

India-Bolivia Relations

Political Relations

India and Bolivia enjoy friendly and cordial relations. The bilateral exchanges, trade and investment are promising with potential for increasing mutually beneficial cooperation. Both sides are working to improve the level of engagement and forge a partnership in sectors like minerals, infrastructure development, health & pharmaceuticals, Information Technology, capacity building and development cooperation. The Indian Embassy in Lima is concurrently accredited to Bolivia since April 1981. Bolivia opened a resident Mission in New Delhi in 2012. There are two Honorary Consuls General in Bolivia in La Paz and Santa Cruz.

VVIP Visit: Hon'ble Rashtrapatiji paid the first ever State Visit to Bolivia from 28-30 March 2019. This historic visit opened a new chapter in the ties between India and Bolivia. The eight bilateral Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding were signed covering a range of areas. US\$100 million line of credit (LoC) was announced for developmental projects of interest to Bolivia. Annual ITEC slots allocation was doubled to 10 and it was announced to gift two busts of Mahatma Gandhi for installation in La Paz and Santa Cruz.

At an outreach event during the VI BRICS Summit in July 2014, PM along with other BRICS leaders interacted with Presidents of South American countries, including Bolivia, organized by host Brazil.

Bilateral Exchanges: Shri Rajen Gohain, MOS for Railways paid an official visit to Bolivia on 20-21 April 2018. This was the first Ministerial visit from India to Bolivia. Opportunities for cooperation in various sectors including railways, pharmaceuticals, mining, energy, IT, etc. and resolution of outstanding issues were discussed. Bilateral Ministerial contacts have taken place on the sidelines of meetings of international organizations. External Affairs Minister Smt. Sushma Swaraj held a bilateral meeting with Bolivian Foreign Minister Diego Pary Rodriguez on 26 September 2018 in New York on the sidelines of 73rd UNGA.

Bolivia's Minister for Development Planning, Mr. Rene Orellana paid a three day visit to New Delhi during March-April 2016 and met with Minister of State for External Affairs Gen. V.K. Singh and Minister for Railways Shri Suresh Prabhu and attended a business seminar 'Doing Business with India' organised by CII. Defence Minister of Bolivia, Mr. Reymi Ferreira visited Goa from 28 to 30 March 2016 to participate DEFEXPO 2016 at the invitation of the Defence Minister Shri Manohar Parrikar. In June 2016, Joint Secretary (LAC) visited Bolivia for bilateral consultations.

The first India-Bolivia Foreign Office Consultations were held in La Paz on 20 November 2014. The Indian side was led by Shri R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary (AMS & CPV). The Bolivian side was led by Mr. Juan Carlos Alurralde, Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs. Special Secretary also called on Mr. David Choquehuanca, Foreign Minister of Bolivia.

India and Bolivia signed a Cultural Agreement in December 1997 and a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in November 2001. During the VVIP Visit in March 2019, 8 bilateral Agreements/MoUs, including those on Visa Exemption for Diplomatic and Official Passport Holders, Cooperation between FSI and Bolivian Diplomatic Academy, Bioceanic Railway Corridor, Cultural Exchange Programme, Geology and Mineral Resources, establishment of Centre of Excellence in ICT, Traditional Systems of Medicine and

Homeopathy and Cooperation in Space Exploration and Use were signed. In addition, Bolivia signed ISA Framework Agreement.

Commercial Relations

The trade between India and Bolivia is low but growing, and there is scope for improvement. In the Financial Year 2018-19, the total trade grew by 23.9% to US\$ 956.92 million with India's exports at US \$104.7 million and Bolivia's exports to India at US \$852 million.

Indo-Peruvian Trade (US \$ Million)						
Trade	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20 (Apr-Dec'19)
India's exports	70.84 (33.2%)	74.43 (5%)	79.52 (6.84%)	105.19 (32.3%)	104.71 (-0.45%)	85.39 (23.6%)
India's imports	3.56 (47%)	240.25 (6648%)	173.54 (-27.7%)	667.25 (284.5%)	852.21 (27.72%)	543.88 (-9%)
Total	74.40 (33.8%)	314.68 (323%)	253.06 (-19.5%)	772.44 (205.2%)	956.92 (23.88%)	629.27 (-5.6%)
<i>Source: DGCI&S, Department of Commerce, Government of India</i>						

According to Bolivian figures, in the calendar year 2018, the bilateral trade reached US\$875 million with India's exports at US \$152.18 million and imports at US \$722.87 million. In 2019 (January - September), the two-way trade stood at US \$642.19 million. India emerged as the third largest export destination and 16th largest source of imports in 2018. India's exports include automobiles, machinery, pharmaceutical products, iron and steel, rubber products, yarn, textiles and fibers, organic and inorganic chemicals. Bolivian exports mainly include gold, fertilizers, mineral waste, leather and wood.

Investments: Project by Jindal Steel & Power Ltd. to develop the El Mutun iron ore mine and set up a steel plant was terminated in July 2012 due to differences with the Bolivian partner ESM, a Government company. Negotiations are on between the company and the Government of Bolivia to bring the matter to a closure. Tech Mahindra has a presence in Bolivia providing software integration & solutions. TATA Motors, Bajaj Auto, Hero Motors and Mahindra & Mahindra have local dealerships in Bolivia. The United Phosphorus Limited (UPL) had shifted its office from Santa Cruz to another city in the region. A bilateral Chamber of Commerce in Bolivia, known as CABINCO, exists at Santa Cruz.

Bolivian Government invited India to be their partner in lithium sector. A three-member KABIL team visited Bolivia in February 2019 to explore opportunities. A five-member official delegation led by Dr. V.K. Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog visited Bolivia in October 2019 to explore possibilities of cooperation in Lithium sector. As Bolivia embarks on industrialization of its resources, Bolivian leadership welcomed India's participation in several areas, including pharmaceuticals, healthcare, technology and tourism.

A PHARMEXCIL delegation comprising 28 member companies visited Bolivia in August 2019 and had a number of business meetings and met Ministry of Health officials.

India's Development Assistance to Bolivia

Bolivia is a beneficiary of India's development assistance and is keen to make India as its development partner. India offers 10 slots per annum under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme. Bolivian diplomats have been attending the Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) conducted by FSI. MoU on cooperation between FSI and Bolivian Diplomatic Academy was signed in March 2019.

A project involving lighting of Tiwanaku Archaeological Site on the shores of Lake Titicaca was completed with Government of India's assistance of US\$ 31000 under the "Aid to LAC" budget. It was inaugurated by the Foreign Minister of Bolivia on 21 June 2017. Tiwanaku holds a great spiritual and historical significance for the people of Bolivia. India extended support for financing a rural water management project in Beni Province of Bolivia under IBSA fund. Solar lighting of Plazuela del Niño (Children's Park) was undertaken with Government of India support at Sucre. In March 2019, India and Bolivia signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up of a Centre of Excellence in IT at Cochabamba with India's assistance. India offered a line of credit of US\$100 million for developmental projects of interest to Bolivia.

Cultural: ICCR has supplied a bust of Mahatma Gandhi for installation at Trinidad in Beni province of Bolivia. ICCR sponsored the visit of Indian classical music group led by Apratim Mazmudar in September 2019. The troupe performed at the International Festival of Culture at Sucre and Municipal Theatre at Santa Cruz from 20-22 September 2019. Odissi dancer Masako Ono visited Bolivia in May 2012 where she performed in La Paz, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. International Day of Yoga (IDY) has been celebrated in Bolivia every year. In 2017, IDY was held at the iconic Lake Titicaca, over 3800 meters above sea level, in addition to La Paz, Santa Cruz and Cochabamba. The 4th International Day of Yoga in 2018 was celebrated in Bolivia in the cities of Cochabamba, Santa Cruz and La Paz. The 5th International Day of Yoga in June 2019 was celebrated in La Paz, Sucre, Cochabamba and Santa Cruz. Various Yoga schools and associations and local authorities joined the general public in the celebrations. The celebration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was commenced in Bolivia with the rendition of 'Vaishnav Jan To' bhajan by a popular Andean Group - WARA.

Consular: India has extended e-Visa facility to Bolivians with effect from 5th August 2015. Visa Exemption Agreement for diplomatic and official passports was signed in March 2019.

Indian Community: Indian community in Bolivia, including PIOs, is around 60. Indian community is engaged in retail trade, transportation, agriculture, service sector, etc. An India Bolivia Friendship Association called Asociacion de Amistad Bolivia India (AABI) was formed in 2017.

Useful Resources: Website: www.indembassy.org.pe;

Facebook: India in Peru & Bolivia ; Centro Cultural India, Becarios del ITEC

Twitter: @eoilima and @CCultural_India

You Tube: India in Peru & Bolivia

31 January 2020