Chandrawat & Partners



BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA - SPAIN

www.chandrawatpartners.co

INTRODUCTION

India and Spain established diplomatic relations in 1956, laying the foundation for a relationship that has steadily expanded across political, economic, defence, technology, cultural and people-to-people domains. 2026 marked the landmark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations, which the two countries celebrated as the India–Spain Dual Year of Culture, Tourism and Artificial Intelligence, reflecting the broad and future-oriented character of the bilateral partnership.

High-level engagement has gained significant momentum in recent years. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Spain in May 2017, while Spanish President Pedro Sánchez made his first official visit to India in October 2024, during which the two leaders agreed to deepen cooperation in trade, investment, defence, infrastructure, technology, renewable energy, tourism, education and culture. President Sánchez returned to India in February 2026 to attend the AI Impact Summit, where he held bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Modi on the entire spectrum of India–Spain relations.

Economic relations have become an important pillar of the partnership. Bilateral trade in goods reached approximately US$9.41 billion in 2025, with Indian exports accounting for around US$7.02 billion. Spain is currently India’s sixth-largest trading partner in the European Union, while India is Spain’s second-largest trading partner in Asia. Spain was also the 16th-largest investor in India, with cumulative FDI stock of approximately US$4.29 billion as of March 2025. More than 200 Spanish companies operate in India, while around 80 Indian companies have a presence in Spain, strengthening commercial and investment linkages between the two economies.

Defence and industrial cooperation have emerged as particularly significant areas of strategic engagement. The Tata Advanced Systems–Airbus C-295 programme represents a landmark example of India–Spain defence-industrial cooperation and the Make in India initiative. Under the programme, 40 of the 56 C-295 aircraft contracted for India are being manufactured at the final assembly facility in Vadodara, with the first domestically assembled aircraft delivered in September 2026. Cooperation is also expanding into rail transport, sustainable infrastructure, renewable energy, technology and advanced manufacturing.

The relationship is also increasingly shaped by technology and emerging areas of cooperation. In January 2026, India and Spain agreed to work towards upgrading their relationship to a strategic partnership, while Spain announced its decision to join India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative. The two countries are also placing greater emphasis on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, science, education and innovation.

Cultural and people-to-people relations receive ongoing attention following the 2026 Dual Year, with programmes spanning culture, tourism, cinema, literature, science, education and artificial intelligence. The operationalisation of Spain’s Consulate General in Bengaluru and India's active mission in Barcelonaare further strengthening institutional and consular connectivity. Together, these developments position India–Spain relations for a more diversified and ambitious phase of cooperation.



HIGH LEVEL VISITS

2017 – Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Visit to Spain

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid an official bilateral visit to Spain on 30–31 May 2017, marking an important milestone in strengthening India–Spain relations. The visit gave fresh momentum to cooperation in trade and investment, defence, renewable energy, infrastructure, science and technology, tourism and cultural exchanges.

2018 – High-Level Engagements on the Sidelines of Multilateral Summits

Prime Minister Narendra Modi met the Prime Minister of Spain on the sidelines of the ASEM Summit in Brussels in October 2018 and again during the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires on 1 December 2018. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj also met the Spanish Foreign Minister during the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2018.

2019 – Foreign Ministerial Engagement

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj met Spanish Foreign Minister Josep Borrell in New Delhi on 8 January 2019. Later that year, EAM's official visit to Spain in February 2019 further strengthened bilateral political and economic engagement.

2022 – Visit of Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares

Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares visited India on 15 June 2022 and held discussions with External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar on bilateral relations and international issues. The discussions covered opportunities to expand cooperation in trade, defence, science and technology, innovation, climate and people-to-people relations.

2023–2024 – Intensified Political Engagement

Spain and India maintained high-level engagement through ministerial meetings and multilateral forums. Spanish Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares visited India in 2023 for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and G20 Summit, while India's External Affairs Minister continued engagement with his Spanish counterpart. In February 2024, Spain's Third Vice-President and Minister for Ecological Transition and Demographic Challenge, Teresa Ribera, visited India.

October 2024 – President Pedro Sánchez's Visit to India

Spanish President Pedro Sánchez paid an official visit to India from 28–29 October 2024, his first visit to India and the first visit by a Spanish President of the Government in 18 years. He met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Vadodara and Mumbai and jointly inaugurated the Tata Advanced Systems–Airbus C-295 Final Assembly Line in Vadodara. The visit produced important outcomes covering rail transport, customs cooperation, culture, tourism, artificial intelligence, investment facilitation and consular presence.

February 2026 – Second Visit of President Pedro Sánchez

President Pedro Sánchez returned to India on 18–19 February 2026 to attend the AI Impact Summit 2026. He held bilateral talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi covering trade and investment, technology, infrastructure, climate and renewable energy, defence and security, space, culture, tourism and people-to-people relations.

CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC RELATIONS

Cultural relations are an important pillar of India–Spain ties, encompassing music, dance, theatre, literature, cinema, museums, festivals and cultural heritage. In 2024, India and Spain signed a Cultural Exchange Programme for 2024–2028 and designated 2026 as the India–Spain Year of Culture, Tourism and Artificial Intelligence, marking the landmark 70th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Academic cooperation has expanded significantly through institutional partnerships. In July 2024, the Association of Indian Universities (AIU) and the Conference of Rectors of Spanish Universities (CRUE) signed an MoU to strengthen higher-education cooperation. In February 2026, a conference bringing together Indian Vice-Chancellors and 34 Spanish university Rectors was held in New Delhi, providing new opportunities for academic and research collaboration.

The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) has established academic Chairs at the University of Valladolid in Hindi and Indian Studies, supporting teaching, research and scholarly exchanges on India. India has also encouraged Spanish universities to develop joint and dual-degree programmes, twinning arrangements and institutional partnerships, including opportunities for Spanish universities to establish campuses in India under the National Education Policy.

Casa de la India in Valladolid, established in 2003 by the Government of India, Valladolid City Council and the University of Valladolid, serves as a major platform for cultural, academic and people-to-people exchanges. The Instituto Cervantes in New Delhi and other cultural institutions further contribute to the promotion of Indian and Spanish languages and cultural understanding.

People-to-people relations are receiving additional momentum through tourism, language learning, cultural festivals and educational exchanges. During the commemorative cycles, the International Day of Yoga was celebrated in 13 cities across Spain and Andorra, while the third Olé India festival in Madrid in March 2026 brought together more than 250 performers and over 1,500 attendees.

The 2026 Dual Year provided a dynamic framework for deepening cultural and academic engagement. Alongside cultural programmes, India and Spain promoted cooperation in tourism, artificial intelligence, education, research, innovation and people-to-people connectivity, giving the cultural relationship a broader and more contemporary dimension.

Science, Technology, Innovation & Artificial Intelligence

Science, technology and innovation are emerging as important areas of India–Spain cooperation. Both countries are promoting collaboration in artificial intelligence, digital technologies, research and innovation, with the 2026 India–Spain Dual Year having placed particular emphasis on AI. Cooperation also extends to space, biotechnology, renewable energy and advanced technologies, creating opportunities for universities, research institutions, technology companies and start-ups to collaborate on future-oriented projects.

TRADE RELATIONS

India and Spain have developed a dynamic and increasingly diversified economic partnership. Bilateral trade in goods reached approximately US$9.41 billion, with Indian exports accounting for around US$7.02 billion and imports standing at US$2.39 billion. Spain is India's 6th-largest trading partner in the European Union, while India is Spain's 2nd-largest trading partner in Asia.

Spain is also an important investment partner for India. It ranks as India's 16th-largest foreign investor, with cumulative FDI stock of approximately US$4.29 billion as of March 2025. More than 200 Spanish companies operate in India, while nearly 80 Indian companies have a presence in Spain, demonstrating growing two-way commercial and investment linkages.

Trade and investment cooperation spans renewable energy, automotive and mobility, railways, infrastructure, engineering, healthcare, food processing, chemicals, machinery, technology and digital services. During President Pedro Sánchez's 2024 visit, both countries established a Fast Track Mechanism for facilitating mutual investments and reaffirmed the importance of the India–Spain CEOs Forum and Business Summit.

The C-295 aircraft programme, involving Tata Advanced Systems and Airbus Spain, represents a major example of bilateral industrial cooperation. The programme combines Spanish aerospace expertise with India's manufacturing capabilities and supports India's Make in India objectives, while opening possibilities for further cooperation in defence and advanced manufacturing.

India and Spain are also positioned to benefit from closer EU–India economic integration. The India–EU Free Trade Agreement negotiations were concluded on 27 January 2026, initiating subsequent implementation workflows that create significant potential for expanding Indian and Spanish business opportunities in goods, services, investment and supply chains.



ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

India and Spain share a growing and diversified economic partnership spanning trade, investment, renewable energy, infrastructure, automotive manufacturing, railways, healthcare, technology and tourism. Spain is India's 6th-largest trading partner in Europe, with bilateral goods trade reaching US$9.41 billion in 2025. India's exports stood at approximately US$7.02 billion, while imports from Spain were around US$2.39 billion.

Investment relations have expanded alongside trade. Spain is India's 16th-largest investor, with cumulative FDI stock of approximately US$4.29 billion as of March 2025. More than 200 Spanish companies operate in India, while nearly 80 Indian companies have a presence in Spain, covering sectors such as renewable energy, automotive, infrastructure, engineering, IT, pharmaceuticals and logistics.

Both countries are pursuing deeper cooperation in renewable energy, smart grids, healthcare, food processing, automotive and transport infrastructure, railways, technology and sustainable urban development. The C-295 aircraft programme, involving Airbus Spain and Tata Advanced Systems, is a flagship example of bilateral industrial cooperation, with the first domestically assembled aircraft under the US$2.5 billion programme successfully delivered in September 2026.

The institutional framework for business cooperation has strengthened through the India–Spain Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation (JCEC), India–Spain CEOs Forum and India–Spain Business Summit. In 2024, the two countries established a Fast Track Mechanism for facilitating mutual investments, while cooperation in rail transport and customs was also advanced.

Tourism, technology, start-ups and creative industries are emerging areas of economic cooperation. In 2024, approximately 225,000 Indian visitors travelled to Spain and more than 80,000 Spanish visitors travelled to India. The 2026 India–Spain Year of Culture, Tourism and Artificial Intelligence further promoted tourism, reciprocal investment, innovation and business-to-business connectivity.

India and Spain are progressively broadening their commercial partnership beyond traditional trade towards technology, infrastructure, innovation and sustainable development. Cooperation in rail transport, renewable energy, artificial intelligence, start-ups, audiovisual industries and tourism is creating new opportunities for businesses and investors in both countries. The Fast Track Mechanism established in 2024, together with the India–Spain CEOs Forum, Joint Commission for Economic Cooperation and the subsequent implementation workflows of the concluded 2026 India–EU FTA negotiations, provides an increasingly robust framework for facilitating investment, strengthening supply chains and expanding bilateral commercial engagement.


THE
DECCAN

GREEN ECONOMY, RENEWABLE ENERGY & CLIMATE COOPERATION

Green growth has emerged as an important dimension of India–Spain economic and commercial cooperation, supported by the two countries' shared interest in accelerating the transition towards cleaner and more sustainable economies. Cooperation increasingly encompasses renewable energy, clean technologies, energy efficiency, sustainable infrastructure, smart grids and climate-resilient development, creating opportunities for investment, technology partnerships and industrial collaboration.

Spain's established capabilities in solar and wind energy, renewable-energy infrastructure and sustainable technologies, combined with India's rapidly expanding clean-energy market, provide significant scope for deeper business engagement. Spanish companies already have a notable presence in India's renewable-energy and infrastructure sectors, while both sides have identified renewable energy as an area with considerable potential for greater bilateral investment and technological cooperation.

During President Pedro Sánchez's visit to India in October 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Sánchez specifically encouraged companies from both countries to explore opportunities in sectors including renewable energy, smart grids and sustainable infrastructure. The leaders also recognised the importance of addressing climate change and advancing sustainable development while strengthening commercial and technological partnerships between Indian and Spanish enterprises.

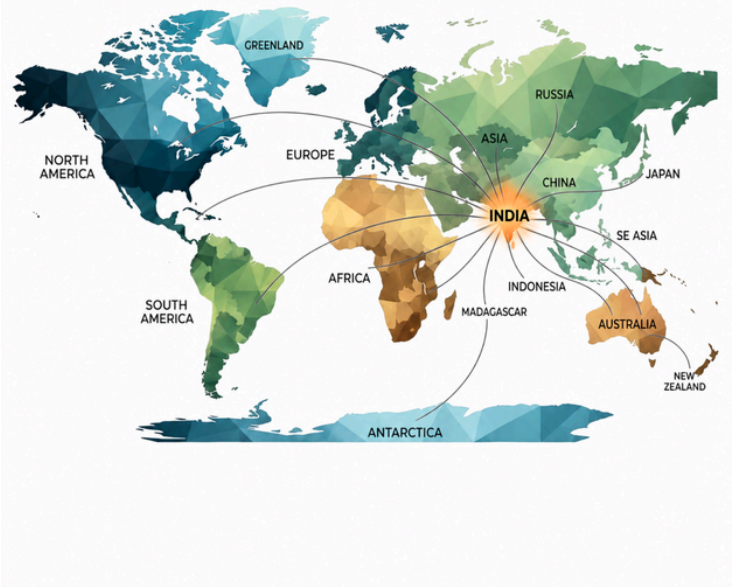
Renewable Energy and Smart-Grid Cooperation

Renewable energy represents one of the most promising areas for India–Spain commercial cooperation. Spain brings considerable expertise in renewable-energy generation, grid management, energy technologies and sustainable infrastructure, while India offers a rapidly expanding market for clean-energy investment and deployment. During the October 2024 bilateral summit, the two governments specifically identified renewable energy and smart grids as priority areas for deeper strategic cooperation and encouraged greater participation by companies from both countries.

Green Transition and Climate Resilience

India and Spain have also committed to strengthening cooperation on sustainable energy and climate-change adaptation. During the 2024 summit, both sides emphasised the urgency of accelerating global climate action and strengthening resilience and adaptation capacities. They also progressed their clean energy roadmap, while India welcomed Spain's commitment to the green transition and Spain's participation in the International Solar Alliance.

SERVING CLIENTS WORLDWIDE



Chandrawat & Partners

The information contained herein is of a general nature. Although we endeavor to provide accurate and timely information, there can be no guarantee that such information is accurate as of the date it is received or that it will continue to be accurate in the future. The information is not offered as an advice on any matter, and no one should act or fail to act based on such information without appropriate legal advice after a thorough examination of the particular situation. The information does not make us responsible or liable for any errors and/or omissions, whether it is now or in the future. We do not assume any responsibility and/or liability for any consequences.

The Bar Council of India does not permit advertisement or solicitation by advocates in any form or manner. The information may be provided to user on request or otherwise. The information contained in it is entirely determined by the user voluntarily and any transmission or use does not establish any lawyer client relationship.

Key Contact



Surendra Singh Chandrawat

Global Managing Partner

surendra@chandrawatpartners.com

+91 99939 85763

Connect Surendra on

LinkedIn WhatsApp

Chandrawat & Partners is a leading and rapidly growing full-service law firm providing high quality professional, legal and corporate services to foreign and local clients, representing worldwide companies and individuals in a wide range of practice areas and sectors.

Copyright © 2027 I All rights reserved I Chandrawat & Partners I Email: enquiries@chandrawatpartners.com I Website: www.chandrawatpartners.co

Follow us on: LinkedIn twitter facebook Instagram