

India-Jamaica Bilateral Relations

Overview:

India and Jamaica have traditionally enjoyed cordial and friendly relations based on common linkages of history, Parliamentary democracy, membership of the Commonwealth nations, English language and the love of cricket. There also exists a cultural heritage bond as Indian nationals were brought to Jamaica as indentured labour between 1845-1917.

Both India and Jamaica are members of NAM, G-77, G-15, WTO, WIPO, UN and its various subsidiary bodies. Both being developing countries, share similar concerns and common aspirations for accelerated economic growth, eradication of poverty, improvement in the quality of life of their people and promotion of equity. Both also have shared stakes in shaping the emerging architecture of various multilateral institutions to address existing inequities and for addressing major contemporary issues related to energy security, food security, climate change and international terrorism, among others. Both have common interests in promotion of South-South Cooperation and synergizing efforts towards the common objective of securing a better deal for the developing world in the relevant multilateral fora to promote the development imperatives of the South without impacting on their policy space.

Political:

Late Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi visited Kingston in 1975, following which the decision to open a resident Indian Mission in Jamaica was taken. Jamaica's Prime Minister Mr. Edward Seaga visited India to attend the Seventh NAM Conference in March 1983. Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Jamaica in February 1999 to attend the Ninth G-15 Summit in Montego Bay. The Jamaican Minister of Foreign Trade, Mr. Anthony Hylton paid a visit to India from 1-4 August 2001. A delegation led by Dr. Phillip Paulwell, Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology of Jamaica visited India from 16-20 October 2001. Shri Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs paid an official visit to Jamaica from 6-7 February 2003. Other Ministerial visits were of Mr. Wykeham McNeille, Minister of State for Tourism and Culture to India in January 2007 for participation in centenary celebrations of Satyagraha, Shri Anand Sharma, MOS for External Affairs to Jamaica in February 2007 and Shri Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs to Jamaica in June 2007. Our Prime Minister had a brief meeting with the former Prime Minister Mr. Orette Bruce Golding of Jamaica on the sidelines of the UNGA on 25 Sept 2008 in New York. In June 2013, Shri Vayalar Ravi, Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, again visited Jamaica on an invitation of the Government of Jamaica to participate in the 'Fifth Biennial Diaspora Conference' held from 16-19 June 2013 at Montego Bay, Jamaica.

In February 2014, a delegation led by Hon. Anthony Hylton, Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce of Jamaica, visited India to attend the NASSCOM India Leadership Forum 2014, held in Mumbai from 12-14 February 2014.

A 3-member Indian delegation led by MOS Gen. V.K. Singh visited Kingston on 17- 19 February 2015. Gen. V.K. Singh paid his second official visit to Jamaica on 29-30 April 2017.

Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Ms Kamina Johnson Smith paid the first ever official visit by any Jamaican Foreign Affairs Minister to India from 9-12 October 2017. During her visit, apart from her full-fledged bilateral delegation level meetings with EAM, she also met the Ministers of Health and Tourism. She also visited Mumbai for business meetings.

PM Modi and Jamaican Prime Minister the Most Hon'ble Andrew Holness have met many times at the sidelines of multilateral fora in the last some years. **PM Holness was one of the select speakers during the event organized by India at UN Headquarters on 25th September 2019 to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.** PM Holness also participated in the 1st ever India-CARICOM Leaders' summit at the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting in September 2019.

The only mechanism between the two countries which exists for discussion at bilateral level is Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) meetings. Under this mechanism, so far 5 rounds of FOC meetings have been held. Three rounds of meetings have been held in Kingston (2001, 2005, 2011) and two rounds have been held in New Delhi (2007 and October 2017).

Jamaica presently has an Honorary Consul in India as well as a non-resident High Commissioner. Jamaican Foreign Minister the Hon'ble Kamina Johnson Smith recently announced during India's National Day reception on 27 January 2020 that Jamaica will formally be inaugurating their High Commission in India this year.

Economic and Commercial:

The bilateral trade, economic and commercial interactions between the countries are growing despite a constraint of distance from India and Jamaica's preferential trade arrangements with the USA, EU and the Caribbean. The level of present bilateral trade is below its potential but there is huge potential. Bilateral trade has been increasing at a healthy rate, from US \$ 28.28 million in 2011-12 to US\$ 55.82 in 2018-19. Pharmaceutical products, medical devices, textiles, vehicle parts and accessories, ceramic products, iron and steel products and machinery are major items of export from India. Aluminium and lead articles, electrical machinery and parts thereof and some coffee form bulk of India's imports. India's export has been increasing year on to year and the balance of trade is heavily in favour of India.

Year	India's Exports (US\$ in millions)	India's Imports (US\$ in millions)	Total (US\$ in millions)
2014-15	37.80	1.78	39.58
2015-16	40.21	1.55	41.76
2016-17	43.01	1.17	44.18
2017-18	52.24	4.35	56.59
2018-19	55.42	5.01	60.43
2019-20 (Apr-Dec)	43.57	2.28	45.85

(Source: Ministry of Commerce-Export Import Data bank)

A Line of Credit (LOC) worth US\$ 7.5 million was extended by India for import of water pumps from India (M/s Kirloskar Brothers Ltd) in the year 2001.

India set up an IT Centre under the ICT Capacity Development Project in Jamaica in February 2009. Under the agreement, India had provided the entire hardware, software, training modules and faculty of 3, deputed by the NIIT, for a period of two years, which trained over a thousand Jamaicans in various modules of IT Skills. The programme came to an end in February 2011. The concluding ceremony was held on the 17 March 2011 and was addressed by the then Minister of Information Daryl Vaz, and the then Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Ms. Marlene Malahoo Forte, High Commissioner and various senior officials.

An assistance of US\$ 200,000 in the form of medicines and medical supplies for the victims of Hurricane Ivan that struck the Island in September 2004, was given by India. Indian medicines worth about US\$ 1,50,000 have also been gifted to the Jamaican government in Feb 2019. An MOU in the field of health cooperation between the two countries is also in its final stages.

Government of India donated an amount of US\$300,000/- (US Dollars Three Lakh) in the month of August 2010, as humanitarian assistance for procurement of medicines and medical equipment's for the Bustamante Hospital for Children in Kingston.

As a part of Indian Humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Nicole which lashed Jamaica in September–October 2010, the Government of India donated an amount of amount of US\$50,000/- (US Dollars Fifty Thousand only) in the month of December 2010 to the Government of Jamaica.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on 31st March 2014 between the Government of India and Government of Jamaica for providing Indian grant assistance of US\$ 2.1 million for installation of flood lights at the Sabina Park. The work has since been successfully completed and full payment has been made to the Jamaican side.

International Training and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) and training cooperation:

India allocated 30 seats under ITEC for the year 2018-19 (in 2017-18, total slots offered were 25 but total seats utilized were 34) to Jamaica. In 2019-20, Jamaica looks set to utilize all the 30 slots that have been allocated to it. So far, around 340 Jamaicans have been trained in various institutions in India.

Many members of the Jamaican Foreign Service have attended courses in India under ITEC programme as well as in courses offered to diplomats by the Indian Foreign Service Institute (FSI).

MOUs/Agreements:

- A Cultural Agreement was signed in March 1996.

- An MOU for setting up of ICCR's Chair of Indology/Gandhian studies was signed in 2012 between ICCR and University of West Indies (UWI). In pursuant to this MOU, a Chair was established for two years which ended in July 2017 and a fresh MOU has been signed and the Professor for the Chair is teaching at the WUI.

- An Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation between India and Jamaica was signed in December 2016 and ratification is pending from both sides.
- An MOU between the Scientific Research Council of Jamaica and the CSIR on cooperation in the field of Food Research and Technology was signed in January 2010 and is operational.
- Following the fourth round of Foreign Office Level Consultations in July 2011, in Kingston, an MOU between The National Small Industries Corporation Ltd India (NSIC) and The Jamaica Business Development Corporation (JBDC) was signed in Kingston on the 28th February 2012.
- As of now, there are no bilateral agreements with Jamaica on protection of investments, avoidance of double taxation, narcotics and drug trafficking, extradition treaty or agreement on mutual legal assistance in civil/criminal matters signed.
- Jamaica has signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and is now a full-fledged member.

Culture:

An agreement between India and Jamaica for cooperation in the field Culture was signed in 1996. An MOU in the field of Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) is in its final stages. The Mission has been harnessing local talent and with the resources available to promote Indian culture, Mission has been organizing cultural programmes/ workshops/ symposia/ seminars etc. on important occasions.

- (i) The Statue of Mahatma Gandhi depicting the famous “Dandi March” donated by ICCR was installed in July 2012 at the University of West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston.
- (ii) Another Statue of Mahatma Gandhi has also been installed in front of Kingston city Library.
- (iii) A third statue of Mahatma Gandhi will soon be installed in the city of May Pen, which has a large Indian diaspora.
- (iv) The first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was organised in National Indoor stadium in Kingston on 21st June 2015. The Yoga Day is organized with the collaboration of Art of living foundation and Jamaican Yoga associations and witnesses enthusiastic participation of Jamaicans.
- (v) A professional Yoga-cum-Hindi/Sanskrit teacher has been deputed by ICCR since Jan 2018, and he has been actively promoting the practice of Yoga through his regular classes at several venues including in Chancery premises.
- (vi) There have been regular bilateral tournaments between India and the West Indies cricket team. Some of the matches (T-20, ODI and Test matches)

take place in Kingston as well. This has made India and Jamaica a natural partner for cooperation in sports. An MOU in the field of sports cooperation between the two countries is in the final stages.

Indian Community:

There are four main Indian Associations in Jamaica which are active and they are based in Kingston, Ocho Rios and Montego Bay. Apart from the Indian Associations, there are Hindu religious groups namely, 'Sanatan Dharma Mandir'; 'Prema Satsangh'; and 'Shri Sathya Sai Baba Organisation' in Kingston.

The Indian Diaspora, of about 70,000 whose forefathers came from India (mainly from Eastern UP and Bihar) as indentured labour from 1845-1917, make up around 3% of the Jamaican population and are proud of their Indian origins. They have retained and nurtured their abiding interest in Indian culture, music, dance and history. They have assimilated well in the Jamaican society – fondly described as 'genetically embedded and integrated in the Jamaican society', and their contribution to the Jamaican economic and social development has been acknowledged and appreciated at the highest political level in Jamaica.

The Indian Diaspora has further brought another group of expatriate Indian workers to work as office managers in their establishments. There is also a small floating and expanding group of expatriate skilled Indian professionals such as doctors, professors, chartered accountants etc. who provide professional and specialist services of a high order and are relatively better paid and much respected. Few of them teach in the University of West Indies, Kingston and among doctors, many are attached to the Jamaican Government Hospitals. Large number of Indians are also running business establishments successfully. At present, it is estimated that the total Indian community holding Indian passport is about 5000.

Consular:

With the increasing number of Indians moving to Jamaica for employment and OCI card facility extended to Indian Diaspora with liberal documentation process, the rush for passports and OCI card has increased in Jamaica.

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