

India-Barbados Bilateral Relations

Oct 2024

Political relations

India and Barbados enjoy friendly bilateral relations. This relationship is reinforced by our Commonwealth membership, the English language, and our love for cricket. Both countries are members of a large number of international and multilateral bodies, including the 42- member developing countries platform of the L.69 Group that actively pushes for reforms of the UNSC through an expansion in permanent and non-permanent membership. Both countries interact actively in the UN, Commonwealth and NAM. Barbados has supported India's candidature for Non-Permanent seat at UNSC and has also committed support for India's bid for Permanent Membership of UNSC. Barbados has supported India's successful candidacies in the International Court of Justice, International Tribunal of the Laws of the Seas, and Executive Board of UNESCO and IMO elections in 2018, and continued to support India's candidature for WCO, WHO, and ICAO elections in 2019 and ITU and ICAO elections in 2022.

Both countries work closely with each other in the multilateral fora. In September, 2019, Barbados PM Mia Mottley met Indian PM Narendra Modi at the India-CariCom Meet in New York on the UNGA margins and India announced an US\$14m grant and US\$150m LoC for solar, renewable energy, and climate change projects for CariCom member states (including Barbados).

MOS Mr. Pabitra Margherita had a visit to Barbados on 6-7 October, 2024 during his visit in the first week of October in the region and had interactions with Indian Community.

On 17.08.2024, Hon'ble Ms. Marsha K.A. Caddle, M.P and Minister of Industry, Innovation, Science & Technology represented Barbados at the 3rd virtual Voice of the Global South Summit (VOGSS) Finance Ministers' session. Earlier, Ms Kay S. McConney, Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training of Barbados virtually addressed the Education Minister Session of VOGSS on 13 January 2023.

Additional Secretary (Latin America and Caribbean) GV Srinivas met H.E. C. Sandra V. Husbands, Minister of State for Education and delegation of Barbados on the margins of ACS AEC Ministerial meeting in Paramaribo, Suriname on 08 May, 2024.

India's External Affairs Minister, Dr. S. Jaishankar, met with Barbados' former Foreign Minister, Jerome Xavier Walcott, at the 4th India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New York on 23 September 2022.

Minister of State for External Affairs, Digvijay Singh paid a bilateral visit to Barbados from 15-17 June 2003 and called on Ms. Mia Mottley, Deputy PM and Attorney General and Foreign Minister, Ms. Billie Miller. Finance Minister of India, P. Chidambaram, visited Barbados to attend the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Meeting in September,

2005. Mr. R. Swaminathan, Special Secretary visited Barbados from April 28-May 01, 2015 to hold the first ever Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). Late Mrs. Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister met Senator Ms. Maxine McClean, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Barbados on the sidelines of 3rd India-CARICOM meeting held in New York on September 19, 2017. Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry met Mr. Donville Inniss, Minister of Industry, International Business, Commerce and Small Business Development of Barbados on October 30, 2017 in Havana. P.P.Chaudhary Minister of State Law & Justice and Corporate Affairs visited Barbados from April 25-28, 2018 under MEA's innovative outreach programme and met the then Prime Minister Freundel Stuart during a community reception on April 26, 2018. Former High Commissioner attended 34th meeting of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) special committee on sustainable tourism meeting in September, 2023.

Commercial relations (Development Partnerships and trade)

The Government of Barbados and the Commonwealth Secretariat implemented an US \$550 thousand project, "Local Content Development in Energy Industry Value Chain" from the India-UNDP Development Partnership Fund. The project aims to create jobs and incomes for Barbadians, and improve market access and competitiveness of local businesses in the energy industry value chain. The key deliverables were handed over to the Minister for Energy and Business in August 2023.

Another Project under India-UNDP Fund "Support on Covid-19 Response" at a cost of US\$ 675,000, aims to strengthen Barbados' medical sector with the specific objective of procurement of medical equipment, a Refrigerated Truck, 20 ventilators and 25 ICU beds has been completed with handover of 107 items of medical equipment that will benefit 13 medical centers in Barbados.

India provided life-saving drugs and protective gear worth \$100,000 to the Barbados government and people, in a solidarity effort against the Covid-19 pandemic. Further, India donated 100,000 doses of Covid vaccine to Barbados on February 9, 2021.

Trade and Commercial relations between the two countries are modest. Bilateral trade between the countries and Barbados fluctuated. Exports peaked at \$24.19 million in 2022-2023, while imports varied, reaching a high of \$3.25 million in 2023-2024. Overall, trade began at \$14.24 million in 2019-2020, dipped to \$11.71 million the following year, and rose again to \$25.48 million in 2022-2023, before settling at \$22.08 million in 2023-2024. India trades majorly with Barbados in Machinery, Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals, Iron and Steel, Plastics, Copper, organic chemicals, etc.

Indian companies in partnership with Barbados Government have carried out many assignments. EXIM Bank India completed an assignment for establishing Export Consultancy Agency in Barbados in collaboration with Export Barbados. Indian company Larsen and Toubro has rebuilt a \$30 mn Kensington Oval cricket stadium in Barbados. Given the size of the country, Barbados enjoys relatively high prosperity owing to its flourishing tourism industry. An MOU between Federation of Indian Export

Organization (FIEO) and Barbados Chamber of Commerce was signed on trade cooperation in 2017.

India and Barbados signed an Air Services Agreement in 2015 to facilitate travel arrangements and direct air connectivity. Once Flights are in operation, it will allow, inter alia, full fifth freedom rights including weekly operations of seven air services to each country.

There are opportunities for Indian companies to import; salt & sulphur, organic chemicals and wood pulp from Barbados, export; food items, pharmaceutical products, medical equipment & coffee/tea from India and investment in health care, agriculture, tourism, port development, road, renovation of stadium, running of international airport, digitization project, construction of hotel, wellness centres, convention centre, housing and international businesses and financial services, setting up BPOs, niche manufacturers (as raw material is not available such as eye lens) etc. The education system of Barbados is sound. Barbados provides a sound platform for R&D centre, ICT etc.

Culture

A 5-member devotional/light classical group led by Ms Indira Naik, visited Barbados on October 22-23, 2014. The event was attended by the Minister of Culture and members of the Diplomatic Corps. Barbados is keen to attract the Indian Film Industry to shoot in their country, hold Film Festivals and award ceremonies. In order to promote technical cooperation between the two countries, India provides scholarships under ITEC to Barbados. The Indian Honorary Consulate in association with the Embassy in Paramaribo organizes cultural events from time to time. Every year, International Day of Yoga is celebrated by the community in Barbados. On February 28th, 2024, Barbados Museum and Historical Society launched the Bengal to Barbados digital project in collaboration with the Bengal to Barbados Foundation Inc. and East Indian communities. The project showcases the diversity and impact of East Indian-Bajan identity, the Migration stories from the regions of Bengal, Gujarat, Sindh, and South India.

Indian Community

People of Indian origin came as indentured labourers and many of them have since acquired local nationality. Most of them are from Surat district of Gujarat known as "Suratis". There are also about Sindhi families (mainly engaged in Business) and NRIs as medical students, professionals engaged in the fields of Education and Medicine, Financial Services & IT. Most of these PIOs have got assimilated in the mainstream local society. Barbados has been included in the list of eTV for 113 countries, whose nationals can avail e-visa facility. The Government of Barbados has included India in the list of countries whose nationals do not require visas with effect from June, 2019.

Useful Resources

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

Facebook pages: <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInSuriname/>
<https://www.facebook.com/iccr.suriname>

Twitter: <https://x.com/indembsur?lang=en>

Youtube:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoj4U_ST86i5GvkwL8mbHA/videos