

India - Jamaica Relations

Overview

India and Jamaica have traditionally enjoyed cordial and friendly relations based on common linkages of history, Parliamentary democracy, and membership of the Commonwealth nations, English language and the love of cricket. There also exists a cultural heritage bond as Indians were brought to this region 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 their 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 the existing inequities, and for addressing major contemporary issues related to energy security, food security, climate change, and international terrorism, and among others.

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. Former 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. 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 Digvijay Singh, Minister of State for External Affairs paid an official visit to Jamaica from 6-7 February, 2003. Shri Anand Sharma, MOS for External Affairs visited Jamaica in February 2007, and Shri Vayalar Ravi, Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs visited Jamaica in June 2007. In June 2013, Shri Vayalar Ravi, Hon'ble Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs, again visited Jamaica on an invitation from the Government of Jamaica to participate in the 'Fifth Biennial Diaspora Conference' held from 16-19 June'13 at Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Political Relations

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 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. Minister of State for External Affairs, General (Dr) V.K.Singh paid an official visit to Jamaica on 17-19 Feb, 2015 and paid a second visit to Jamaica on 29-30 April, 2017. Jamaican Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamina Johnson Smith paid first ever official visit to India on 9-12 October 2017. Five rounds of Foreign Office Level Consultations have been held so far. Three in Kingston in 2001, 2005, 2011 and two in New Delhi in 2007 and 2017.

Bilateral Trade & Commerce

The bilateral economic and commercial interactions between India and Jamaica has been constrained by small size of the economy, distance from India and 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 exists. The bilateral

trade has been increasing at a healthy rate and in 2011-12; the total trade was US \$ 28.28 million which has increased to US\$ 42 million in 2015-16 and US\$ 44.61 million in 2016-17. India's exports have been increasing year on to year and the balance of trade is heavily in favour of India.

Value in US\$ Million)

Year	India's Exports	India's Imports	Total	Balance of trade
2012-13	29.7	2.4	32.1	27.3
2013-14	36.2	0.90	37.	35.3
2014-15	37.8	1.78	39.58	36.02
2015-16	40.21	1.55	41.76	38,66
2016-17	43.44	1.17	44.61	42.27
2017(Apr-Jun)	11.27	2.92	14.19	8.35

(Source: Department of Commerce - Export Import Data Bank)

Major Exports: Major items of India's exports to Jamaica are pharmaceuticals products, motor parts, mineral fuels, mineral oils, textiles, cotton, readymade garments, industrial machinery, plastic and linoleum products, pearls, precious and semi-precious stones, and artificial jewellery.

Major Imports: Indian imports from Jamaica are mainly beverages, organic chemicals, steel scrap and other miscellaneous products.

Development Assistance

The bilateral development assistance to Jamaica has been very modest but Indian government had granted funds for support in critical areas including agriculture, health, education etc; India offers 25 slots annually to Jamaica under the ITEC programme. So far over 300 Jamaicans have been trained in various institutions in India. From 2015 the slots have been raised to 20 and since last it is 25.

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).
- 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 being operational.
- 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.

Pending MOUs

- An MOU between India and Jamaica for establishment of India-Jamaica Vocational Training Centre (IJVCT)
- An MOU for cooperation in the field of Sports and Youth Affairs with Jamaica:
- An MOU for cooperation in the field of Health
- A Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) between India and Jamaica
- An Agreement for the “Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes” (AEI&ACT).

Notable investments made in Jamaica are BPO centres in IT sector by Hinduja group and M/s Suderla Sunderland Global Services. A private medical college based in Jamaica is owned and run by an Indian entrepreneur Dr Ram Chalasani. A plastic recycling plant has been set up recently (in May 2017) near Kingston by an Indian firm M/s Gravitha India private Limited, a Jaipur based firm with US\$ 1 million investment. M/s GMR Infra limited, has been pre-qualified to submit their final bid for next level of bidding process in Kingston International Airport.

Under ITEC, India offers 25 slots annually to Jamaica. So far, over 310 Jamaicans have been trained in various institutions in India. Earlier, Ministry had offered 20 slots for Jamaica, but due to poor response from them, the slots were brought down to 15 during 2015-16 and 2016-17. In 2016-17, all 15 slots were utilized.

Cultural Relations

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. Another Statue of Mahatma Gandhi has also been installed in front of Kingston city Library.

The first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was organised in National Indoor stadium in Kingston on June 21st 2015. The second International Day of Yoga was also organised in Kingston on 19th June, 2016. In both the events, large number of local Jamaicans participated so enthusiastically. The third IDY was organised at a famous city college auditorium in Kingston on 17th June 2017 in collaboration with Art of living foundation and Jamaican Yoga associations. Large number of Jamaicans have participated in the event.

There has been regular bilateral series takes place between India and West Indies cricket team. Some of the matches both ODI and test takes place in Kingston as well. This has made natural partner for cooperation between the two countries in sports.

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, Bihar, Basti, Deoria, Gorakhpur) as indentured labour from 1845-1917, constituting around 3% of the Jamaican population, are proud of their Indian origin and 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 workers to work as office managers in their establishments. At present, it is estimated that the total Indian community holding Indian passport could be about 5000.

The consular work is relatively less and with the limited staff strength, this mission has managed very well. However, 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 slowly increasing. During the year 2016, Mission had issued: Passports :303, Official/Diplomatic passports: 6, Emergency Certificates: 5, visas: 237, OCI cards: 245, Mis. Services: 155, Attestations:100 and earned revenue about India rupees 47.60 lakhs.

Useful Resources:

High Commission of India, Kingston website:

<http://www.hcikingston.com/>

High Commission of India, Kingston Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/HighCommissionOfIndiaKingston>

High Commission of India, Kingston Twitter page:

<https://twitter.com/hcikingston>

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