

Political

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations, St. Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), which became independent on 27 October 1979, enjoys cordial and friendly ties with India. Both countries interact actively in the U.N., Commonwealth and NAM and various other international fora. SVG supported India's candidature for Non-Permanent seat at UNSC, gave assurances for future support and has also committed support for India's bid for Permanent Membership of UNSC as part of the L69 group. India also supported SVG's non-permanent membership of UNSC. SVG has supported India's successful candidatures in the elections to International Court of Justice (ICJ), International Tribunal of the Laws of the Seas (ITLOS), Executive Board of UNESCO and International Maritime Organization (IMO), WCO, IMO, WHO, ECOSOC and ICAO and several other multilateral organisations.

Bilateral Visits: SVG Prime Minister Dr. the Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves, met Indian Prime Minister on September 24, 2015 in New York on the sidelines of UNGA meeting, when our PM extended an invitation to SVG PM to visit India, which he accepted and had a successful official visit to India on 8-12 September, 2019. During his stay in India, SVG PM met PM Modi and External Affairs Minister. Three MoUs were signed during the visit related to ISA framework, traditional systems of Medicine and Visa Waiver for Diplomatic & Official passport holders.

Former President of India Sh. Ram Nath Kovind had a highly successful state visit to SVG from 18-20 May 2022. The President was accompanied by Minister of State for Finance Shri Pankaj Chaudhary, Members of Parliament Shri Satish Kumar Gautam and Smt. Rama Devi and a high-level official delegation. President was received with full military honour, and he held meetings with Governor General, SVG PM. An agreement for Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes. The First Lady Smt. Savita Kovind visited a School of Special Needs separately and donated US\$ 25,000/- to the Governor General's Charitable Fund.

Shri P.P. Chaudhary Minister of State for Law & Justice and Corporate Affairs visited St. Vincent and the Grenadines from April 22-24, 2018 under MEA's innovative outreach programme and held bilateral talks with SVG PM Gonsalves. On 1st June, 2007, Mr. Vayalar Ravi, the then Minister of Overseas Indian Affairs, attended the first ever celebrations of Indian Arrival Day organized by SVG Indian Heritage Foundation.

PM-SVG again met PM Sh. Narendra Modi on the margins of UNGA on September 25, 2019 during PM Modi's meeting with CARICOM leaders. EAM met with SVG PM on 23 September 2022 on the sidelines of UNGA and co-hosted a high-level meeting of members of the L.69 group on "Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Achieving Comprehensive Reform of the UN Security Council". EAM met SVG Minister of State for Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, Hon'ble Ms. Keisal Melissa Peters during the 4th India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers' Meeting, held on the sidelines of UNGA in New York on 23 September 2022 and again during the India-COFCOR Meeting held in Georgetown on 21 April 2023.

Hon'ble Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry & Labour of SVG Mr. Saboto Caesar visited India to attend the 9th CII India- LAC Conclave from 03-05 August 2023. Mr. Curtis King, Minister of Education and National Reconciliation of SVG virtually addressed the Education Minister Session of Voice of South Summit on 13 January 2023.

Hon'ble Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment H.E. Hon. St. Clair Prince also participated in Health Ministers' virtual Voice of Global South Summit 2.0 on 17 November 2023, hosted by Indian Health Minister. Former High Commissioner represented India at 8th Summit of CELAC on 1st March 2024.

Speaker of OECS and former cabinet Minister of SVG Ms. Rene M. Baptiste visited India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme in March 2024 and had interactions with Minister of State Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi and Director General, ICCR Mr. Kumar Tuhin.

Prime Minister of SVG, Honourable Ralph E. Gonsalves chaired the L69 meeting hosted by the Foreign Minister of the Republic of India, on the margins of the 79th United Nations General Assembly and had discussions with EAM on the margins of Joint Ministerial Meeting of L-69 and C-10 groupings of nations on 26 September 2024.

DEVELOPMENTAL PARTNERSHIP

India has handed over a cash donation of US\$500,000/- towards assistance in recovery and rehabilitation following flash floods in December, 2013. India had made a cash donation of US\$100,000/- towards recovery and rehabilitation following Hurricane Tomas in October 2010 and April 2011 flash floods and landslides. India provided an assistance of US 1.33 million to SVG in 2017 under UNIDO for modernization of Arrowroot Industry for climate change resilience and sustainable rural livelihoods for

indigenous communities. Govt. of India provided as a token of solidarity lifesaving drugs and protective gear worth US\$ 100000 to Govt. and people of St.Vincent and the Grenadines to assist in their fight against Covid 19 pandemic, which were handed over to Govt. of SVG on September 3, 2020. As a gesture of solidarity, Gol donated 40,000 doses of Made in India Covishield vaccine to St. Vincent and the Grenadines on March 1, 2021.

India decided to extend relief assistance of around USD 1 million to SVG to provide relief in SVG's rehabilitation efforts post Hurricane Beryl through delivery of Humanitarian Assistance containing relief supplies weighing around 60 tons was delivered.

India announce the grant of US\$14 mn (1 mn for each CARICOM country) for community development-related projects and a Line of Credit of US\$150 mn for projects relating to solar, renewal energy and climate change for CARICOM Member States announced during the meeting of the Prime Minister of India with the CARICOM leaders in September 2019. EAM also offered SVG USD 1 Million for a grant project in the SME sector during India-COFCOR meeting held in Georgetown on 21 April 2023, SVG under this grant purposed a project for processing root and leafy vegetables, following which NABCONS (implementation partner) carried out a feasibility study in July 2024 and found the project suited for implementation, supply, installation and maintenance of food processing machines will carried out by India under the grant assistance.

During the official visit to India in September 2019 of Dr. The Hon. Ralph Gonsalves, Prime Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG), India announced a total grant of USD 200,000 for four Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in SVG – a first for the Latin and the Caribbean region. Subsequently, India and SVG signed an umbrella agreement on 13 November 2019 for implementing the projects. The following four projects taken up for execution were completed and handed over: (1) Rehabilitation and Transforming the Derelict Chatuebelair Agriculture Deport into a processing and training facility at a cost of USD 40,740/-; (2) Refurbishment of the Old Calder Community Center at USD 40,863/- (3) "Community Development Project for Glenside Village Marriaqua" at USD 39,796/- and (4) Port Elizabeth Bequia Market Repairs and Restoration at USD 30,000/-. Other five QIPs will be implemented in 2025.

Economic: Trade ties with India are limited. There has been increase in bilateral trade from .7 million USD to 2.5 million USD in 2023-24. [However, in 2020-21, the bilateral trade figure was US\$ 12.80 million due to a spike in export of ships and boats from SVG to India (for breakage)]. Pharmaceuticals, machinery, plastics, Iron and Steel,

printed books, fisheries, cotton and textiles are exported from India. There are negligible exports from SVG to India.

India regularly offers slots for SVG under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC). Two Foreign Service officials Affairs participated in the PCFD/CARICOM special diplomatic training programme at Foreign Service Institute in New Delhi in 2017, one in PCFD, 2019 and three under special training programme for CariCom Diplomats in June, 2019. Two senior-level customs officials participated in the India-Caricom special training programme in customs and taxes held in India on 10-14 June, 2019 under ITEC.

Culture

With the Indian Community efforts, 1st June has been declared as Indian Arrival Day in St. Vincent whereas 7th October has been declared as Indian Heritage Day.

A cultural troupe from ICCR had visited the Island and performed at Indian Arrival Day of St. Vincent in 2011. The Queens Baton for Commonwealth Games also toured the Island in March, 2010. An ICCR-sponsored six member Rajasthani folk group led by Gazi Khan visited SVG on 22nd February, 2019 and held performance in Kingstown. The event was attended by PM Gonsalves and several other dignitaries. 5th edition of International Day of Yoga was celebrated at Kingstown Cruise Terminal, Kingstown, SVG on June 23, 2019 in association with SVG Indian Heritage Foundation. Minister of Transport, Works, Urban Development, and Local Government Hon'ble Julian Francis was the Guest of Honour. Mission sent a cultural troupe from Suriname to participate in SVG Indian arrival day on June 1, 2019.

Indian Community

There are about 6500 persons who had Indian roots are residing in St. Vincent and the Grenadines and include NRIs in various capacities such as Doctors, professionals, medical students. The Persons of Indian Origin had come to SVG in the 19th century as indentured labourer between 1861 and 1885. Most of these PIOs have got completely assimilated in the mainstream local society and know very little about India, their forefathers and culture. Between 1861 and 1880, 8 ships arrived from India bringing a total of 2474 Indians, living on 23 estates. It's worth mentioning that 1,141 individuals chose to return to India after completing their indenture contracts.

PIOs in the Island established the SVG Indian Heritage Foundation in October, 2006 with the aim to revive and promote cultural and social links with India. SVG Indian Heritage Foundation is a prominent Indian culture promoting organisation. 1st June is

celebrated as Indian Arrival Day in St. Vincent and 7th October has been declared as Indian Heritage Day.

Useful Resources

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

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

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

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

Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoj4U_ST86i5GvkpwL8mbHA/videos