

**Embassy of India
Caracas, Venezuela
India-Venezuela Bilateral Relations**

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 hydro carbon 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 a side 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.

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). Vice President Shri Venkaiah Naidu met with President of Venezuela Mr. Nicolás Maduro on the sidelines of the 18th NAM Summit in Baku, Azerbaijan on 26 October, 2019.

The Executive Vice President, Dr. Delcy Rodriguez and the Foreign Minister, Jorge Arreaza have indicated that President Maduro wants to visit India. President Maduro has also expressed his desire to visit India during the credential ceremony of Ambassador in August 2020.

Commercial

An MOU on the establishment of an Indo-Venezuelan Joint Commission was signed during President Chavez's visit to India in 2005. Shri Rao Inderjit Singh, formerly Minister of State (Foreign Affairs), led the Indian delegation for the first session of the Joint Commission in August 2005 in Caracas. The Joint Commission discussed cooperation in energy, infrastructure, railways, low cost housing, trade, science and technology, culture, poverty alleviation, consumer protection and standards, health, agriculture and defense. The 2nd JCM between India and Venezuela was held in Delhi on 20-21 December 2013. The Indian side was led by Shri Salman Khurshid, former Minister of External Affairs while the Venezuelan side was led by Mr. Elias Jaua, former Foreign Minister, who headed a huge delegation comprising 9 Vice Ministers dealing with Petrochemicals, External Trade, Agriculture, Food, Health, Air and Water Transport, Telecommunications, IT & Postal Services, Culture and Education. EAM said that India greatly valued its relationship with Venezuela which had become the 3rd largest supplier of crude oil to India in 2012 and that India was keen to diversify India's relations with

Venezuela in other areas of mutual interest. Mr. Jaua said that his visit demonstrated that Venezuela regarded its relationship with India as very important and wanted to upgrade it to a strategic level. Mr. Jaua's visit provided a renewed opportunity for high level political contact between the two countries.

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 Ramirez, 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. Asdrubal 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
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	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs	US\$ million	Rs. Lacs
2020-21	714.24	529,493.32	557.10	412,489.78	1,228.29	941,983.10
2019-20	6,057.01	4,295,510.14	339.71	243,943.87	6,396.72	4,539,454.01
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

ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) and Corporacion Venezolana del Petroleo (subsidiary of PDVSA) have a joint venture called "Petrol era 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 (nowNayara).

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 setup 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 Caricuaoon 2 October 2017. Mahatma Gandhi Foundation Venezuela, which was set up in June 2016, offers regular diploma courses onnon-violence.

Several GoI 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 13thInternational 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 Arthasashttra 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 150thBirth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was held at Gran Fraternidad Universal, Maracay in June 2019. 150thBirth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated on 2ndOctober 2019 at Caricuaao, where bust of Mahatma Gandhi is installed. Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, attended the event. The Mission celebrated the 550thBirth 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. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2020 and the World Hindi Day 2020 were celebrated at the premises of the Mission on 09 Jan 2020. A Photographic Exhibition “The Inspiring life of Mahatma Gandhi” was organized at Tabay, Mérida from 29 Feb to 29 Mar 2020 in coordination with the Municipality of Santos Marquina. The Mission celebrated the 6thInternational day of Yoga with a series of Yoga Sessions from 15 to 20 Jun 2020 and an Online Session on Common Yoga Protocol on 21 Jun 2020. Minister of Tourism and Foreign Trade and Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania, Ministry of Foreign Affairs attended the event. Online Quiz Competition and “My Life, My Yoga” Video Blogging Competitions were also organised by the Mission to mark the Celebration of the 6thIDY. The Mission organised many activities to mark the grand finale of 150thBirth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi i.e Online Gandhi Katha by Dr. Shobhana Radhakrishna, an online event with South African Embassy in Venezuela, posting of video bytes of Venezuela Ministers, academics etc., painting competition, cultural performance by local artists, flower offering ceremonies at Gandhiji’s Busts/statue, unveiling

of first statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Metropolitana University Venezuela etc. The Mission participated in the Online Celebrations of the International Book Fair of Venezuela (FILVEN 2020) and Expo Valencia 2020 from 12 to 20 Nov 2020. The Mission celebrated virtually the 5th Ayurveda Day on 13 Nov 2020 in coordination with AYUSH Information Cell, Maracay. On Constitution Day (26 November 2020), Embassy organized an online talk on 'Constitutional Values and Fundamental Principles of the Indian Constitution' by Prof. Miguel Mónaco, UCAB. During the celebration, Ambassador announced the winner of the Online Quiz Competition on Dr. B.R Ambedkar, organized by the Embassy of India, Caracas from April 14, 2020 to Nov 3, 2020.

A Painting Competition on the occasion of "Communal Harmony Campaign Week" was organised by the Embassy from 19 to 24 Nov 2020. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2021 & the World Hindi Day 2021 were organised by the Mission virtually on 9 & 10 Jan 2021 respectively. On the occasion of 72nd Republic Day of India, a reception was hosted at JW Marriot Hotel which was attended by Venezuelan Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Jorge Arreaza as Chief Guest. Ms. María Gómez, personnel of Venezuelan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, proceeded to India to pursue her Ph.D at Osmania University under ICCR Scholarship in February 2021. The Embassy celebrated the International Women's Day 2021 on March 8. 'Bollywood y Arepa' an initiative of the Embassy to showcase Bollywood cinema to the Venezuelan people and the international community in Caracas was launched by Ambassador on 17 March 2021 as part of India@75 celebrations. The Embassy endeavours to show one famous film of Bollywood on a monthly basis in a non-commercial manner. Mr. Ulises Farias (Dha Maharaj) from Venezuela won the 2nd Prize of US\$ 1000 in the International Video Blogging Contest organised by ICCR New Delhi on its 71st Foundation Day. After successful launch of the world's first gamified Sanskrit learning App 'Little Guru' by ICCR on 9 April, Ambassador did a local launch in Caracas on 16 April 2021. As part of India@75 celebrations, another initiative of EOI Caracas - 'Khana de la India', showcasing Indian cuisines was launched by Ambassador Abhishek Singh and his spouse in May.

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.

Source: Embassy of India, Venezuela Web site August 2021.