

India-Saint Lucia relations

Political Relations

St. Lucia and India enjoy cordial bilateral relations, actively cooperating in international organizations like the United Nations, Commonwealth, and Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) as well as other multilateral platforms. The bilateral ties have sustained momentum through exchange of high-level visits.

In April 2018, Prime Minister Allen Chastanet of St. Lucia held a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Modi, discussing bilateral relations and mutual interests. In 2019, Prime Minister Modi announced a US\$14 million grant and an US\$150 million Line of Credit for projects related to solar energy, renewable energy, and climate change for Caricom member states including for St. Lucia during the India-CariCom Meet of Heads of State/Government. Earlier in 2015, former Prime Minister Dr. Kenny Anthony met with the PM Modi during the UNGA meeting, discussing bilateral relations and shared concerns.

In November 2023, the Minister of Health, Wellness and Elderly Affairs Hon. Moses Jn. Baptiste participated in health Ministers' virtual Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) hosted by Indian Health Minister. Prior to that in January 2023, the Minister for Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology, and Vocational Training of Saint Lucia, Mr. Shawn Edward participated in the Education Minister's session of the VOGSS. In April 2023, Foreign Minister of St. Lucia Mr. Alva Romanus Baptiste met with EAM at the India-COFCOR Meeting in Guyana. The Health Minister of St. Lucia, Mr. Moses Jn Baptiste participated in the Health Ministers session of Voice of Global South Summit 2.0 in November 2023. Additional Secretary (Latin America and the Caribbean) Mr. GV Srinivas called on H.E. Alva R. Baptiste, Minister of Foreign Affairs of St. Lucia, on 7th May in Paramaribo on the margins of the ACS AEC Ministerial Meeting held in Paramaribo.

In 2016, Indian Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Rajiv Pratap Rudy visited St. Lucia and held meetings with St. Lucian Ministers and other important figures. This visit marked a significant milestone in the two nations' relationship, generating interest among local businesses, the Indian Diaspora, NRIs, and social organizations. In September 2019, Ezechiel Joseph, Minister for Education, Agriculture, Fisheries, Physical Planning, Natural Resources, and Cooperatives, participated in the UNCCD meeting in New Delhi.

St. Lucia has consistently extended support to India's candidacies for International bodies like the International Court of Justice, International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea, Executive Board of UNESCO, and International Maritime Organization. India has also supported St. Lucian

candidates for the World Customs Organization, World Health Organization, and International Civil Aviation Organization in 2019.

In 2019, St Lucia signed and ratified the ISA Agreement and extended support to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ). In 2021, St Lucia supported India's candidature for various positions, including External Auditor of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, Postal Operations Council, Council of Administration of the Universal Postal Union, International Organization for Standardization, External Auditor of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Human Rights Council, International Law Commission, International Criminal Police Organization, UNESCO World Heritage Committee, International Maritime Organizations, and IPCC election. St Lucia has expressed its commitment to India's aspiration for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC and a Permanent Membership on the UNSC. However, it has not yet formally conveyed its written support for India's candidature for a non-permanent seat on the UNSC for the term 2028-2029.

In April, 2024 India-St. Lucia signed visa waiver agreement for Diplomatic and Official passport holders (agreement is under ratification process). St. Lucia ratified the ISA Framework agreement on October 29, 2019, following its signing on October 25, 2019. The Foreign Service Institute of India submitted a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Sardar Patel National Police University and the Diplomatic Academy, which has been pending since February 2020. St. Lucia recognized the Indian Pharmacopoeia via Note Verbale No. PE060/2021 on March 1, 2021. St. Lucia sent a proposed Agreement for Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection of Taxes (AEI&CT) with track changes for India's consideration, which was taken up with the LAC Division on February 9, 2022, and forwarded to the Ministry of Finance of India for necessary action. Efforts are on ongoing to conclude an Extradition treaty with St. Lucia.

Commercial relations (Development Partnership and Trade)

India has extended support to community development projects in St. Lucia under the India-UNDP Fund. One project to the value of US\$ 1 million on "Human Security and Sustainable Development – a Covid 19 Response" was implemented through UNOSCC and WFP in two components with (i) providing urgent medical supplies to strengthen the national healthcare capacity (US \$ 0.5 million) and (ii) a public assistance programme to the tune of US\$ 0.5 million. Under the India-UNDP Fund (Commonwealth window). A project on "upgrading St. Lucia's capacity to provide impactful vocational training for marginalized youth" amounting to US \$ 1,061,601 is nearing completion as the crucial part of the project Center for Adolescent Renewal and Education (C.A.R.E.) Hospitality and Catering Unit has already been handed over. St. Lucia has also benefited under IBSA Fund wherein a project concerning Poverty Reduction through Livestock Development for a sum of US\$ 1,291,100/- was completed in September, 2018 (duration of the project was June 2015 to September 2018). India has also joined CariCom Development Fund (CDF) as its International Development Partner in January,

2019 with contribution of US\$ one million and St. Lucia is also a member of CDF.

India supported St. Lucia with a cash donation of US\$500,000/- towards assistance in recovery and rehabilitation following flash floods in December, 2013. Earlier, in December, 2010, India had made a cash donation of US\$500,000/- towards recovery and rehabilitation following Hurricane Tomas. In 2010, India had extended financial assistance of US\$ 250,000/- and medical equipment valued at over 200,000 US\$ towards reconstruction and rehabilitation of St. Jude hospital. Speaking on the occasion, then External Affairs Minister Rufus Bousquet said “Saint Lucia will never forget its diplomatic allies like India that came forward to assist in time of need”. As a token of solidarity, Govt. of India provided life-saving drugs and protective gear worth US\$ 100,000 to the Govt. and people of St.Lucia to assist in their fight against Covid 19 pandemic, which were handed over to Govt. of St. Lucia on August 12, 2020. And, Gol also donated 25,000 doses of Made in India Covishield vaccine to St. Lucia on March 1, 2021. In 2017, the St. Lucian government provided support to enable the evacuation of Indian students and NRIs from Dominica to St. Lucia during the Hurricane Maria.

The External Affairs Minister of India offered Saint Lucia a grant of USD 1 Million for a project in the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) sector as an outcome of the India-Caricom meetings when such a grant assistance was extended to all Caricom countries. However, an Expression of Interest is still awaited from the Saint Lucian side.

Bilateral trade between India and St. Lucia is limited due to the country's small size, population of 179,000, and modest economy. The New India Assurance Company represents the only Indian investment in St. Lucia, with a commitment of US\$ 2.8 million.

Financial Year	Export to Saint Lucia (US\$ Million)	Import from Saint Lucia (US\$ Million)	Total Bilateral Trade (US\$ Million)
1 2019-2020	3.24	0.61	3.85
2 2020-2021	3.40	0.39	3.79
3 2021-2022	4.07	0.14	4.21
4 2022-23	5.13	0.11	5.24

5	2023-24	7.26	1.23	8.49
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Culture

The Indian Cultural Foundation (ICF) of St Lucia, in collaboration with the Embassy of India in Paramaribo, organized the annual 'Namaste St Lucia' event in 2017, celebrating Indian culture. The event was attended by Ms Fortuna Belrose, the Minister of Culture. In 2022, on India's 75th independence anniversary, as part of the Guardian Ring program, the Indian Cultural Foundation (ICF) in St. Lucia observed the International Day of Yoga. Saint Lucia has three prominent Indian organizations: the ICF, the Indian Heritage Foundation, and the Sanatan Hindu Organization. The Sanatan Hindu Organization, established in 1997, promotes awareness and education about the Hindu religion. The ICF collaborates with the Embassy in Paramaribo to organize cultural events.

In 2017, two Foreign Service Officials participated in the PCFD/CARICOM special diplomatic training program at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in New Delhi. Two more Foreign Service Officers also attended the 65th PCFD and 70th PCFD courses respectively. India regularly offers Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) slots to St. Lucia.

Indian Community

St. Lucia, established as a British colony in 1814, has a rich history of Indian roots when indentured labour was brought in from Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh. The first ship, the Palmyra, arrived in St. Lucia in 1859, carrying 318 indentured workers from India. The last ship, the Volga, arrived in December 1893, marking the end of the transportation of nearly 4,500 Indian indentured workers to St. Lucia. The Indian population in St. Lucia reached 2,560 individuals by the late 19th century. The Indian-origin community observes 6 May as Indian Arrival Day, though the St. Lucian Government is yet to officially grant its recognition.

Currently, there are approximately 18,600 Indian-origin individuals in St. Lucia, with 5% in mixed marriages. However, most have assimilated into the local population, with some maintaining their distinct Indian identity. A small number of wealthy businessmen from the Indian origin community, with 150 naturalized Indians (PIOs), are associated with wealth and influence. The Indian Diaspora also comprises of Indian professionals, particularly doctors employed both in public and private sector in St. Lucia and a small number of Sindhi businessmen are engaged in imports, trading, and duty-free shops.

St. Lucia houses three offshore medical colleges owned by the Indian diaspora, primarily catering to American/Canadian nationals of Indian origin or Indian nationals. These campuses are Spartan Health Sciences University

(SHSU), American International Medical University (AIMU), now Commonwealth University College of Medicine, and International American University (IAU), with around 250 Indian students currently pursuing medical studies.

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_ST86i5GvkpwL8mbHA/video
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