India-Costa Rica Relations

India and Costa Rica enjoy cordial and warm relations, which are being strengthened by the growing commercial engagement between the two 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. Costa Rica opened its Embassy in New Delhi in April 2010. The Indian Embassy in Panama is concurrently accredited to Costa Rica.

Important Bilateral Visits:

From India:

1. Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd), visited Costa Rica in July 2015.
2. The then Minister of State for Commerce & Industry, Smt. D. Purandareswari visited Costa Rica in April 2013
3. The then Secretary (West) Shri M. Ganapathi visited Costa Rica for Foreign Office Consultations in August 2012.
4. The then Secretary (West), Shri V. K. Grover, visited San Jose in February 1996 to discuss issues relating to the NAM and the UN.

From Costa Rica:

1. The Second Vice President of Costa Rica, Ms. Ana Helena Chacon Echeverria, accompanied by Mr. Alexander Mora Delgrado, the Minister of Foreign Trade participated in the 6th India-Latin America and Caribbean Conclave held on October 8-9, 2015 in New Delhi.
2. Vice-Minister of Foreign Relations, Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz, visited India for second round of Foreign Office Consultations in March 2015.
3. Mr. Alexander Mora, Minister of Foreign Trade visited India in February, 2015 as a Guest Speaker at the NASSCOM Leadership Forum at Mumbai.
4. The then Minister for Foreign Trade, Ms. Anabel Gonsalez, visited India on 05 March, 2013.
5. The then 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.
6. The then Foreign Minister Rene Castro visited India from October 19-23, 2010 for bilateral discussions and to inaugurate Costa Rican Embassy in New Delhi.
7. The then Foreign Minister Bruno Stagno along with SICA (Sistema de la Integracion Centroamericana) FMs in June 2008
8. The then Vice Foreign Minister Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira visited India on February 1-5, 2004 as part of the SICA delegation.
9. The then 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.

Bilateral Agreements:

1. MOU on Technical Cooperation, July 2015
2. MOU for Cooperation between FSI and Costa Rican Diplomatic Academy, March 2015.
3. MOU on Economic Cooperation in April 2013
4. MOU on Regular Foreign Office Consultations 2008
5. MOU for setting up of Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Costa Rica 2009
6. MOU between the Foreign Service Institutes of India and Costa Rica, March 2015.
7. MOU on Exemption from Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic and Official and Service Passports (Pending)

First Foreign Office Consultations between India and Costa Rica were held in August 2012 in Costa Rica. Second round of FoCs was held on March 16, 2015 in New Delhi. The Indian delegation was led by Shri R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary (AMS&CPV) and the Costa Rican delegation was led by Vice Foreign Minister, Mr. Alejandro Solano Ortiz.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Gen (Dr.) V.K. Singh (Retd), led a delegation to Costa Rica on July 21-22 on his first official visit. The delegation, inter alia, was comprised of Ambassador Shamma Jain and Ms. Riva G. Das, JS (LAC). MoS (VKS) held meetings with the Foreign Minister of Costa Rica, Mr. Manuel Gonzalez Sanz, the Vice President & Finance Minister, Mr. Helio Fallas Venegas, and the Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. Alexander Mora. Discussions during the meetings with Costa Rican dignitaries covered the entire gamut of bilateral relations as well as regional and multilateral issues. MoS (VKS) extended an invite to the Vice President & Finance Minister Mr. Helio Fallas Venegas to visit India. An MoU on Technical Cooperation was signed. The visit of MOS(VKS) was considered as a significant step towards strengthening the relations further and enhancing the level of cooperation, in various fields.

GoI's Development assistance:

India's assistance to Costa Rica includes, 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.

An MOU for the setting up of a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Costa Rica was signed in September 2009. Government of India signed agreements with C-DAC and APTECH in March 2015 for setting up the Centre in Costa Rica in the National Technical University of Costa Rica, Alajuela. After installation of the hardware and associated equipment, the Center was inaugurated by Ambassador Shamma Jain and. Ms. Carolina Vazquez, Deputy Minister for Science, Technology and Telecommunications, in March 2016. The Centre is now

functional and 3 Aptech trainers have been deployed since July, 2016, for a period of 2 years, to impart training to Costa Ricans.

Economic & Commercial Co-operation:

The eco-friendly policies of Costa Rica motivated the country to import 50 Reva electric cars duty-free. Other exports include textiles, tubes, pharmaceuticals, and agro-chemicals. Scorpio SUVs are 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 integrated circuits, wood and wood products, leather and hides and oil seeds. Havells Sylvania group from India, which manufactures electrical products, has its Latin America headquarters in San Jose, Costa Rica, as well as a factory.

India-Costa Rica trade in US $ mn.

Year (Apr-Mar)	Exports	Imports	Total trade
2013	81.09	203.99	285.08
2014	95.84	155.30	251.14
2015	134.76	62.21	196.97
2016 (Apr- Sep)	76.61	37.51	114.12

(Source: Ministry of Commerce, India)

Though India's exports have seen a steady increase over the past few years, imports from Costa Rica plummeted after closure of the INTEL chip factory in 2014 in San Jose.

India's exports to Costa Rica as per MOCI figures amounted to USD 134.76 million in 2015, registering a growth rate of 40.62 over 2014. The main export items were comprised of automobiles, pharmaceutical products, textiles and clothing, motor cycles, organic chemicals, electrical machinery, and miscellaneous products like notebooks, cables, and tyres.

India's imports from Costa Rica in 2015 were just USD 62.21 million declining by 59.94 from 2014. Major imports from Costa Rica, consisted of wood and articles of wood, integrated circuits and micro assemblies, optical medical or surgical instruments, and to a lesser extent, nuts, coffee, tea, glass and glassware. The imports of integrated circuits from Costa Rica fell by 55 % in 2014.

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 6 IT Costa Rican Companies participated in India Soft in February 2009. A delegation of six business houses organized by the Plastics Export Promotion Council of India (Plexconcil) visited San Jose in March 2010 to promote a 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 organized a Buyer Seller Meet at San Jose in November 2012. A CII delegation, led by MOS (C&I), visited Costa Rica in April 2013.

Five leading IT companies, viz Infosys, Wipro, Cognizant, TCS, and CSS Corp are operating in San Jose. Costa Rica has emerged as a niche market for manufacturing of high-end medical devices, IT hardware and software, and logistics and BPOs services. 70 Costa Rican students and teachers from public and private universities underwent three month training at Infosys in Mysore in 2014 under a cooperation programme between the Ministry of Foreign Trade, Costa Rican Coalition for Development Initiatives and Infosys.

A delegation from the Export Promotion Council of India Plastic (Plexconcil) visited Costa Rica on March 19, 2015 for conducting BSM with producers and buyers of plastics. The Ambassador also visited Costa Rica for the BSM. The 16-member delegation also discussed business partnerships with Costa Rica companies.

The Second Vice President of Costa Rica, Ms. Ana Helena Chacon Echeverria, accompanied by Mr. Alexander Mora Delgrado, Minister of Foreign Trade participated in the 6th India-Latin America and Caribbean Conclave held on October 8-9, 2015 in New Delhi.

The ITEC programme is popular in Costa Rica and Costa Rica has been allotted 15 ITEC slots for 2016-17 fiscal..

Culture:

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. Prof Hilda's articles on India were published by the Public Diplomacy Division of our Ministry.

Co-operation in the cultural sphere has included performances of Indian cultural troupes, which have been visiting Costa Rica from time to time.

An ICCR sponsored Kuchipudi Classical Dance group led by Ms. Tirumalasetti Reddy Lakshmi, performed at the National Theatre, San Jose on 20th October, 2015 to an audience of over 600 . The event was attended by several high dignitaries and received wide coverage in the local media.

Over 160 Costa Ricans performed Yoga at the IDY 2015 event, organized by the Embassy of India, Panama in cooperation with local Yoga Institutes and the Indian Community at the iconic Museum of Art in San Jose**.**

Ms. Wen Hsu, a prominent illustrator and author of children stories, visited India under Familiarization Programme, for eminent illustrators and literary personalities of XP Division, from 27 December 2014 to 6 January 2015.

Mr. Luis Alberto Munoz, Vice President of a prominent Spanish newspaper of Costa Rica *La Republica* visited India from 15-21 October 2014 under

‘Familiarization Visit of Journalists from LAC Region’, organized by the External Publicity Division of the Ministry

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

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. In August 2007, the visa regime for Indians wishing to visit Costa Rica was further relaxed when Indian nationals with valid US or Schengen visas were allowed to enter Costa Rica without a Costa Rican Visa.

Indian Community:

The Indian Community of about 250 persons, consists mostly of IT professionals, taking advantage of the proximity to the US. It also includes businessmen, engaged in exports of wood, NGOs and the Missionaries of Charity. There are three Indian restaurants run by Indians. The Costa Rica Indian Association (CRIA) (www.crindian.org) established in 2010 and has been active in organizing social and cultural programmes, as well as trade promotion activities, in collaboration with the Indian Embassy.

Useful Resources:

A) Website of Embassy of India , Panama
http://www.indianembassyinpanama.com/

B) Facebook Account :

Embassy of India in Panama :
https://www.facebook.com/embassyofindiainpanama

C) You Tube Account :

Embassy of India Panama,
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCdnZ2n6EpfrFx12-GgRWRhA

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