,351.01
2017-18	5,866.37	3,779,668.44	79.21	51,053.33	5,945.58	3,830,721.77
2016-17	5,512.06	3,696,429.07	62.22	41,615.42	5,574.28	3,738,044.49
2015-16	5,701.81	3,715,029.41	130.66	85,177.63	5,832.47	3,800,207.00
2014-15	11,729.89	7,158,579.90	258.07	158,004.43	11,987.96	7,316,585.00

ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Corporacion Venezolana del Petroleo (subsidiary of PDVSA) have a joint venture called "Petrolera Indovenezolana SA" for the production and exploration of oil in the San Cristóbal field, in which OVL has 40% stake, while PDVSA has 60% of the remaining stake. The OVL investment in the San Cristóbal project is approximately US \$ 200 million.

An international consortium comprising ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Oil India Limited (OIL), Repsol of Spain and Petronas of Malaysia was declared the winner of an international bidding process to develop a multi-million dollar oil project integrated in Carabobo in the Orinoco belt of Venezuela.

Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) has a 15-year crude supply contract with PDVSA. The other major importer of oil from Venezuela is Essar (now Nayara).

Culture

There is a great deal of interest and appreciation for Indian art and culture in Venezuela. There are several centres in Venezuela established by Indian spiritual Gurus/groups like Sathya Sai Baba, Brahma Kumaris, Radha Swami etc. There are temples and several yoga centres in the country. Ayurveda is becoming popular and has been recognized as an alternative system of medical treatment in a health regulation issued by the Government of Venezuela in February 2001. The first AYUSH Information Cell of Venezuela has been established in Gran Fraternidad Universal, Maracay in July 2017. International Day of Yoga (IDY) has been celebrated each year since 2015. A 3-day Holi festival, was organized in March 2016, which saw a massive turnout of over 25000 people.

A *Catedra Libre* (India Chair) was set up in the University of Los Andes (ULA) in Merida in 2006 and in the Central University of Venezuela (UCV) in Caracas in 2010. Dr. B.R Ambedkar Study Centre was opened in Santa Maria University, Caracas on 14 April 2016. A workshop and IT Centre was set up in Araira, Miranda State on 16 March 2017. Nearly 1300 students from the local community have benefitted from the project. A Vallabhbhai India-Venezuela Association (VIVA) Centre was set up at El Hatillo, Caracas on 31 October 2016 to mark National Unity Day. Mahatma Gandhi Center was inaugurated in Caricuao on 2 October 2017. Mahatma Gandhi Foundation Venezuela, which was set up in June 2016, offers regular diploma courses on non-violence.

Several Gol sponsored cultural groups visited Venezuela in 2017, which include groups on Indian music, Bhangra, Manipuri, Odissi and Bharatanatyam dance forms. India was a participating country at the 13th International Book Fair (FILVEN 2017) in Caracas in November 2017. Two books on India in Spanish were released by the Venezuelan Minister of Culture at the event. Earlier, the first Spanish version of Arthasashtra authored by a Venezuelan Professor was released. Two books on North Eastern States were released in Spanish in March, 2018. To mark the commencement of the celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th Birth Anniversary, Embassy organized an LED Projection on the 'Relevance of Bapu's message in the contemporary world.' The Commemorative Postage stamps on 150th Birth Anniversary of the Mahatma were released.

Gandhi Hall was inaugurated at Maracay Venezuela on 30 October 2018 jointly by the Embassy and Gran Fraternidad Universal, Venezuela. Yoga classes are being conducted by the Teacher of Indian culture for 6 Venezuelan Ministries, Central Bank of Venezuela and other public/private establishments.

Professor Nobert Molina Medina of University of Los Andes visited India to participate in Kumbh Mela-2019. Gandhi cycling event was organized in Puerto Ordaz in coordination with a local organization FIVA in June 2019. A Vegetarian Food Festival in commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was held at Gran Fraternidad Universal, Maracay in June 2019. 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated on 2nd October 2019 at Caricuao, where bust of Mahatma Gandhi is installed. Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended the event. Mission celebrated the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji at Sant Bani Venezuela on 17 November 2019 which was attended by the Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On Constitution Day (26 November, 2019), Embassy organized a lecture on Indian Constitution by Prof. Miguel Mónaco at Universidad Católica Andrés Bello. The Rector of the University attended the event. The commemorative stamps on Guru Nanak Dev ji were released by the Mission and the Rector of the Universidad Católica Andrés Bello at the University campus.

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi has been sent by ICCR. It is being installed at Universidad Metropolitana in March, 2020.

Venezuelan experts are sent to India every year under ITEC programme. ICCR has approved 4 scholarships for Venezuela starting from academic year 2017.

Indian community :

There are around 50 NRIs and 30 PIOs in Venezuela.