

India-Argentina Relations

Political Relations

India-Argentina relations are cordial and encompass political, economic, scientific and technological cooperation including Antarctic research and cultural cooperation. India opened a Trade Commission in Buenos Aires in 1943 and later converted it into an embassy in 1949. Argentina had established a consulate in Calcutta in the 1920s, which was transferred to Delhi as an embassy in 1950. Argentina opened a Consulate General office in Mumbai in April 2009.

Visits from India

External Affairs Minister Mr. Salman Khurshid visited Argentina in February 2013. During the visit he met with President Cristina Fernandez, Vice President Amado Boudou, FM Hector Timerman and Parliamentarians. During bilateral exchanges, issues relating to Science and Technology Co-operation, Cultural Exchange Programme, Agriculture, Agreement on Phytosanitary Cooperation among others, were discussed.

Some of the other important visits from India include:

- Smt Preneet Kaur, Minister of State for External Affairs, May 2010
- MOS (Commerce) Jyotiraditya Scindia May 2011
- Minister of Agriculture Sharad Pawar September 2010
- Minister of Textiles Mr Sankarsingh Vaghela - April 2008
- Minister of State for External Affairs Mr Anand Sharma - February 2008
- Minister of State for External Affairs Rao Inderjeet Singh -2005
- Prime Minister Narasimha Rao - 1995 (for G-15 Summit)
- President Zail Singh - April 1984
- Prime Minister Mrs Indira Gandhi – 1968

Visits from Argentina

Argentine Foreign Minister Hector Timerman led a delegation that visited India between June 15-18, 2013. He co-chaired, along with External Affairs Minister, the 4th India- Argentina Joint Commission Meeting (JCM). The issues on which deliberations were held included political, economic and commercial, agriculture, science & technology, Defence and cultural issues and to identify newer areas of cooperation. They also exchanged views on regional developments and global issues of common interest.

Governor of Mendoza Province of Argentina, Mr. Francisco Pérez visited Gujarat and New Delhi between 15-16 April 2013. Issues discussed include collaboration and investment opportunities in various fields like higher education, research, sports, academics, among others, and signed four Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) for mutual collaboration in four sectors. He also

participated in a seminar organized by CII to deepen bilateral cooperation between Mendoza Province of Argentina and India.

Governor of San Luis Province of Argentina Mr. Claudio Poggi visited India on 7-13 May 2013 for the Inauguration of first Commercial, Cultural & Tourism Office of the Govt. of San Luis Province, Argentina at Chennai (8.5.2013).

President Cristina Fernandez visited India in October 2009, which also marked the sixtieth anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two nations. She was accompanied by the Ministers and Governors of the provinces of San Juan and La Pampa along with a 70 member business delegation. Ten agreements/MOUs for cooperation, covering wide ranging areas such as sports, science & technology, industrial research, hydrocarbons, trade promotion and business visas were signed. During the visit, both sides agreed to develop a Comprehensive Dialogue leading towards a Strategic Partnership. The Argentine Senate and the Chamber of Deputies have formed Friends of India Parliamentary groups in 2008.

Some of the other important visits from Argentina include:

- Agriculture Minister Julian Dominguez – August 2010
- Chief Minister of Buenos Aires Mr. Mauricio Macri - April 2010
- Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana-September 2007 (for Doha Round Consultations)
- Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana – September 2007 (for G-20 Consultations)
- Foreign Minister Jorge Taiana – July 2006
- President Carlos Menem-March 1994
- President Raul Alfonsin - 1985 (chief guest for the Republic Day)
- President Reynaldo Bignone - 1983 (to attend NAM summit)
- President Arturo Frondizi - Dec 1961

Co-operation

The 4th India- Argentina Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) was held in New Delhi in June 2013. Foreign Office Consultation is another mechanism of cooperation between the two countries. After a gap of 3 years Shri Vivek Katju, Secretary (West) had led the Indian delegation for the Foreign Office Consultations with Argentina on 4th October, 2010 in Buenos Aires, where he reviewed with Vice Foreign Minister Mr. Alberto Dalotto the entire gamut of bilateral relations, and exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues. India gives ITEC scholarships to Argentine candidates every year. Argentine diplomats attend the courses at the Foreign Service Training Institute of India from time to time.

ISRO launched an Argentine nano-satellite, called as Pehuen Sat-I (weighing 6 kg) on board PSLV of India in January 2007 on a commercial basis. There exists scope for such cooperation in future. **Antarctic Cooperation** India and Argentina also have ongoing cooperation in the Antarctica. Both are members of the Antarctic Treaty. The Secretariat is located in Buenos Aires. An MOU on Antarctic cooperation was signed between India and Argentina in 1998 and renewed in 2006.

Defence

The Argentine Government has posted a Defence Attache in their Embassy in New Delhi in 2008. Delegations of the National Defence College (NDC) of India visited Argentina in May 2008 and May 2012, respectively. An Indian Naval Officer joined the six-month global sailing of the Argentine Naval Sailing Vessel 'Libertador' in 2008. Indian Naval officers are regularly being deputed to attend the Antarctic Navigation course since September 2009. One Officer from the Indian Army had been deputed to undergo Equestrians Training Course in Argentina since 2010.

Commercial Relations

Trade and Investment

Indo- Argentine Trade turnover for the year 2012(Jan-Dec) was USD 1838 million (USD 1.8 bn) as follows: **(In Million US \$)**

Year	Indian Exports	Indian Imports
Jan-Dec 2012	574	1264

The main items of Indian exports to Argentina are Organic Chemicals, Vehicles and Auto parts, Lubricants, Machinery, Sound and Image Devices and Garments, among others. The main items of India's imports from Argentina are Soybean oil, Sunflower oil, Leather, Wool , Ferroalloys among others. Organic Chemicals and fine chemicals constitute the biggest item of Indian export to Argentina and Soybean oil, India's biggest import from Argentina.

Indian Investments in Argentina

Almost thirteen Indian Companies have established operations in Argentina. They provide employment to about 7000 Argentines. Eight of them are in the IT sector, two in agro-chemicals, one in pharma, one in cosmetics and one in electrical lighting. Indian investment in Argentina totals to an estimated USD 930 million. Indian companies include TCS, CRISIL, Bajaj, Cellent, Cognizant Technologies, United Phosphorus Ltd (UPL), Sintesis Quimica, Glenmark,

Godrej etc. ONGC (OVL) has signed a MoU with ENARSA, their Argentine counterpart for possible joint ventures in Argentina for oil exploration.

Regional Action Plan

A unique **Regional Action Plan**, was started in August 2012, to promote India's commercial and economic interests in Argentina especially with special focus on its Provinces to a) identify areas of imports and exports b) bring investment in mining, energy and infrastructure in provinces with assured returns c) identify sectors for manufacturing or joint ventures for export to Argentina and Latin American countries d) export technical collaboration and e) organize visits of the Governors of States with commercial delegations to India.

Under the Plan, the provinces of San Juan, Cordoba, Mendoza and San Luis, Neuquen, Catamarca, Salta, San Juan, Santa Fe, Entre Rios etc have been covered in the last year and the Ambassador has addressed various business seminars and interacted with regional leaders of trade and industry, looking for prospects for boosting trade relations. Governors of Mendoza and San Luis Province have visited India in 2013.

Argentine Investments in India

Total Argentinian investment in India stands at USD 120 million. TECHINT, which is one of the largest seamless steel tubes manufacturers in the world, has offices in Delhi employing about 200 people. IMPSA, an Argentine engineering company, specializing in hydroelectric projects, has opened an office in Gurgaon. They are exploring opportunities for projects as well as supply of power generation equipments such as turbines. They have a manufacturing unit in Malaysia. Biosidus, an Argentine pharma company, has a proposal to set up a plant in India for production of biotech pharmaceuticals for Indian and Asian markets. They are already exporting over 3 million dollars a year to India.

Bago, the leading Argentine pharma company has opened an office in Hyderabad. They have a joint venture operation with Ranbaxy to market their products in Thailand.

Non-Resident Indian Companies

Arcelor Mittal has acquired the Argentine steel company Acindar and steel distribution company Magjadalani for over USD 600 million. **Sterling Group of India** (owned by NRI Sivasankaran) has acquired a 1700 hectare olive farm in Catamarca Province of Argentina.

“**Olam**”, a NRI company with headquarters in Singapore has some investment in agribusiness and does trading in groundnut and other agro

commodities. They grow peanuts, soya and wheat in 30,000 hectares of land in Rio Cuarto and Salta areas and have plans to increase the acreage. They have acquired 2 peanut processing plants in Rio Cuarto. They are planning rice production in Argentina and Uruguay. There are some Non Resident Indians who are in textiles business(imports, wholesale and retail) in Buenos Aires.

Cultural Relations

Cultural Co-operation

The Embassy in Buenos Aires has been organizing cultural programmes and visits of Indian troupes from time to time. There are thousands of followers of Sai Baba, Brahmakumari, Art of Living, Rama Krishna Mission, Hare Krishna and other such groups. Yoga is very popular. There are hundreds of Yoga centres all over the country. Argentine exponents of classical dance and music have dance/music schools with good reception. Proposal for the setting up of an Indian Cultural Centre in Buenos Aires has been approved by the Government of India. Also, India and Argentina are in the process of negotiating a formal Cultural Exchange Programme, soon.

Festival of India

The Fifth Edition of the Festival of India was held between 15 and 24 November 2013. Secretary Tourism, Shri Parvez Dewan visited Argentina between 14.11.2013 to 16.11.2013 to inaugurate the Festival of India. He also addressed a seminar on Tourism on 16.11.2013 as part of the Festival. Secretary Textiles Smt Zohra Chatterjee led a delegation comprising of Shri S.S. Gupta, Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) and Shri RK Srivastava Executive Director – NCDPD to inaugurate the Artisan's Fair of the Festival between 15.11.2013 to 17.11.2013.

Literature and Films

Rabindra Nath Tagore had visited Argentina in 1924 and stayed for two months as the guest of Victoria Ocampo, a well-known literary personality and writer. He wrote a series of poems under the title "Purabi" containing memory of his stay in Argentina. Victoria Ocampo was given a honorary doctorate by the Viswa Bharati University and this was handed over by PM Mrs Indira Gandhi during her visit to Argentina in 1968. Jawaharlal Nehru University had organized a seminar on Victoria Ocampo in 1991. Maria Rene Cura, the Argentine writer (died in 2007) and associate of Victoria Ocampo had published for some years a magazine on India. She ran a cultural centre devoted to India called as " Anand Bhavan". The theme of the Fourth Festival of India was on Tagore. India regularly participates in atleast 3 Argentine Film Festivals including the famous

Pinamar film festival and Argentina participates in 6 Indian Film Festivals including IIFF.

Ayurveda

Ayurveda is becoming popular and there are some Ayurvedic Spas and massage centers in Argentina. The University of Buenos Aires and the University of Cordoba are running courses in Ayurveda. University of Cordoba recently started a two year post graduate course in Ayurveda from April 2010. Dr Jorge Luis Berra is the organiser of these courses. Our Honorary Consul General in Cordoba city Dr. Sergio Suarez is a well-known Ayurvedic expert.

Education and Think Tanks

A MoU is operational between the Jawaharlal Nehru University of India and FLACSO of Argentina for exchange of professors, students and semesters. A proposal for setting up of a Chair in Oriental Studies in the University of Cordoba is under consideration. The Indian Council for World Affairs has signed a MoU (April 2009) with the Argentine Council for International Relations. More Argentine think tanks have shown interest in exchanges with their Indian counterparts.

Sports

Argentine Football legend Diego Maradona visited Kerala in 2012 and to Kolkata in 2008 at the invitation of the Indian Football Academy where he inaugurated a football school named after him. The Indian Football Academy is establishing a collaboration programme with the Argentine Club "River Plate" for training and exchanges. In June 2009 an Argentine professional football player Sebastian Monesterolo signed for Kingfisher East Bengal club to play in the Indian premier football league. Argentina played Venezuela in a FIFA international friendly match held in Kolkata, India in September 2011. Indian Hockey teams have visited Argentina and played tournaments in 2008, 2009 and 2010. An Indian Army Polo team played matches with their Argentine counterparts in December 2008 at Buenos Aires and sent an Indian officer for a one-year equestrian training in Argentina. Argentine Polo players have been playing in Indian teams. Indian Polo players visit Argentina for training and participation in tournaments.

Consular Relations

Under the 1968 Visa agreement, fees for transit and tourist visas have been abolished. Under the new visa agreement signed during Argentine Presidential visit in October 2009, it has been agreed that five year multi-entry business visas would be given free of cost.

Indian Community

There are about 200 Indians in Buenos Aires of which half are those settled for over thirty years. Most of these are from the Sindhi community. Others are professionals working with Indian companies and multinational corporations like TCS, Cognizant Technologies etc., About 300 Sikhs from Punjab have settled down in Salta province in the course of the early and mid twentieth century. Now, with families they number around 2000 persons. They have become Argentine citizens and are well assimilated in the local population. Most of them are in retail and wholesale trade. The first generation immigrants speak Punjabi. There is a Gurudwara in the town Rosario de la Frontera, where they celebrate Guru Nanak Day every year. President Zail Singh had visited the Gurudwara in 1984.

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