



## India-Argentina Relations

**For Prelims:** [17th BRICS Summit](#), Argentina, India-Argentina Business Council (IABC), [India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement \(PTA\)](#), [Lithium](#), [Free Trade Agreement \(FTA\)](#).

**For Mains:** India- Argentina Relations, India's Relation with Latin America: Prospects & Challenges

[Source: IE](#)

### Why in News?

The Prime Minister of India visited **Argentina for the first time in 57 years**, commemorating **75 years of diplomatic relations** and **5 years of Strategic Partnership**.

- He was awarded the "**Key to the City of Buenos Aires**," recognizing India's growing global prominence and the strengthening of bilateral ties.

### Argentina

- **Capital:** Buenos Aires
- **Location:** **Southern South America**, **8<sup>th</sup> largest country (area wise) globally** and **2<sup>nd</sup> largest in South America (after Brazil)**.
  - It borders **Chile (W/S)**, **Bolivia & Paraguay (N)**, **Brazil (NE)**, **Uruguay & Atlantic Ocean (E)**.
- **Topography:** Divided into 4 key regions- **Andes Mountains** (with highest peak **Cerro Aconcagua**), **Northern region**, **Pampas** (agricultural heartland), and **Patagonia** (south).
- **Economy:** Resource-rich, industrialized economy with a **skilled workforce**; among **South America's largest economies**.



## What are the Key Highlights of the PM's State Visit to Argentina?

- **Strategic and Economic Engagement:** India and Argentina agreed to **expand [India-MERCOSUR Preferential Trade Agreement \(PTA\)](#)** to boost bilateral trade and economic ties.
  - Focus areas include **trade diversification**, reducing reliance on **primary commodities**, and enhancing **investment in emerging sectors**.
- **Energy Security and Critical Mineral Cooperation:** Both nations committed to **shale energy collaboration**, leveraging Argentina's **2nd largest shale gas** and **4th largest shale oil** reserves.
  - India also signalled interest in expanding **oil & gas cooperation under the ONGC Videsh & Argentina's state-owned energy company YPF**, to support its growing energy needs.
- **Defence & Digital Cooperation:** India and Argentina agreed to boost **defence manufacturing** via **co-development and tech transfer**, and expand adoption of India's **Digital Public Infrastructure** like **UPI, telemedicine, and digital health**, enhancing strategic and tech partnerships.
- **Shared Democratic Values & Soft Power Diplomacy:** Both leaders reaffirmed commitment to **democratic values, South-South cooperation, and multilateralism**.
  - PM's visit to **General San Martín's (Argentinian statesman national hero) statue** symbolised strong **people-to-people ties** and India's rising **soft power in Latin America**.

## What are Key Areas of Cooperation Between India & Argentina?

- **Political Relations:** India established an **embassy in Buenos Aires in 1949**, while Argentina has maintained a **Consulate General in Mumbai since 2009**.
  - India and Argentina celebrated **75 years of diplomatic relations in 2024** and their diplomatic relations were elevated to a **Strategic Partnership in February 2019**, after a visit by the President of Argentina to India.
  - India and Argentina share **strong democratic ties** rooted in **shared values** and **mutual respect**.
- **Economic Cooperation:** India-Argentina trade reached **USD 5.2 billion in 2024**, with **53.9% growth in 2025**. India is Argentina's **4th largest trading partner**. The **India-Argentina Business Council (IABC)** plays a key role in promoting trade and investment.
  - **Key exports from India:** Petroleum products, agrochemicals, textiles, and pharmaceuticals
  - **Key Imports to India:** Soybean oil, leather, and cereals.
  - The **India-MERCOSUR PTA** is a trade agreement signed in **2004** and operational since **2009**, between **India** and the **MERCOSUR** bloc (a Latin American trading bloc established in 1991).
    - It offers **tariff concessions** on select goods to boost **bilateral trade** and aims to strengthen economic ties, potentially paving the way for a future **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**.
- **Energy and Critical Minerals:** Argentina, part of the **Lithium Triangle**, supplies **lithium, copper, and rare earth elements** vital for India's **clean energy transition**.
  - Indian PSU **KABIL** has secured strategic **lithium exploration and mining concessions** in **Argentina** enhancing India's **resource security** and reducing reliance on external sources.
  - Existing bilateral accords in other energy sectors include **HAL-Argentine Air Force collaboration** (defence), and the **Heavy Water Board-Nuclear Electric Company** partnership (nuclear energy).
- **Technical and Development Cooperation:** India has strengthened development cooperation with Argentina through **ITEC scholarships, ICCR programs, and capacity building initiatives**.
  - The **India-Argentina Centre of Excellence in IT (IA-CEIT)**, established at the National University of Hurlingham with C-DAC support, promotes skill development.
  - Argentina has also participated in **ISRO's UNNATI program** and space training courses at **IIT Kanpur**.
- **Cultural and Values-Based Relations:** India and Argentina share **deep cultural ties** and **democratic values**, reinforced through shared advocacy for **South-South cooperation**.
  - Argentina has a **strong presence of Indian cultural institutions** (Art of Living, ISKCON, etc.),
  - Events like **International Day of Yoga (IDY)**, **Ayurveda Day**, and **Gandhi@150** have seen large participation.
  - Literary and intellectual links were celebrated through **Tagore@160** events.

## Note:

- **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** visited Argentina in **1968** during her South America tour and met noted Argentine intellectual **Victoria Ocampo** and conferred on her an **honorary doctorate from Visva-Bharati University**, founded by **Rabindranath Tagore**.
- **Rabindranath Tagore**, during his **1924** visit en route to **Peru** fell ill in **Buenos Aires** and was hosted by Argentine intellectual, writer **Victoria Ocampo**.
  - He composed **Purabi**, dedicating it to her.
  - The meeting forged a lasting cultural bond and **Ocampo promoted Indian thought through her magazine Sur**, deepening Argentina's interest in Indian **music, dance, yoga, and spirituality**.

# How Have India's Relations with Latin America Evolved over the Years?

- **Historical Background:** India shares **long-standing cultural and ideological linkages** with Latin America through personalities like **Pandurang Khankhoje** (who advanced agriculture in Mexico) and **M.N. Roy** (founder of the Indian and Mexican Communist parties).
  - Bilateral ties were formalized with **PM Nehru's 1961 visit to Mexico** and **Indira Gandhi's tour of 8 Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) nations in 1968**, laying a diplomatic foundation.
  - India's participation in the **BRICS Summit (Brazil, 2014)** renewed India's strategic outreach to the region.
  - India launched the **FOCUS LAC Programme (1997)** and signed **trade agreements with 7 LAC nations** to promote bilateral trade and economic collaboration.
- **Economy, Trade & Commerce:**
  - **Trade Figures:** India-LAC trade reached **USD 43.2 billion in 2023**, and is projected to touch **USD 100 billion by 2027**.
  - **Trading Partners:** **Brazil (top), Mexico, Colombia, Peru, Argentina.**
  - **Strategic Economic Fit:** Latin America is seen as a **"goldilocks zone"** for India, striking a balance between the **strict regulations of markets like the US and Europe** and the lower competition levels found in African markets.
  - **PTA Signed:** India has signed **Preferential Trade Agreements (PTAs)** with **Chile** and the **Mercosur bloc**. **Mercosur** is now advancing toward a **Common Market**.
- **Political and Bilateral Cooperation:** India's **foreign policy approach** toward **Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC)** is witnessing a strategic recalibration.
  - In **April 2023**, **External Affairs Minister of India** undertook the **first-ever official visit** to **Guyana, Panama, Colombia, and the Dominican Republic**.
  - **Brazil** is India's **most politically connected partner** in the region, with active collaboration in **multilateral forums** like **BRICS, IBSA (India, Brazil and South Africa)** and the **G20**.
  - Both regions align on **strategic autonomy**, with India's doctrine resonating with Latin America's **Active Non-Alignment (ANA)** stance, especially evident in **shared positions on global issues** like the **Russia-Ukraine conflict**.
- **Cultural Ties:** **Mahatma Gandhi's** legacy of **non-violence** holds deep relevance in Latin America.
  - His philosophy is actively promoted by civil society groups, notably **Palas Athenas in Brazil**, reinforcing shared **ethical and ideological values** between India and the region.

Click Here to Read: [Significance of Latin America for India](#), [Challenges in Deepening Engagement with Latin American Nations](#)

## Conclusion

India-Argentina relations are evolving into a **strategic and multidimensional partnership**. With growing synergies in **energy, digital technology, space, and trade**, and shared Global South aspirations, the relationship has the potential to serve as a model for **South-South cooperation** in the 21st century.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Examine the opportunities and challenges in strengthening India-Argentina ties in the context of India's global outreach strategy.

## **Prelims**

**Q. Consider the following countries: (2018)**

1. Australia
2. Canada
3. China
4. India
5. Japan
6. USA

**Which of the above are among the 'free-trade partners' of ASEAN?**

- (a) 1, 2, 4 and 5
- (b) 3, 4, 5 and 6
- (c) 1, 3, 4 and 5
- (d) 2, 3, 4 and 6

**Ans: (c)**

**Q. The term 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership' often appears in the news in the context of the affairs of a group of countries known as (2016)**

- (a) G20
- (b) ASEAN
- (c) SCO
- (d) SAARC

**Ans: (b)**

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## **Mains**

**Q. How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India? (2018)**

**Q. Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India's Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. (2016)**