

## India-Guatemala Relations

**Political:** India-Guatemala relations have been cordial and friendly over the years. They established diplomatic relations in the late 1970s, and both countries decided to open resident diplomatic missions in each other's country.

The visit of Shri. Anand Sharma, then Minister of State for External Affairs, in June 2007, was the first ever ministerial visit from India to Guatemala. After the visit of Shri. Anand Sharma, Minister of State for External Affairs of India to Guatemala in 2007, both countries have decided to open their Embassies in respective countries. Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Guatemala from April 29 to May 1, 2011. He formally inaugurated the Embassy on April 29, 2011 in the presence of H.E. Mr. Alvaro Colom Caballeros, President of Guatemala and other invited dignitaries and guests.

India-SICA (Central American Integration System) Foreign Ministers' meeting is an important forum for India's bilateral interaction with Guatemala, among others. The 2<sup>nd</sup> India-SICA Foreign Ministers' meeting was held in Delhi in June 2008. Within its context, India has extended to each of the 8 SICA countries, including Guatemala, credit lines of US\$10 millions each for development projects. EXIM Bank of India has also extended a US\$ 10 millions commercial LOC to the Central American Bank for Economic Integration (CABEI), to finance regional project. India has further offered to assist SICA countries in priority areas such as agriculture, SMEs, pharmaceuticals, tourism, IT-related activities, renewable energy, disaster management, distant education and supply of satellite imagery for development purposes.

**Bilateral agreements:** Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, signed in 1981.

### **Bilateral Visits:**

**From India:** Shri Anand Sharma, Minister of State for External Affairs, in June 2007. Shri E. Ahamed, Minister of State for External Affairs visited Guatemala from April 29 to May 1, 2011. He formally inaugurated the Embassy on April 29, 2011 in the presence of H.E. Mr. Alvaro Colom Caballeros, President of Guatemala and other invited dignitaries and guests.

From Guatemala: Mr. Jorge Britz, then Minister of External Relations, in Mayb 2005; Mr. Gert Rosenthal, Foreign Minister in August 2007; Mr. Haroldo Rodas Melgar, Foreign Minister in June 2008, to attend the India-SICA meeting.

## Trade:

### Indo-Guatemala Trade (in million US \$)

Year ( April - March)	Imports from Guatemala	Exports to Guatemala	Total trade	% increase over previous year
2007-2008	3.58	74.86	78.44	-----
2008-2009	2.94	81.40	84.34	7.52
2009-2010	5.74	87.15	92.89	10.14
2010-2011	40.18	111.02	151.20	62.77

Source: Ministry of Commerce, Govt. of India

Major items of export: Articles of Iron & Steel, cotton, Machinery & Mechanical Appliances and Parts thereof, Organic chemicals, Pharmaceutical products, Rubber & articles thereof, Vehicles and its parts & accessories. Electrical Machinery and equipment and parts thereof, Miscellaneous edible preparations,

Major items of import: Wood & articles thereof, wood charcoal, Sugar and Sugar confectionery, Coffee, Cardamom and Aluminium & articles thereof.

Praj Industries Limited, noted Indian company in the field of alternative fuels, is supplying equipment for ethanol production plants. B Fouress (P) Limited a well known Indian company in hydro-eletric field has opened its office in Guatemala. For the first time, India participated in the INTERFER Trade Exhibition in October 2005. PLEXCONCIL delegation visited Guatemala in March 2007. Delegations from The Cofee Board of India and The Spices Board of India visited Guatemala in 2010. A 10-member EEPC delegation visited Guatemala from March 10-13, 2011.

**ITEC and Other Cooperation:** Guatemala is an ITEC partner country since 1997-98. The number of ITEC slots for Guatemala is 10.

Government of India, in an effort to contribute to capacity building in Guatemala, set up an IT Training Center in San Carlos University in August 2006. Tata Communications Services (TCS) ran this IT Center till July 2008, training about 1,500 Guatemalans, before in was handed over to the Guatemalans.

An Indian donation of US\$50,000 worth of medicines was given following Hurricane Stan in October 2005. India donated 36 Bajaj three-wheelers in October 2005, and recently, in November 2009, responding to Guatemala Government's food insecurity declaration, India has provided assistance of US\$250,000.

**Cultural Exchanges:** Cultural cooperation so far has been limited to Indian cultural troupes visiting from India to Guatemala. Academic and other linkages are being encouraged and visits by Indian academicians have been well received. At an initiative of the Indian community, a plan to install a statue of Mahatma Gandhi at a prominent location in the capital is under consideration.

**Guatemala Visa:** With effect from June 6, 2011 for Indian nationals who are holders of ordinary passports, visa will not be required to enter Guatemala if they have valid visas of United States of America, Canada or Schengen. All other Indian nationals not having these visas will be required to obtain prior visa to enter Guatemala.

**Air Links/Travel:** There are no direct flights between Guatemala and India. Convenient connections are available via United States, Mexico and Europe.

**Indian community:** The Indian community in Guatemala is small and consist of about 30 families and 70 individuals in all, working in the Indian Call Centers like '24/7 Customer-Guatemala' and 'Genpeck', in cardamom export trade, in auto parts business, or in cottage industries. Most of them came to Guatemala during the last two decades. Also a Guatemala-India Chamber of Commerce and Industry was set up in 2004. There is an India association called Asociacion de Amigos de la India 'Bharat Bandhu'.

Besides there are about 450-500 people of India origin who came to this region as indentured laborers during the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20 centuries and settled in the coastal Guatemala on Atlantic and a small township of Livingstone. They live in villages, own land, and are involved in fishing, agriculture and tourism sectors. They are mostly 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> generation Indians, and by now well integrated into the local community.

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