India-Costa Rica Relations

The Indian Embassy in Panama is concurrently accredited to Costa Rica. India and Costa Rica enjoy friendly and cordial relations. Costa Rica shares commonality of views with India on all bilateral and multilateral issues except that of the UNSC expansion. High-level bilateral interactions, which have been minimal, are being paid attention to.


Important Bilateral Visits:

From India:
2. Secretary (West) Shri M. Ganapathi visited Costa Rica for Foreign Office Consultations in August 2012.
3. 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 Costa Rican Minister for Foreign Trade, Ms. Anabel Gonzalez again visited India on 05 March, 2013.
2. 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.
4. FM Bruno Stagno along with SICA FMs in June 2008
5. Vice Foreign Minister Marco Vinicio Vargas Pereira visited India on February 1-5, 2004 as part of the SICA (Sistema de la Integracion Centroamericana) delegation.
6. 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 Regular Foreign Office Consultations 2008
2. MoU for setting up of Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) in Costa Rica 2009
3. MOU for Cooperation between FSI and Costa Rican Diplomatic Academy.
4. MOU on Economic Cooperation in April 2013

GOI Assistance:

India’s assistance to Costa Rica include, 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.

Costa Rica has conveyed interest in availing GOI LOC for 10 million for Lemon project. This is at its initial stages of consultations.

Economic & Commercial Co-operation:

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

India-Costa Rica trade in US Dollar (mn).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Exports</th>
<th>Imports</th>
<th>Total trade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>132.83</td>
<td>25.31</td>
<td>158.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>89.83</td>
<td>32.16</td>
<td>121.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>100.94</td>
<td>31.74</td>
<td>132.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

India’s main exports include pharmaceutical products, organic chemicals, vehicles other than railways, electrical machinery, and miscellaneous products. India’s imports include wood and articles of wood, electrical machinery and equipment, edible fruits and nuts, optical medical or surgical instruments, coffee, tea, glass and glassware.

ITEC:

The programme is very popular in Costa Rica and they have been utilizing the slots fully. Costa Rica was allotted 25 ITEC slots for the year 2011-12 and 2012-13. After a mid-term review five more slots were allotted for 2013-2014. Costa Rica has been allotted 25 slots in 2014-15. The MOU for setting up of the Centre of Excellence in Information Technology in Costa Rica was signed in September 2009. 100 Costa Ricans were selected for training in Infosys in January 2014.

Cultural:

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

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. She also writes extensively on India. Prof Hilda’s articles on India are being 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.

Visa & Consular Matters:

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. However, in December 2006, the
visa regulations in respect of visitors from India were again revised and India was put in the Consular [visa on application] category. Costa Rica started issuing visa for 30 days to Indians without making a reference to the Costa Rican Ministry in San Jose. In August 2007, the visa regime for Indians wishing to visit Costa Rica was further relaxed when Indian nationals with valid US or Shenzhen Visas were allowed to enter Costa Rica without a Costa Rican Visa.

**Indian Community:**

Indian Community consists mostly of IT related professionals taking advantage of the proximity to the US. Costa Rica is also more bilingual than most other Latin American countries. Other Indian nationals include businessmen, NGOs and the Missionaries of Charity. An Indian restaurant was opened in San Jose by a Canadian entrepreneur of Indian origin in 2004. The Costa Rica Indian Association (CRIA) ([www.crindian.org](http://www.crindian.org)) was formed in 2010 and has been very active in organizing various social and cultural programmes as well as trade promotion activities involving Costa Rican nationals also and assisting the Embassy of India, Bogota whenever required.

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July 2014