

India- Jamaica Bilateral Brief

India and Jamaica have traditionally enjoyed cordial and friendly relations based on common linkages of history, parliamentary democracy, membership of the Commonwealth, as well as love of cricket. Jamaica is one of the girmitya countries with a 70,000 strong Indian diaspora, who act as a living bridge with India. 2022 marks the completion of 177 years of the presence of the Indian community in Jamaica.

2. Both countries are members of multilateral and international organizations like NAM, G-77, WIPO, UN and its various subsidiary bodies. As developing nations, India and Jamaica share similar concerns and have common aspirations for economic growth, promotion of equity, eradication of poverty, and improvement in the quality of life of their citizens. Convergence of views and consistent cooperation in various multilateral fora are major factors which reinforce India-Jamaica relations.

History and Background

3. The links between India and Jamaica go back to the 19th century when more than 36,000 Indians were brought to British Jamaica as indentured labourers. Around two-thirds of these labourers remained on the island.

4. India was one of the first countries to recognize Jamaica after it became an independent nation. Diplomatic relations between India and Jamaica were established on 12th August 1962. Following the visit of PM Indira Gandhi to Jamaica (1975), a resident Mission was established in Kingston in 1976.

5. A Resident Mission of Jamaica in India started functioning in 2020. (In May 2019, Prime Minister of Jamaica Mr. Andrew Holness had indicated Jamaica's intention to open a new Resident Mission in New Delhi). PM Holness was scheduled to visit in April 2020. The proposed visit could not take place because of the Covid 19 pandemic. In 2021, Amb. Mr. Jason Hall was appointed as the first Resident High Commissioner of Jamaica to India. Prior to this, Senator Mr. Aubyn Hill (who was earlier the Special Investment Ambassador and Special Envoy for India) was Jamaica's High Commissioner to India with residence in Kingston since 2018.

Important visits and Interactions

6. There have been several high level and Ministerial visits between India and Jamaica. A list of high level and Ministerial visits between India and Jamaica are given below:

From India to Jamaica	From Jamaica to India
Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1975)	Prime Minister Mr. Edward Seaga (March 1983- to attend the 7th NAM Conference)
Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee (February 1999-to attend the Ninth G-15 Summit in Montego Bay)	Minister of Foreign Trade Mr. Anthony Hylton (August 2001)
MOS for External Affairs Digvijay Singh (February 2003)	Minister of Industry, Commerce and Technology Dr. Phillip Paulwell (October 2001)
MOS for External Affairs Anand Sharma (February 2007)	Minister of State for Tourism and Culture Mr. Wykeham McNeille (January 2007- to attend the centenary celebrations of Satyagraha)
Minister for Overseas Indian Affairs Vayalar Ravi (June 2013- to participate in the 5 th Biennial Diaspora held in Montego Bay, Jamaica)	Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce Mr. Anthony Hylton (February 2014- to attend the NASSCOM India Leadership Forum)
Minister of State (MOS) for External Affairs General (Dr.) V. K. Singh (February 2015, April 2017)	Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Senator Kamina Johnson Smith (October 2017)
Hon'ble President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind (15-18 May 2022)	

7. PM Modi and Jamaican PM Mr. Holness have met many times at the sidelines of multilateral fora in 2018. PM Modi had brief meetings with PM Holness on the margins

of CHOGM in April 2018 in London, at BRICS Summit in South Africa in July 2018 and at G-20 Summit in Argentina on 2nd December 2018. On 4th July 2019, PM Holness called PM Modi over telephone and congratulated him on his victory in the general elections.

8. In September 2019, PM Holness participated in the first-ever meeting of PM Modi with CARICOM leaders on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meeting. He was also one of the select speakers during the special event organized by India at UN Headquarters on 25th September 2019 to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. On 2 November 2021, PM Holness participated in the launch of Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) on the sidelines of COP26 in Glasgow.

9. There have also been Ministerial level visits and interactions between the two countries. Former MOS Gen (rtd) V.K. Singh paid two official visits to Jamaica in 2015 and 2017, during which he met his counterpart and held comprehensive discussions on the bilateral relationship. He also called on Jamaican PM. **EAM had spoken to Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica Ms. Kamina Johnson Smith twice, viz. on 29 April 2020 and 8 March 2021 in the context of COVID19 and Vaccine Maitri.** A visit by Minister of State Shri V. Muraleedharan was scheduled in July 2021 but was cancelled due to unavoidable circumstances.

10. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica Ms. Kamina Johnson Smith visited India from 9-12 October 2017 and held discussions with former External Affairs Minister, Smt. Sushma Swaraj on various aspects of the bilateral relationship, including trade and investment, health and health tourism, capacity building, agriculture, culture, and tourism. This was the first ever official visit by any Jamaican Foreign Minister to India. Ms. Smith also met former Minister of State for Tourism and Minister of Health & Family Welfare, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), representatives of leading Indian IT companies and the business community and also visited Mumbai. Senator Kamina Johnson Smith met with EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar during the CHOGM in Kigali in June 2022. In January 2023, Senator Johnson also participated in the virtual Global South Conference hosted by EAM. On 21 April 2023, EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar met with Senator Kamina Johnson on the sideline of the COFCOR held in Georgetown.

11. The ongoing bilateral exchanges of visits culminated in the historic visit of HR Shri Ram Nath Kovind from 15-18 May 2022. This was the first ever visit by the President of

India to Jamaica. The visit coincided with the 60 years of diplomatic relationship between the two countries. 2022 is also the year when India and Jamaica celebrated the 75th and 60th years Independence of the respective countries. During the visit HR addressed a Joint parliament of Jamaica and MOU on cooperation between SSIFS and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade of Jamaica was signed. HR also inaugurated Dr. BR Ambedkar Avenue was named after the architect of India's constitution in Down town Kingston. The visit further strengthened the existing cordial bilateral relationship of the two countries.

Institutional Mechanisms

12. The only dialogue mechanism between India and Jamaica is the Foreign Office Consultation (FOC). Under this mechanism, 5 rounds of meetings have been held so far; three rounds in Kingston (2001, 2005, 2011) and two in New Delhi (2007 and October 2017). The fifth and the latest meeting of FOC held in October 2017 in New Delhi reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations including political and economic relations, technical and development cooperation, as well as cooperation in regional and multilateral fora.

Agreements/MoUs

13. The following agreements have been signed between India and Jamaica.
- Cultural Agreement – 1996
 - MoU for Cooperation in the field of Food Research and Technology between Scientific Research Council of Jamaica and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) – 2010
 - Agreement on the establishment of a Chair on Indology/Gandhian Studies between the University of West Indies (UWI) and the Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR) – 2012 (renewed in 2017) further renewed in 2019.
 - Agreement for Cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation- 2016
 - MOU between ANI and Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica for the mutual sharing of content – 2021
 - An MOU on cooperation between Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), MEA and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade on 16th May 2022

14. In October 2021, an Agreement was signed between Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica and the High Commission of India, Kingston for commissioning a documentary on the Indian diaspora in Jamaica. In 2021, High Commission of India, Kingston also signed an agreement with the Nature Preservation Foundation (NPF) for establishing an India-Jamaica Friendship Garden at the Hope Botanical Gardens.

15. There are no bilateral agreements with Jamaica on protection of investments, avoidance of double taxation, extradition treaty or agreement on mutual legal assistance in civil/criminal matters.

Trade and Investment

16. There has been a steady growth in bilateral trade as well as economic and commercial interactions despite the constraint of distance and Jamaica's preferential trade arrangements with the USA, EU and the Caribbean. Bilateral trade has been increasing at a healthy rate, from US \$ 28.28 million in 2011-12 to over US\$ 64 million in 2019-20. In 2021, the total bilateral trade was US\$ 66.29 million with India's exports worth US\$ 64.06 million, and India's imports from Jamaica were valued at US\$ 2.23 million. Bilateral trade jumped to US\$ 82.4 in 2021-22 and in 2022-23, it has been further jumped to USD 92.74 mn and the figure for April-June 2023-24 stands at USD 38.08 mn.

17. India's exports have been increasing year on year and the balance of trade is heavily in favour of India. Pharmaceutical products, medical devices, textiles, vehicle parts and accessories, ceramic products, iron and steel products and machinery are major items of export from India. Aluminum and lead articles, electrical machinery and parts thereof and some coffee form bulk of India's imports. A table of India-Jamaica bilateral trade in the last six years is placed in Annex I.

18. There are significant investments by Indian companies in the IT and BPO sector in Jamaica. These include BPO centres by Hinduja group with around 1800 employees and by M/S Suderland Global Services (which is owned by an Indian national and run as part of its US operations) with 5700 employees. Jamaica's largest Bank - National Commercial Bank outsourced its entire IT development services to Infosys which has around 70 employees working in Jamaica on a temporary basis. Dr. Ram Chalasani, an Indian entrepreneur owns and runs a private medical college in Jamaica. In May 2017,

an Indian firm M/s Gravitha India Private Limited set up a plastic recycling plant near Kingston with investment of US\$ 1 million. Letter of Agreement was signed by Hon'ble Floyd Green, Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining and Dr. Crispim Moreira, FAO Representative on 3rd October 2023.

Development Partnership

19. A rural development project in Kitson Town is being implemented through the FAO with the US\$ 1 million grant announced by PM Modi during the 1st India-CARICOM Summit in New York in 2019. The two year project started its implementation on 30th April 2023.

20. In March 2021, a gift of 50,000 doses of 'Made in India' COVID-19 vaccine was made to Jamaica under the 'Vaccine Maitri' initiative of the Indian government. In February 2021, India donated essential medicines and medical equipment worth US\$ 1,00,000 to the Jamaica for combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

21. Following the signing of an MoU in 2014, India provided grant of US\$ 2.2 million for installation of flood lights at the Sabina Park (and completed in May 2015). India donated US\$50,000 to Jamaica to deal with the aftermath of tropical storm Nicole in October 2010. In August 2010, India donated US\$300,000 as humanitarian assistance for procurement of medicines and medical equipment for the Bustamante Hospital for Children, located in Kingston. In September 2004, India provided an assistance of US\$ 200,000 in the form of medicines and medical supplies for the victims of Hurricane Ivan. India extended a Line of Credit (LOC) worth US\$ 7.5 million in 2001 for import of water pumps from India (M/s Kirloskar Brothers Ltd).

22. During the visit of HR in May 2022, allocation under ITEC programme has been increased from 30 slots to 50 slots. Slots are currently underutilized because of the restriction of travels under Covid situation. We have observed increase in the uptake as the Covid situation has improved. In 2022-23, 36 slots were utilized. ITEC slots for Defense have reserved from 2021. Currently, there are four slots. Two officials are currently in IMA Dehradun.

In the last 7 years (2015-16 to 2022-23), 225 slots have been offered to Jamaica out of which 126 slots have been utilized in courses in various streams like Government Function, Management and Leadership, Women Empowerment, Engineering and

Technology and Banking, Finance, Accounts and Audit. So far 340 Jamaican nationals have been trained in various institutions in India so far under ITEC programme.

23. One diplomat each from Jamaica participated in the Second Special Course for Diplomats from the Caribbean Community (August 2019), 68th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (September 2019) and Second Annual Disarmament Fellowship Programme (January 2020) respectively.

24. In February 2009, India set up an IT Centre under the ICT Capacity Development Project in Jamaica. As part of the project, India provided hardware, software, training modules and a 3-member faculty was deputed by the NIIT for a period of two years to provide training. The programme, which ended in February 2011, trained over a thousand Jamaicans in various modules of IT.

25. In 2014, India announced its intention to set up a Vocational Training Centre for Jamaica at an estimated cost of Rs. 4.38 Cr. It was proposed that the VTC will provide training for Motor vehicle mechanics, Welding & IT Hardware Repairs and Networking. HMT(I) has been engaged as the implementing agency on single source nomination from the Indian side after approval by EAM in December 2014. After initial exchanges of MOU drafts, the last revised draft MOU was shared by the Indian side in 2017. In 2021, the Jamaican side responded with a Counter-draft MOU for the establishment of a Vocational Training Centre (VTC). DPA II has conveyed that the VTC projects are under review.

Consular Matters

25. Indian passport holders have provision for visa free entry and stay for a maximum of 90 days in Jamaica. With increasing number of Indians moving to Jamaica for employment and OCI card facility being extended to Indian Diaspora with liberal documentation requirements, there is an increasing rush for passports and OCI cards.

Indian Diaspora

26. Jamaica has an Indian diaspora numbering around 70,000 whose forefathers came from India, mostly from Eastern UP, Bihar, Basti, Deoria, Gorakhpur, as indentured labour from 1845-1917. While most of the indentured labourers were from the Bhojpuri

and Awadhi region, a significant minority was from South India. The diaspora, which constitute around 3% of the Jamaican population, are well integrated in the Jamaican society and are fondly described as ‘genetically embedded and integrated in the Jamaican society’. Their contributions to the socio-economic development of Jamaica have been recognized at the highest levels. They retain and nurture an abiding interest in Indian culture, music, dance and history and serve as a common cultural bond between India and Jamaica.

27. The Indian diaspora brought another group of Indian expatriates to work as office managers in their establishments. There is also a small floating and expanding group of skilled Indian professionals such as doctors (including many attached to government hospitals), and professors (some of whom are teaching in the University of West Indies, Kingston). There is also a sizable Indian community in Jamaica who are involved in business activities, mainly in the pharmaceuticals, jewelry & diamonds, ICT, medical and health, and construction sectors. Currently, there are around 5000 Indian passport holders in Jamaica.

Culture

28. In Jamaica, there is a lot of interest in India’s culture, religion, performing arts and philosophy. Jamaicans strongly relate their colourful festivities to the folkloric traditions and celebrations of India.

29. India and Jamaica signed an agreement for cooperation in the field of culture in March 1996. An MoU on Cultural Exchange Programme (CEP) is in the final stage of negotiation. An MoU for setting up an ICCR Chair of Indology/Gandhian studies was signed in 2012 between ICCR and University of West Indies, which was renewed in 2017, further renewed in 2021. Under this, a professor from India has been deputed by ICCR to teach philosophy at the University of West Indies.

30. Mahatma Gandhi is highly regarded among the people of Jamaica. A statue of Mahatma Gandhi depicting the famous “Dandi March” donated by ICCR was installed at the University of West Indies, Mona Campus, Kingston in July 2012. Another Statue of Mahatma Gandhi has been installed in front of Kingston city Library. In July 2021, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in Clarendon Library in the city of May Pen, which has a large Indian diaspora.

31. International Yoga Day is celebrated annually in Kingston, Jamaica. The first International Day of Yoga (IDY) was organised in National Indoor stadium in Kingston on 21st June 2015. The 8th International Day of Yoga was organized at various location during the month of June, 2022 in collaboration with the Jamaican government, JDF, the Art of Living foundation and Brahm Kumaris. The event saw enthusiastic participation Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade and Health of Jamaica as well as local Jamaicans.

32. In December 2021, six participants from Jamaica visited India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitor's Programme titled "Gen-Next Democracy Network" Programme. Among the participants were Members of Parliament from ruling and opposition party as well as from media and business fields.

33. Indian cinema and television shows are popular among the Jamaican people. Bollywood movies are regularly screened in cities like Ocho Rios which have a concentration of Indian diaspora. Some Indian television shows are also telecasted and enjoy huge popularity in Jamaica.

34. There have been regular bilateral tournaments between India and the West Indies cricket team, with some of the matches (T-20, ODI and Test matches) taking place in Kingston. This has made India and Jamaica a natural partner for cooperation in sports. An MOU in the field of sports cooperation between the two countries is in the final stages of negotiation.

Cooperation in Multilateral Organisations

35. India and Jamaica cooperate in the multilateral fora with common views and positions on issues such as promoting South-South Cooperation and the developmental imperatives of the global South. They have a shared interest in shaping the emerging architecture of various multilateral institutions, especially with regard to addressing issues such as energy and food security, climate change and international terrorism.

36. Jamaica has repeatedly expressed concern at the continued terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India. It continues to advocate for a proper international mechanism to address the menace of terrorism and has offered support to India's draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

Candidatures

37. Jamaica has consistently supported India's candidatures in elections to various UN bodies and other international organizations. Jamaica supported India's candidature for UNSC non-permanent seat for 2021-22. Recently, Jamaica supported India's candidature for the Vice President of INTERPOL Executive Committee. The two countries also had a reciprocal support arrangement for the membership of the Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for 2022-23. Both India and Jamaica were elected, under Category 'B' and 'C' respectively.

UNSC Reforms

38. Jamaica supports India's position on the reform and expansion of the UN Security Council. It is a member of the L.69 Group, a cross regional grouping of approximately 40-45 developing countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific, which is working towards achieving lasting and comprehensive reforms of the UN Security Council. Jamaica supports expansion of the permanent category subject to the countries getting a 2/3rd majority in UNGA, a 2-year term for the non-permanent category and one rotating seat for SIDS across regions as well as grant of veto to the new permanent members.

39. Jamaica has signed and ratified the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and is now a full-fledged member. A group of more than 40 Jamaicans underwent an online training programme organized by ISA in December 2020.

40. Jamaica has also joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

6th October, 2023