

**Brief Embassy Report on Bilateral Relations – ITJ Division, DGCI&S,
Kolkata.**

India-Cuba Bilateral Relation

A. Introduction

1. Indian Trade Journal (ITJ) division of the Director General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) brings out weekly publication on Embassy Profile Report providing information on recent policy changes and happenings in other countries that may be of interest to the Indian trading community. This is the Profile Report depicting the Embassy of Cuba.

2. India and Cuba enjoy excellent bilateral relations and have been traditionally warm and friendly. India was among the first countries to extend recognition to the new Cuban government following Cuban revolution in January 1959. The visit of Major Ernesto Guevera (Che) to India from 30 June to 4 July 1959 consolidated diplomatic ties which fructified in opening embassies in respective capitals. The first head of the Mission presented credentials on 12 January 1960 in Havana. India and Cuba maintain close contacts with each other in UN, NAM and other international fora.

B. Commercial Relations (Trade and Foreign Investment) – Recent facts & figures

3. Bilateral trade has been moderate. The main items of Indian export to Cuba are pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, plastic products, medical equipment, engineering goods, textile products, metal products, mineral oil products and tools. Imports from Cuba primarily comprise of pharmaceutical and tobacco products. An account of Bilateral commodities trade in goods from 2019-20 to 2023-24 is as under:

The export-import statistics for the last seven years as per India’s Ministry of Commerce data bank are as follows :

The Export-Import statistics from 2019-2020 to 2023-24.

(US Dollar

Million)

Year	Total trade	Import	Export
2019-20	51.04	3.53	47.51
2020-21	89.77	69.44	20.33
2021-22	27.57	1.00	26.57
2022-23	83.91	4.87	79.04
2023-24	42.65	2.19	40.46

(Source: Department of Commerce, India)

4. Indian companies participates in Cuba’s largest trade fair- the Havana International Fair (FIHAV) on regular basis. In 2017 edition, Commerce and Industry Minister (CIM) Shri Suresh Prabhu led the Indian delegation to Cuba. 28 Indian exhibitors participated at FIHAV 2017 led by

ITPO and EEPC. FIEO and Cuban Chamber of Commerce signed an MOU for cooperation in 6 priority sectors: pharmaceuticals, tourism, renewable energy, sugar, bio-technology and infrastructure development. At the 2018 edition of FIHAV, 45 Indian companies took part. 1st November was designated as India Day at FIHAV. In 2022 edition, India hosted a pavilion with the participation of 22 Indian companies and 3 of the main Indian trade organisations. Embassy of India also hosted a stall at the pavilion showcasing GOI's One District One Product scheme and International Year of Millets-2023.

5. Cuba participates regularly in major trade and IT related international events hosted in India, as mentioned earlier in bilateral visits section. Cuba's IT professionals enthusiastically participated in the INDIA: LAC IT Connect held virtually in March 2021.

6. Bilateral assistance through Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) has increased in the last few years, and ITEC has become popular in Cuba. Following the announcement of 10 additional slots in 2018, total 70 slots are allocated to Cuba. A specialized course has been scheduled under ITEC programme for Cuba (12 slots) on film production, co-production and distribution, to be held in October-November 2023. One more dimension is the Lines of Credit for developmental projects in Cuba. India has extended five LoCs to the tune of \$243 million to Government of Cuba in agriculture, agro-food, and renewable energy sectors.

C. Other Major Areas of Cooperation :

➤ India and Cuba have signed Several agreements on Bilateral Trade, Culture, S&T, Standardization, Sports, Renewable Energy and Consumer Protection and Cultural Exchange Program.

➤ MoU Between All India Institute of Ayurveda, Ministry of AYUSH, India and University of Medical Sciences of Havana (UCMH), Havana, Cuba on the Establishment of an Academic Collaboration in Ayurveda in December 2022.

➤ Agreement On Cooperation in The Field Of Sports Between India And Cuba was signed in February 2012. During the year 2013, the Cultural Exchange Programme and MOU on Cooperation in Broadcasting between Prasar Bharati and Cuban Radio and Television Institute were signed. MOU between Jawahar Lal Nehru University and Havana University for education cooperation was signed in September, 2014. Agreement on Visa Exemption for Diplomatic Passport holders was signed in March, 2015. An MOU on enhanced cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine was signed during the visit of Cuban Health Minister to Delhi in December 2017. MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy was signed during the visit of President of India to Cuba in June 2018.

➤ **Energy Cooperation:** Energy cooperation is one of the main aspects of India-Cuba relations. Cuba is a member country and the Vice-President of Latin America and the Caribbean region at International Solar Alliance (ISA). Government of India has extended Lines of Credit for 3 projects in Cuba related to the field viz. Power Cogeneration Project at 30 November Sugar Mill, 51 MW Wind Energy Farm project at Rio Seco, and 75 MW solar power projects. In addition, a MoU between Ministry of Energy and Mines of Cuba and Ministry of New & Renewable Energy of India is under negotiations.

➤ **Science & Technology, Biotechnology and Health:** India-Cuba relations in the field of S&T and health have been strengthened by ministerial level visits from both sides. Both countries have collaborated in these fields under various agreements viz. MOU on Cooperation in Broadcasting between Prasar Bharati and Cuban Radio and Television Institute; the MOU on cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine; the MoU on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy; and the MoU on Cooperation in the field of Biotechnology. Interest in Ayurveda and Indian Naturopathy is increasing in Cuba. Under the bilateral collaboration, a Panchakarma Centre was established in Cuba, at the International health Centre “La Pradera” on 6 November 2019. Ministry of AYUSH deployed one Ayurveda expert and two Ayurveda therapists on short term deputation to assist the Centre. International Day of Yoga and Ayurveda Day are celebrated in Cuba every year with the support of Cuban government.

➤ **Cultural relations:** Indian culture and civilization is well appreciated in Cuba. Mahatma Gandhi, Nehru and Tagore occupy a special place in Cuba. ICCR donated a bust of Mahatma Gandhi and a bust of Tagore, which are placed in prominent locations in Havana. Mahatma Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary was celebrated in Havana with a solemn ceremony at the Gandhi Park.

The depth and variety of Indian dance, music and cinema are well known in Cuba. Multiple ICCR sponsored cultural troupes have visited Cuba. The House of Asia in Havana organizes cultural events – exhibitions, film shows, talks -on India and has a hall dedicated to India where Indian art and craft objects are permanently displayed. An Indian movie is broadcast on Sunday on national television.

India was the ‘Guest of Honour’ country for 24th Havana International Book Fair held in February 2015. Cuba’s choir group Erfeon Choir Santiago won the first prize in the International Choral Festival organised by ICCR in December 2020.

Yoga and Vipassana meditation are practiced. With the support of Cuba’s INDER, Embassy of India have been organizing events related to yoga, including on the International Day of Yoga. From September 2022-August 2023, Indian Council for Cultural Relations deployed a Teacher of Indian Culture at Embassy of India in Havana, in order to promote yoga and Indian culture among Cubans. Cubans cherish the cultural performances of India on various occasions, for example national day celebrations. Indian festivals like Holi, Lohri, Diwali etc. are also celebrated with the participation of Cuban enthusiasts by the Indian Embassy.

➤ **Indian Community:** Indian Community in Cuba is small. One of the components of the community is the people of Indian origin, descendants of Indians who came to Cuba in the early twentieth century from Jamaica and other part of the West Indies to work on sugarcane plantations. They are settled mostly in Guantanamo province in Eastern Cuba (no official record though). They have got totally assimilated into the local culture. Since last seven years, there are Indian labourers as part of an international company working on various real estate construction projects in Cuba.

Source: www.mea.gov.in