

India-Spain Bilateral Relations

Relations between India and Spain have been cordial since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1956.

2. Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, paid an official bilateral visit to Spain on 30-31 May 2017. The Prime Ministers of India and Spain met on the sidelines of G20 Summits in 2018 and 2021 and they spoke on telephone on 15th February 2023, in which they expressed confidence in the growing relations between the two countries. EAM met FM José Manuel Albares in New York on the sidelines of UNGA in September 2024 and September 2022. FM Albares had paid a bilateral visit to India in June 2022. FM Albares had also visited India twice in 2023 to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meet in March 2023 and the G20 Summit in September 2023. The Third Vice President and Minister of Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Ms. Teresa Ribera, visited India from 7th - 9th February 2024.

3. Foreign Office Consultations were held on 9th October 2023 in Madrid, in which a comprehensive review of bilateral relation was carried out, besides exchanging views on regional and global issues. The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (West) Shri Sanjay Verma while the Spanish side was led by Under-Secretary for External Affairs, Mr. Luis Manuel Cuesta Civis.

4. Spain is India's 6th largest trade partner in Europe. Bilateral trade reached US\$ 9.9 billion in 2023. India's exports stood at US\$ 7.17 billion while imports stood at US\$ 2.74 billion during the same period. India's top exports to Spain are Mineral fuels, chemical products, Iron and steel, textiles, Machine and mechanical appliances, seafood, and leather. India's major imports are mechanical appliances, chemicals, plastic and mineral fuels. Spain is the 16th largest investor in India with cumulative FDI stock of US\$ 4.2 billion (April 2000 – June 2024). There are about 230 Spanish companies in India and nearly 80 Indian companies in Spain. On 12-13 April 2023, the 12th Session of India-Spain Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC) was held in New Delhi led by Ms. Xiana Mendez, the Spanish Secretary of State for Trade, and Shri Sunil Barthwal, Secretary, Dept. of Commerce. Both sides took stock of the growing bilateral commercial relation and identified 7 sectors for deeper cooperation. Indian delegations regularly participate in major international trade fairs and conferences in Spain viz. FITUR (Tourism), Mobile World Congress (Telecom), Alimentaria (Gastronomy and Hospitality), FEINDEF (Defense), Cevisama (Ceramics), Fruit Attraction (Fruits and Vegetables), InterGift (Jewellery, Textiles and Gifts) and Smart City Expo World Congress (Smart Cities).

5. Bilateral partnership in defence sector has witnessed rapid growth in recent years. The procurement of 56 C295 aircraft from *Airbus Spain* in a \$2.5 billion contract, 40 of which will be made in India by *Tata Advanced Systems*, represents the first *Make in India* project in the defence aircraft sector. The Chief of Indian Air Force ACM VR Chaudhari presided the handing over of the first C295 Aircraft to Indian government on 13th September 2023 in Seville. The Chief of Spanish Airforce Lt. Gen. Francisco Braco Carbo visited India in August 2024 to participate in Exercise Tarang Shakti. The 4th India-Spain Defence Joint Working Group was held in June 2022 in Madrid. Vessels of Indian Navy participate frequently in Passage Exercises and Port

Calls in Spanish coasts, the latest being INS Tabar in August 2024 and *INS Sindhuratna*, *INS Tarkash*, *INS Chennai* and *INS Sumedha* in 2023.

6. Cultural exchange is an important component of India-Spain bilateral relations. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sponsors cultural groups to Spain and offers scholarships annually to Spanish students to study in India. Two ICCR sponsored Teachers of Indian Culture impart yoga and classical dance classes in Spain. The Indian cultural center *Casa de la India*, was established in Valladolid, Spain, on March 17th, 2003, as a cultural foundation and counts as its founding entities the Government of India, through the Indian Embassy in Spain, Valladolid City Council and the University of Valladolid.

7. During the visit of Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares to India in June 2022, the two sides signed a *Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in Cultural and Academic Fields*, with a focus on boosting cooperation between the *Instituto Cervantes* and ICCR.

8. The International Day of Yoga 2024 was celebrated by the Mission in 13 cities throughout Spain and Andorra, in collaboration with prominent yoga institutes, City Councils and diaspora. The IDY celebrations, under the theme ‘Yoga for Self and Society’, had participation of thousands of yoga enthusiasts and attracted unprecedented media coverage. In Madrid, the celebrations were held at the iconic King’s Esplanade, across the Royal Palace of Spain.

9. The Spain-India Council Foundation (a private non-profit organization that functions in coordination with the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs) organized the 3rd Spain-India Forum on 22nd November 2023 in New Delhi, in collaboration with Observer Research Foundation (ORF). This Forum serves as a crucial tool for promoting bilateral relations between Spain and India and is endorsed by the Spanish State Secretary for Foreign and Global Affairs, the Spanish Embassy in New Delhi, and the Instituto Cervantes. The previous editions were held in Spain in 2014 and 2017. India was the Guest Country at the Valladolid Book Fair in June 2-11, 2023. India was also the Guest Country at the Valladolid International Film Festival (Seminci) in October 2023, for which a delegation led by Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information & Broadcasting visited Spain. In November, India was the Guest Country at the 7th World Tapas Championship in Valladolid.

10. In 2023, the University of Valladolid and ICCR signed two MoUs on the establishment of a Chair on Hindi Language and on the establishment of a Chair on Indian Studies at the University. In July 2024, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) signed a Memorandum of Understanding on bilateral cooperation in the higher education sector.

11. The Indian diaspora in Spain numbers around 75000, concentrated in Catalonia, Valencia, Madrid and Canary Islands. In view of the increasing demand of consular services, Consulate General of India in Barcelona was opened on 13th August 2024.

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