

India-Spain Bilateral Relations

Relations between India and Spain have been cordial since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956. A Mission headed by a Cd'A was opened in Madrid in 1958. The first resident Ambassador of India was appointed in 1965.

High Level Visits

After a gap of 28 years, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid an official bilateral visit to Spain on 30-31 May 2017. A Joint Statement was issued on the conclusion of the Summit entitled "Partnership for Peace, Growth and Innovation between India and Spain. Eight agreements/MOUs were signed during the visit.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi met Mr Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires on 1 December 2018. Vice President of India Shri Venkaiah Naidu met the Spanish Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 12th ASEM Summit in Brussels on 19 October 2018.

High Level visits in the last decade include those of President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil from 20-23 April 2009 – the first State Visit to Spain by an Indian head of state. Former King, His Majesty King Juan Carlos I, paid a State Visit to India from 24-27 October 2012, accompanied by a high-level delegation. The present king, His Majesty Felipe VI, visited India as the Crown Prince on his first official visit from 10-12 November 2009, during which he inaugurated the *Cervantes Institute* in New Delhi. King Felipe had earlier visited India in February 2001 and October 1997 as Crown Prince. Former Spanish President Jose Rodriguez Zapatero paid an official visit to India on July 3, 2006. Prior to Prime Minister Modi, Shri Rajiv Gandhi had paid an official bilateral visit to Spain in 1988.

EAM Smt. Sushma Swaraj visited Spain on 18 – 19 February 2019. EAM was conferred the prestigious *Grand Cross of the Order of Civil Merit* by the Spanish Government in recognition of India's swift response through *Operation Maitri* in rescuing 71 Spanish nationals from Nepal in April 2015 in the wake of the disastrous earthquake. Spanish Foreign Minister, Mr Josep Borrell had earlier visited India on 8-9 January 2019 to participate in the *Raisina Dialogue*. Both Foreign Ministers also met on the sidelines of UNGA in New York in September 2018.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Spain is India's 7th largest trade partner in the European Union. Bilateral trade during January – December 2018 stood at US\$ 6.31 billion (*MINCOTUR, Govt. of Spain*), posting a growth of 8.68% and crossing the US\$ 6 billion mark for the first time. India's exports grew 8.49% and stood at US\$ 4.74 billion while imports grew by 9.25% and stood at US\$1.57 billion. India's top exports to Spain are textiles, organic chemicals, iron & steel, seafood, automobiles and leather. India's major imports are mechanical appliances, electrical machinery, chemicals, plastic and mineral fuels.

Spain is the 15th largest investor in India with cumulative FDI stock of US\$ 2.83 billion (April 2000 – December 2019). There are about 200 Spanish companies in India mainly in the sectors of metallurgical industries, renewable energy, automotive, ceramics and infrastructure mainly in highways, transmission lines, tunnels and metro stations. Indian investment in Spain is around US\$ 900 million. There are about 50 Indian companies in Spain mainly in software & IT services, pharmaceuticals, chemicals and logistics. India is among the top 30 investors in Spain globally and among the top 5 from Asia.

Recognizing the immense potential for strengthening cooperation in the field of tourism, it was agreed to set up an Expert Panel on Tourism during PM's visit. Air India launched non-stop, thrice a week, direct flight services between New Delhi and Madrid in December 2016. Indian delegations regularly participate in major international trade fairs and conferences in Spain viz. FITUR (Tourism), Mobile World Congress (Telecom), CPhI Worldwide (Pharmaceuticals) and Smart City Expo World Congress (Smart Cities).

Cultural and Academic Relations

Cultural exchange is an important component of India-Spain relations. ICCR regularly sponsors cultural troupes to Spain and every year offers ten scholarships to Spanish students to study in India. *Casa de la India* is an Indian Cultural Centre in the city of Valladolid supported by ICCR, the local government and Valladolid University. ICCR has also set up a Hindi Chair and the Rabindranath Tagore Chair of Contemporary Indian Studies in the University of Valladolid.

Following Prime Minister Modi's visit to Spain in May 2017, a Twinning Agreement between the cities of Ahmedabad and Valladolid was signed in July 2017. The first Sanskrit Round Table was organized in October 2017 and this resulted in an outcome document in Sanskrit, the first of its kind. An annual *Imagine India Film Festival* is organized in Madrid and Barcelona. Rabindra Sangeet concerts were organized by the Embassy in Madrid and Valladolid in May 2018. With the support of ICCR, Embassy organized the 5th Biennial Classical Indian Festival – *India en Concierto* – in Madrid from June-September 2018. A film festival of independent films, *IndiaIndia* was held in Madrid and Valladolid in September 2018. A Diwali Mela was organized by the Embassy in Madrid in 2017 and 2018. Embassy participated at the Rio Mundi - World Rivers Festival in the city of Cordoba in June 2018. Margi Kathakali group performed *Kijote Kathakali*, an Indo-Spanish co-production in Madrid in November 2018. Delegations from Ahmedabad and Kerala participated in AR&PA Biennale of Cultural Heritage in Valladolid. A cultural evening *Flamenco meets India* was organized on the sidelines of FITUR 2019.

In February 2019, during the visit of former EAM, Smt. Sushma Swaraj, a Bharatnatyam, Kathak and Flamenco fusion performance and painting exhibitions on India were organised. ICCR Foundation Day was celebrated on April 9 at Casa de la India, Valladolid with ICCR Alumni. The first ever Indian-Spanish play was performed at the *Almagro Theatre Festival* in July 2019. Talks of Indian speakers were organized at the Hay Literature Festival in Segovia. Casa de la India organizes performances and workshops of reputed Indian artists visiting Spain

under Lab India initiative. Spanish audiences were invited by the Embassy to premier shows of Bollywood films, Gully Boy and Super 30. Embassy also supported a Bollywood Musical in Madrid in June 2019.

Yoga is popular across Spain. In 2019, 15 cities across the country organized International Day of Yoga activities. A Teacher of Indian Culture conducts Weekly Yoga classes at the Embassy and the Conde Duque Cultural Centre in Madrid. On Hindi Diwas, a Lecture was organized by a Spanish Professor on the linguistic sophistication of Hindi at the Embassy.

The 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi are being celebrated in Spain. Activities include, rendition of *Vaishnava Jana To* by Spanish singers; Contributions for an Anthology of Mahatma Gandhi; Quiz on the Mahatma; Cycling For Peace; Planting of trees on World Environment Day; Summer course 'Gandhi's India and Today's India' at the prestigious Complutense University; An audio-visual exhibition- "*My Life is my Message*" in various Spanish cities and the release of a Commemorative Stamp by the Spain Philatelic Commission. A series of activities involving schools and colleges, musical performances and lectures and floral offerings at the five Mahatma Gandhi statues in different cities of Spain are also being held.

The Embassy is also celebrating the year-long 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanakji along with local Gurdwaras.

Indian community

The Indian community forms a very small percentage of the immigrant population of Spain. Among the Asian communities, the Indian Diaspora is the third largest group, after Chinese and Pakistanis. The earliest Indian settlers were Sindhis who came from the subcontinent at the end of the 19th century and settled in the Canary Islands. Many others travelled to Spain from Africa in the 1950's and 1960's, while others came directly from India. According to Spanish statistics, the resident Indian population in Spain has gone up from 9000 in 2001 to 57600 in 2018. The Indian community is peaceful and well respected. The main centres of Indian Diaspora are Barcelona, Canary Islands, Madrid, Valencia and Malaga.

Useful Resources

Embassy of India in Madrid

Website: <https://www.eoimadrid.gov.in/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInSpain>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/IndiainSpain>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/eoimadrid/>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCJdWi0H0pTwsI9kyq97dmjA>