

## India-Mexico Relations

India and Mexico have striking similarities in geo-climatic conditions, biodiversity, physiognomy and people, cultural and family values, as well as European connections of the colonial era. Both are heirs to a great civilizational heritage and contacts between them indicatively go back centuries. Legend has it that an Indian princess 'Meera' landed in Mexico in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and is well-known here as 'Santa Catarina.' Mexico was the first Latin America country to recognize India after Independence and establish diplomatic relations with India in 1950. Mexican wheat varieties used in Indo-Mexican hybrids were the backbone of India's Green Revolution in the sixties.

Among common Mexicans, there is wide general awareness, high interest and regard for Indian culture, social values and her pluralistic democracy. India's achievements in the economic, educational, scientific & technological fields, especially in recent years, are greatly admired. Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru, Tagore, and Mother Teresa are widely admired. Gandhiji's statues and busts adorn four major Mexican cities: roads and several schools are also named after him. The writings of Nobel-laureate and Indophile Octavio Paz, who was Mexican Ambassador to India in the sixties, on his long experiences in India have had a profound impact in Mexico.

### Political

The bilateral relationship has long been characterized by warmth, friendship and commonality of views on a wide range of issues. Even though there are differences on expansion of the permanent membership of the UNSC, environment, climate and non-proliferation issues, as such, there are no disputes in the relationship. In the cold war years, Mexico and India had worked together closely as members of the UN, G-77, G-15 and G-6 (nuclear disarmament), both actively championing the interests of developing countries such as in the Uruguay Round of Trade Negotiations.

Till mid-eighties, the two countries exchanged as many as eight visits at the level of Head of State and Government. Bilateral interaction regained momentum, particularly with the exchange of high-level visits of former President Felipe Calderon in September 2007, when the two countries established a "Privileged Partnership", and President Pratibha Patil in April 2008. PM Manmohan Singh attended the G-20 Summit in Los Cabos, Mexico in June 2012. Shri Dharmendra Pradhan MOS(I/C) for P&NG (May 2015), Gen (Rtd) Shri V.K Singh MOS(External Affairs)(November 2016) and Shri Kiren Rijju, MoS for Home Affairs(May 2017) visited Mexico recently. From the Mexican side, Mr Jose Antonio Meade Kuribreña, Foreign Minister (October 2014), Mr. Juan José Guerra Abud, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources (February 2015), Ms Claudia Ruiz Massieu, Foreign Minister (March 2016) and the President of the Chamber of Deputies, Ms Maria Guadalupe Murguía Gutierrez (August 2017) visited India recently.

The bilateral relations received a new momentum with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meetings with President Peña Nieto on the sideline of G-20 meeting at Brisbane in November 2014 and on the sidelines of UNGA at New York in September 2015 followed by his visit to Mexico City on 8<sup>th</sup> June, 2016. During this visit, Prime Minister Modi and President Nieto agreed to work for achieving a 'Strategic Partnership'. Both the leaders recently met on the sidelines of the G-20

summit held at Hamburg on July 8, 2017, during which the Indian Prime Minister invited the Mexican President to visit India.

#### Bilateral Cooperation:-

The 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of Bilateral High Level Group on Trade Investment & Economic Cooperation at the level of Commerce Secretary was held in Mexico City in July 2016. CII in partnership with MEA, UNECLAC and Government of Mexico organized the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of India-LAC Conclave on 28-29 November 2016 in the City of Guadalajara in Mexico, which was inaugurated by MOS (EA) Gen. (Retd) V.K. Singh. Meetings under established bilateral mechanisms such as the 7<sup>th</sup> bilateral Joint Commission and the 4<sup>rd</sup> Foreign Office Consultation were held in June 2017.

The two countries have several bilateral agreements & MOUs, including for Investment Promotion and Protection, Double Taxation Avoidance, Extradition, Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters, Air Services, S & T Co-operation, Space Cooperation, Promotion of Traditional Medicine, Tourism Promotion, Cultural Exchanges, etc.

India gives 20 scholarships to Mexico under the ITEC program, and Mexican diplomats are also given training at FSI. The Gurudev Tagore Indian Cultural Centre has been functioning in Mexico since October 2010, teaching Yoga, classical and Bollywood dances, sitar, tabla, Indian languages Hindi and Sanskrit and Indian cooking.

An agreement on cultural cooperation has been in existence since 1975 and cooperation activities are carried out through four-yearly 'Programmes of Cultural Cooperation' under the framework of this agreement. ICCR offers four scholarships to Mexicans every year. Leading Mexican university 'Colegio de Mexico' and the 'National Autonomous University of Mexico' have important centres of Indian studies.

#### Economic and Commercial

Bilateral trade was US\$ 6.32 billion in 2016, up from US\$ 5.86 billion in 2015. India's exports (US\$ 4.28 billion) mainly comprised vehicles and auto parts, organic chemicals, electrical machinery & electronic equipment, aluminium products, readymade garments, iron and steel products and gems & jewellery. India's imports (US\$ 2.04 billion) mainly consisted of crude oil, electrical goods and machinery, organic chemicals, vehicles and auto parts and iron & steel. India is the third largest buyer of Mexico's crude oil. Steep fall in crude oil prices since 2014 brought the trade balance in favour of India. Export of vehicles assembled in India to Mexico crossed 100,000 mark in 2015.

Presently, 13 Mexican companies have presence in India and more than 100 Indian companies have presence in Mexico. Investments from India in Mexico is approximately US\$ 2 billion; Mexican investment in India is around US\$ 800 million. Most of the leading Indian companies in IT/software (TCS, Infosys, Wipro, NIIT, BirlaSoft, HCL, Aptech, Hexaware, Patni, etc.) and pharmaceutical (Claris Life Sciences, Wockhardt, Sun Pharma, Dr.Reddy's Laboratories, Torrent Pharmaceuticals, etc.) sectors have set up joint ventures in Mexico taking advantage of its strategic location, large market and investment friendly policies. Major investments in the steel and mining sector have also been made by the Arcelor Mittal Group. In 2008, JK Tyres of India bought Mexican tyre company Tornel and in 2009 Uflex set up a greenfield packaging products project with an eye on the US market. In 2013, Samvardhana Motherson Group set up a plant in Puebla for manufacturing

original equipment for Audi and Volkswagen and now has plants around Mexico. Pharma company Zydus commenced operations in 2013. In May 2014, Tech Mahindra has established office in Mexico City to provide IT & other related services. In September 2014, Lupin acquired a pharma company in Mexico. OVL has set up an office in Mexico City to participate in the auction of oil fields by Mexico. Leading Mexican companies like Nampak, Metalsa, Mexichem, Tremec, Great Foods & Beverages, RuhrPumpen, Cinopolis and Kidzania have likewise invested in India in recent times. Mexican IT company Softtek became the first Latin American company to have a presence in India as service provider. Recently Bimbo Group has announced investment in India.

### Indian Community

The Indian community (PIOs/NRIs) in Mexico is estimated to be around 7000, comprising mostly software engineers of Indian IT companies - TCS, Infosys, Wipro, Accenture etc. and executives in other Indian and international companies. In addition, there are several academics/professors in the local universities and some private businessmen in textile and garment business. Out of these categories, only the academics and businessmen are permanent residents of Mexico. The rest are on short term work assignments of 2-3 years and get replaced after that.

Tourism between the two countries is steadily increasing. Mexicans have been extended the online e-Tourist Visa facility and around 15,000 Mexicans visited India in 2016. Over 50,000 Indian tourists visit Mexico annually, mostly from the USA & the European countries. Indian nationals holding ordinary passports, but having valid visa for USA, UK, Canada, Schengen area or Japan, and holders of permanent residence in USA, UK, Canada, Schengen Area, Japan or Member States of Pacific Alliance viz. Colombia, Chile and Peru do not need visa for short tourism or business visits to Mexico. Such persons are, however, required to carry adequate documents to support the purpose of their visit to Mexico.

### Useful Link

Embassy of India to Mexico & Belize website:

<http://www.indembassy.org/index.php6>

Facebook : India in Mexico <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInMexico/>

Twitter : India in Mexico <https://twitter.com/indembmexico?lang=en>

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