

India-Costa Rica Relations

India and Costa Rica enjoy friendly and cordial relations even though high level bilateral interactions have been minimal. Costa Rica supported India's stand on Kashmir at the United Nations in 1993 and 1994 and was one of the very few countries that committed themselves towards voting against Pakistan's draft resolution on Kashmir at the UNCHR in Geneva in 1994. Costa Rica shares commonality of views on all bilateral and multilateral issues except that of the UNSC expansion. Being a member of the Coffee Club, Costa Rica does not support the G-4 Resolution on the UNSC reforms since it does not allegedly promote the interests of the smaller countries.

Following India's appointment of an Honorary Consul in San Jose in 1995, Costa Rica reciprocated by opening an Honorary Consulate in New Delhi in 1996. In 2007, Costa Rica announced its intention to open its Embassy in India. (Costa Rica had earlier intended to open its Embassy in India in 1990 following dismissal of its Honorary Consuls in Bombay and Calcutta). Costa Rica opened its Embassy in New Delhi in April 2010 and sent a senior official as Charge d' Affaires in June 2010. Ambassador of Costa Rica assumed office in New Delhi in June 2011.

Secretary (West), Shri V. K. Grover, visited San Jose in February 1996 to discuss issues relating to the NAM and the UN.

Foreign Minister Fernando Narango visited India from February 27 to March 5, 1997 which was the first ever visit by any Foreign Minister from Costa Rica to India.

Vice Foreign Minister Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira visited India on February 1-5, 2004 as part of the SICA (Sistema de la Integracion Centroamericana) delegation.

FM Bruno Stagno along with SICA FMs in June 2008.

Proposals by Costa Rica for a visit to India by President Oscar Arias November 2007 and April 2008 did not materialize.

Foreign Minister Rene Castro visited India from October 19-23, 2010 for bilateral discussions and to inaugurate Costa Rican Embassy in New Delhi.

Minister for Foreign Trade, Ms. Anabel Gonzalez, accompanied by 25 Costa Rican entrepreneurs visited India from 19-23 March 2012 to participate in IndiaSoft 2012 in Hyderabad and also had meetings with Commerce Secretary, MOS for Finance, FICCI, CII, Nasscom in New Delhi and Business community in Bangalore.

Secretary (West) Ahri M. Ganapathi visited Costa Rica for Foreign Office Consultations in August 2012.

Bilateral Agreements:

- (i) MoU on Regular Foreign Office Consultations 2008
- (ii) MoU for setting up of Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Costa Rica 2009
- (iii) Exemption of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders: Approved version of the Agreement on Exemption of Visas for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders from the Foreign Office of Costa Rica has been forwarded to MEA in May 2009. India conveyed in March 2012 that due to disparity in grant of Diplomatic Passports by India and Costa Rica, this Agreement cannot be concluded.
- (iv) MOU for Cooperation between FSI and Costa Rican Diplomatic Academy – Costa Rica sent its amended draft to us in May 2008 and was sent to FSI in June 2008.

GOI assistance:

India's assistance to Costa Rica include, donation of photovoltaic equipment worth Rs.1.85 mn in 1997 for setting up a solar energy research laboratory for training purposes at the University of Heredia under the ITEC programme, donation of a telephone exchange to Costa Rica's telecom operator ICE in 1998, and a relief assistance of US\$ 25,000 to help rehabilitate flood victims in 1996. India also donated 18 Bajaj 3-wheelers in December 2005 to be used by the police department of San Jose. India donated \$ 100,000 for relief and rehabilitation of victims of Hurricane Tomas in November 2010.

Costa Rica has conveyed interest in availing GOI LOC for 10 million for Lemon project. This is at its initial stages of consultations.

Economic & Commercial Co-operation:

The eco-friendly policies of Costa Rica motivated them to import 50 Reva electric cars duty-free. Other exports include textiles, tubes, pharmaceuticals, and agro-chemicals. Scorpio SUVs were imported in small quantities. Bajaj three-wheelers and two-wheelers are assembled in Costa Rica by MASESA, the leading importer and

distributor of motorcycles in the country. India's imports from Costa Rica include printed circuits, wood and wood products, leather and hides and oil seeds. Havells Sylvania group from India which manufacture electrical products has its Latin America headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica as well as a factory.

Bilateral trade with Costa Rica has been growing steadily as seen from the Table below:

India-Costa Rica trade in US \$ mn.

Year	Exports	Imports	Total trade
2009	47.42	29.27	76.69
2010	107.32	22.14	129.46
2011	132.83	25.31	158.14
2012 (Jan- Nov)	64.34	30.07	94.41

Main export commodities

2009	2010	2011	2012
Organic Chemicals	Mineral Fuels, mineral oils	Pharmaceutical Products	Pharmaceutical Products
Pharmaceutical Products	Organic Chemicals	Mineral Fuels, mineral oils	Organic chemical
Vehicles other than railways	Pharmaceutical Products	Organic Chemicals	Vehicles other than railways
Paper and paperboard	Electrical Machinery and Equipment	Vehicles other than railways	Electrical machinery
Rubber and Articles thereof	Vehicles other than railways	Miscellaneous Chem. Products	Miscellaneous Chem. Products

Main import items

2009	2010	2011	2012
Wood and articles of wood	Wood and articles of wood	Wood and articles of wood	Wood and articles of wood
Machinery and	Machinery and	Electrical Machinery	Electrical

Mech. Appliances	Mech. Appliances	and Equipment	Machinery and Equipment
Glass and glassware	Electrical Machinery and Equipment	Iron and Steel	Oil, seeds and oleaginous
Iron and Steel	Iron and Steel	Glass and Glassware	Glass and Glassware
Oil seeds and oleaginous fruits	Oil, seeds and oleaginous	Oil, seeds and oleaginous	Copper & articles thereof

Source: Procomer

A proposal from RITES on a management contract was submitted to the Costa Rican Transport Minister, Javier Chavez Bolaños, in July 2002 after which the Costa Rican Transport Ministry agreed to proceed with the project on a Government-to-Government basis. RITES thereafter submitted a 2-phase proposal along with financial terms involving a diagnostic study to be funded by the GOI and the RITES and the second phase by the Costa Rican Government. A delegation of 6 IT Costa Rican Companies participated in India Soft in February 2009. A 19-member business delegation from the Costa Rican Export Promotion Council, CRECEX, participated in the India International Trade Fair 2007 organized in New Delhi on 14-27 November 2007. Three Costa Rican software companies participated in India Soft 2008 organized by ESC in Hyderabad in March 2008. A delegation from the Electronics and Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) participated in the Costa Rican technology Fair—Costa Rica Technology Insights—in February 2008. A delegation of six business houses organized by the Plastics Export Promotion Council of India (Plexconcil) visited San Jose in March 2010 to promote range of primary, intermediate and finished plastics products. An 8 Member delegation of Software companies led by the Electronics and Software Export Promotion Council (ESC) of India participated in Costa Rica Technology Insight (CRIT) 2011 as well as June 2012. Capexil will be organized a Buyer Seller Meet at San Jose in November 2012.

ITEC:

Costa Rica was allotted 25 ITEC slots for the year 2011-12 and 2012-13. Costa Rica has already utilised their allotted slots by December 2012 as more and more Cost Rican candidates are applying for ITEC training programmes. The MOU for setting up of the Centre of Excellence in Information Technology in Costa Rica signed in September 2009 is awaiting Costa Rican Parliament's approval.

Cultural:

President Oscar Arias wrote the prologue for, and launched the Spanish version of Gandhiji's autobiography in Costa Rica in September 2008.

There is a great deal of interest in India's history and cultural heritage in Costa Rica and much of the credit for this goes to Prof Hilda Chen Apuy who visited India on a UNESCO scholarship in the 1950's and introduced studies on Indian History, Philosophy and Sanskrit at the University of Costa Rica in San Jose. She also writes extensively on India. Prof Hilda's articles on India are being published by the Public Diplomacy Division of our Ministry.

Co-operation in the cultural sphere has included performances of Indian cultural troupes. A 13-member Odissi ballet group led by Shri Durga Charan Ranbir Das performed in San Jose in April 2004. A 5-member Kathak dance troupe led by Ms. Sunanya Hazarilal performed at San Jose in September 2002 and a BharataNatyam dance troupe led by Dr. Ananda Shankar Jayant visited San Jose in September 2004. University of Costa Rica organized a two days seminar on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore with the participation of two speakers sponsored by ICCR in September 2011. San Jose Museum held the exhibition of the digital prints of Tagore's paintings in November 2011.

Screening of several Indian films at the University of Costa Rica was organized in the past. A cultural Festival of India was organised in Costa Rica from November 2-4, 2006 in coordination with the Juan Santamaria Museum of Cultural History. Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports of Costa Rica, Ms. Maria Elena Carballo Castegnaro inaugurated the Festival. The activities of the Festival included screening of Indian films, a photo exhibition of the churches of Goa entitled Velha Goa, and a lecture on Indian culture by the renowned Indologist, Prof. Hilda Chen-Apuy. ICCR is examining a proposal for a Hindi teacher in the University of Costa Rica.

Visa & Consular Matters

In July 2006, Costa Rica relaxed its visa regime by removing India from Consultada [prior reference] category and allowing visitors from India to enter Costa Rica without visa for a period of 30 days. However, in December 2006, the visa regulations in respect of visitors from India were again revised and India was put in the Consular [visa on application] category. The Consulate of Costa Rica in New Delhi is authorized to issue Visas for 30 days to Indians who wish to visit Costa Rica without making a reference to the Costa Rican Ministry in San Jose. In August 2007, the visa regime for Indians wishing to visit Costa Rica was further relaxed when Indian nationals with valid US or Shenzhen Visas were allowed to enter Costa Rica without a Costa Rican Visa.

Multilateral Cooperation

Costa Rica has, by and large, been supportive of India's candidature in the multilateral fora. However, being a member of the Coffee Club, it did not support the G-4 Draft Framework Resolution on the UNSC Reforms. Although Costa Rica favours comprehensive reforms that are "transparent, democratic, representative and effective", it calls for regulation of veto power of the UNSC permanent members and wishes to see its eventual elimination. Costa Rica supported India's candidature for the non-permanent seat in the UNSC in 1997-98 and again supported our candidature for the same post for the period 2011-12.

Indian Community

Indian Community consists mostly of IT related professionals taking advantage of the proximity to the US. Costa Rica is also more bilingual than most other Latin American countries. Others include businessmen, NGOs and the Missionaries of Charity. An Indian restaurant was opened in San Jose by a Canadian entrepreneur of Indian origin in 2004. Costa Rica Indian Association (CRIA) was formed in 2010 and has been very active in organizing various social and cultural programmes as well as trade promotion activities involving Costa Rican nationals also and assisting the Embassy of India, Bogota whenever required.

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