

MEXICO

Día de la Independencia

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A Prosperous Bond: On The Mexico-India Road Ahead



H. E. Federico Salas Lotfe
Ambassador of Mexico to India



MEXICO AND India are two reliable partners, a fact that is reflected in prosperous and growing trade and investment, the growth of new areas of cooperation, and a consistent and frequent political dialogue at high levels. This is why both governments are taking concrete steps towards the consolidation of a strategic relationship.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Marcelo Ebrard, visited India from March 30 to April 1, 2022, to seek technology transfer for the manufacture of vaccines and medicines in Mexico; deepen cooperation in financial innovation and space science; expand business alliances that give vigour to bilateral trade; modernise governance and health systems, and increase scientific and academic exchanges.

Likewise, the Foreign minister announced the forthcoming opening of a Mexican consulate in Mumbai, the financial capital of India. Both countries aspire to move from a successful privileged partnership established in 2007 —thanks to which commercial exchanges multiplied by four in just one decade— to a relationship that reflects the full potential of our societies and economies. One fact explains the shared future: in 2021 our bilateral rose to \$10.1 bn.

This first visit by the Mexican foreign minister to Asia acknowledges India's global leadership, and its numerous international efforts to supply vaccines against COVID-19 and identifies affinities in strategic sectors. Hence his meetings with Dr. Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Minister of Foreign Affairs, as well as with those of Health & Family Welfare, Commerce & Industry, Science and Technology, and Ayush.

Likewise, he held meetings with CEOs of the pharmaceutical industry, businessmen, and with leaders in technology and innovation. For this reason, the Mexican Foreign Minister was accompanied by a delegation of entrepreneurs, scientists, and academics whose objectives were to strengthen ties for joint research and manufacturing of medicines, vaccines, immunotherapy, and biotechnology in Mexico; increase technological and scientific cooperation in ar-

tificial intelligence and space robotics; explore how to expand the banking of the population and inclusion of marginalised sectors in the health system through digital tools; as well as promote education on traditional medicine through scholarships and chairs.

These steps will contribute to establishing, in the short term, a strategic partnership. It is important to note that the central pulse of the visit was to provide Mexico with self-sufficiency in the face of epidemiological or economic eventualities that may alter the course of its national goals. This translates into developing capacities that allow the country to manufacture its own vaccines and medicines while having robust governance and a digital finance system capable of managing large-scale data to make social decisions based on science.

Faced with an increasingly unpredictable international scenario, multilevel cooperation (government, private sector, civil society) between Mexico and India will be essential to navigating the difficult waters of geopolitical reality.

Both nations look to the future from a perspective of innovation with a social perspective whose mutual strengthening positively affects the strategic autonomy of the two countries in a multipolar world. There are also coincidences on issues of democracy and international security: we are firm promoters of diplomacy and dialogue as the only tools for the peaceful settlement of disputes.

In line with the above, Foreign Minister Ebrard's visit to India underlined that together we can develop our nations, lead our regions, and show the world that global stability will only be achieved through international cooperation and respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all the states.

Fostering global supply chains, ensuring universal access to pharmaceutical assets, and building financial trust through global fintech collaboration initiatives are the paths to follow in our longstanding friendship, which envisions a strong strategic partnership.



A Mexico-India Collaborative Strategic Autonomy

TO NAVIGATE the current international scenario, unpredictable due to the hardships caused by COVID-19 and the pressure put on the rules-based international order, the bilateral relationship between Mexico and India must nurture and strengthen the strategic autonomy capacities of both countries through science and education.

The visit to India by Marcelo Ebrard, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, from March 30 to April 1, promoted Mexico's political, technological, and commercial diversification strategy in the Indo-Pacific, and shows that the privileged relationship with New Delhi is moving toward a strategic partnership.

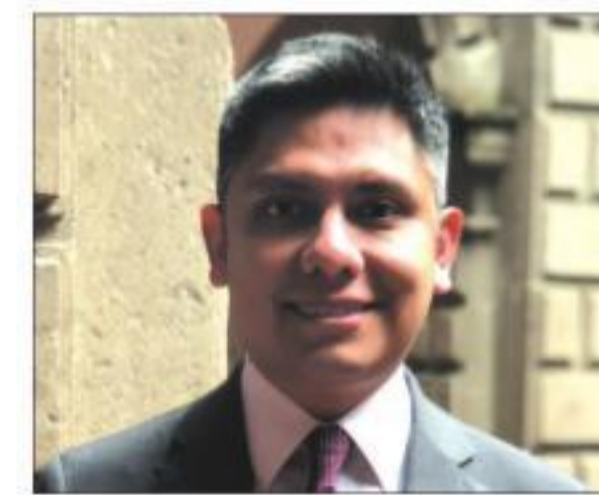
Recently, India rose to fifth place among the world's largest economies and by 2030 it is estimated to be the most populous country on the planet with more than 1.5 billion inhabitants according to data from the World Economic Forum. Attractive as an expanding market, its development also requires multisectoral engagements with public and private partners.

Such dynamism requires new goals and objectives. Therefore, Mexico and India can base their mutual support to accelerate and strengthen their strategic autonomy in three specific areas: innovation, health, and education.

In terms of innovation, in addition to the plans that FM Ebrard discussed during his visit to India regarding fintech, space cooperation, and data digitisation for health purposes, it will be convenient to continue promoting innovation with a social perspective in additional areas such as artificial intelligence, automation, machine learning, and automobility, whose results would be positive for trade, data management, and energy transition.

Likewise, looking at the efforts made by the Government of India to bank its population through the Unified Payment Interface, which is digital, portable, and scalable, a similar initiative could foster Mexico's economic recovery.

In health, there are ample opportunities for cooperation in biotechnology to produce vaccines, medicines, and immunotherapies beyond



by Guillermo Chavez Conejo
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COVID-19. As agreed by FM Ebrard and Sarbananda Sonowal, Minister of AYUSH, it will be essential to increase the bilateral cooperation in traditional medicine given that both countries have a vast heritage on the topic, a legacy for the world from our ancient cultures, and a proud example of the ancestral knowledge of our indigenous communities.

Moreover, it is essential that Mexico sees and understands India from a direct perspective and vice versa, leaving aside the narrative and commonplaces of other visions about our cultures and ideas. For this purpose, both countries could come together in education through a greater exchange of ideas between think tanks such as the Observer Research Foundation, the International Council of World Affairs, Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, India Foundation, Gateway House, among others, with their Mexican counterparts such as the Mexican Council on Foreign Relations, and public and private universities such as Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, El Colegio de México, Universidad Iberoamericana, among other prestigious Mexican institutes.

Additionally, shared efforts with proven positive results with organisations such as the Confederation of Young Leaders and Global Youth will also be essential platforms. These alliances have enabled Indian students to collaborate with the Embassy of Mexico in New Delhi, and

also created bridges of understanding, dialogue, and direct friendship with the Mexican student youth.

The innovation pillar could enable the modernisation of the Mexican commercial sector, increase the Government's tax collection, and allow finance inclusion of marginalised social sectors, a common goal of our governments and where Indian fintech companies could merge ideas and knowledge with their Mexican peers.

Self-sufficiency in health will make it possible to face any global health risk with greater and better capacities. Just as India supported its immediate neighborhood and beyond its region under the Vaccine Maitri humanitarian initiative, Mexico could increase its capacity to act in support of Central and South America, as it has already been doing in the last year. Therefore, technology transfer by Indian pharmaceutical companies such as Cipla, Bharat Biotech, and the Serum Institute of India is crucial to achieving this goal.

The educational pillar will allow to boost academic exchanges and will give greater visibility and understanding of the social and regional realities of both countries.

In turn, these proposals will strengthen the Indian footprint in Latin America, deepen the Mexico-India relationship with the aim of reaching a strategic partnership, and will facilitate the insertion of both countries in the Indo-Pacific—a region that ranges from the eastern coasts of Africa to the western coasts of the Americas, from Canada to Chile—in a constructive, peaceful, collaborative way, and in accordance with international law.

In a multipolar world and considering India will assume the G20 presidency at the end of this year, it also must be noted that the self-sufficiency and strategic autonomy that our countries seek are not concepts that subtract our external action from world affairs. On the contrary, they are ideas that add to the international community by counting on two reliable partners who are willing to cooperate and assume global responsibilities within a rules-based international order.



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Finally Maini Precision Products has diversified its portfolio from a customer and product perspective, ensuring an aggressive foray into the manufacture of electric vehicle components and assemblies for the global market.

With India and Mexico continuing to maintain strong economic ties, Maini Group hopes to support this partnership and do more business with Mexico in the years to come.

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Why Look At The Opposite Side Of The Globe?

Government-to-government pacts will set the framework for more profound and more diverse exchanges between India and Mexico and more partnerships would contribute towards building stronger productive sectors

FOR THE last few years, dignitaries and business people have highlighted the opportunities that remain untapped in the economic exchange between Mexico and India, even if economic recovery after the pandemic seems steady. As evidence, during the first half of 2022, total trade between the two countries surpassed 5 billion, almost 20% more than the same period of 2021. Considering the 10 billion traded during 2021 were already on pre-pandemic levels, this trend will continue setting new records. So far, India is the 7th destination of Mexican exports and the 13th origin of imports, and more than 70% of the 5.9 billion imports from India in 2021 were intermediate goods.

These figures might not seem impressive. However, our bilateral trade was more significant than the commercial exchange of India with Canada, Israel, Spain, or Sri Lanka. It has also been said that either for exporters or investors on both sides, the first gap to be filled is mutual awareness. More consciousness about the evolving possibilities could lead to identifying new areas to connect and partner with.

According to the records of foreign investment in Mexico kept by the Ministry of Economy, from 1999, cumulative investments from India rose by \$229 million. More than 75% went to the manufacturing sector, most of which arrived in Mexico during the last decade. This figure could be actually higher, considering that aside from restrictions of confidential information from corporations, there might be some inaccuracy on the origins due to the



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The economic recovery after the pandemic has not been easy. The global trade environment had disturbances. Mexico-India trade declined almost 30%. The turmoil caused by the measures to counter the spread of COVID-19 proved that productive sectors must adjust to being resilient to future shocks. Full recovery needs not only local policies and incentives to go back to the previous stage, but also a reshaping of networks that incorporates lessons from the recent events



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good platform for businesses. The share of annual investment coming from countries beyond the usual origins has increased from 0.4% in 2018 to 4.1% in 2021.

Diversification at the source, manufacturing, and destination of supplies and products is one of the methods for increasing preparedness and resilience. More partnerships between the two countries would contribute towards building stronger productive sectors.

India is naturally attractive to investors thanks to its huge market, human assets, and steady economic growth with positive

projections. On the Mexican side, even if its market is much smaller, the privileged location and the network of FTAs facilitate access in both geographic and commercial ways to a market of a similar size to India. That is why Mexico trades 8 out of 10 dollars within the scope of those agreements. Moreover, Mexico was among the top ten recipients of FDI for both 2020 and 2021 according to the UNCTAD's World Investment Reports.

For Mexico, it is crucial to attain diversification, considering that its exports account for more than a billion dollars a day

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compared with USA, and at the same time this impressive figure means more than 50% of total exports from Mexico to the world. As an example of these diversification efforts, the governmental health sector has initiated a wide search for pharmaceutical products beyond usual sources, and India, being a key player in the industry has become a closer partner. Mexican industrial sector has still much to discover in India, from innovation for MSMEs, to metallurgy in the traditional sectors or electric mobility in emerging industries.

Mexico is an attractive and stable export platform: Only in 2020, more than 1.5 million dollars circulated every minute through Mexican ports, roads, and land borders. Also a skilled workforce for the industry is available by virtue of the number of engineering graduates it has and is among the top 10 worldwide.

Government-to-government agreements will set the framework for more profound and more diverse exchanges, but actual discovery and development are up to business people from both countries to venture into our respective markets.

by **Adriana Villanueva Becerril**
Head of Trade and Tourism Affairs
Embassy of Mexico to India

Mexico-India Cooperation Looking To The Future

SEVENTY-TWO years into their diplomatic relations, Mexico and India have come closer while strengthening their bilateral ties in various fields; however, their links in scientific and technological cooperation are generally an unfamiliar area for most people in both India and Mexico.

Both countries signed a Bilateral Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation on July 23, 1975. Under this legal umbrella, Mexico and India have had modest yet steady cooperation; nonetheless, the visit of Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard last March opened the door to broadening the scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. With a clear foresight of the next step of the bilateral relation, Minister Ebrard's official visit to India had a significant cooperation component, ranging from medical research to space collaboration.

The scientific delegation accompanying Minister Ebrard was composed of senior officers and scientists of two main public universities of Mexico, along with the Director General of one of the leading Mexican research institutes and the then Director General of the most prestigious national health institute for internal medicine and nutrition. Their aim was clear: to establish new contacts and interactions with relevant Indian actors in the health, medical, and pharmaceutical sectors. It is impossible to ignore that this selection was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed the vulnerabilities of the health systems around the world but also reflected the objective of Mexico's President, Andres Manuel López Obrador, to transform the health system in the country.

The scientists held meetings with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), several of its institutes and other research organisations, pharmaceutical companies, and academic institutions spearheading scientific research and development in India. It was, however, the official encounter between the Foreign Minister, this scientific delegation, and the Minister of AYUSH that gave a pioneering turn to the whole visit.

Although Mexico's long history of natural medicine has its roots in the ancient Pre-Columbian civilisations, Mexican traditional medicine is not "institutionalised" as the Indian one is. Nevertheless, because of the pandemic, there has been increasing recognition of its benefits as an adjuvant preventive medicine. Thus, it is decidedly practical to have a rapprochement with the ancient Indian systems of medicine to start its incorporation into the curricula of higher education institutions in Mexico to make it available to the general population. This step will undoubtedly, increase and improve the study of our traditional medicine.

The meeting between Minister Ebrard and the Chairperson of the Indian Space Research Organi-



sation (ISRO) was an assertion of the strong bilateral ties on space cooperation. On this, Mexico and India have been building a successful path of collaboration in the last decade. In 2014, the Mexican Space Agency (AEM) and ISRO signed an MoU on space cooperation aimed at peace whose first outcome was the 2020 Specific Cooperation Agreement (SCA) on Forest Fire Management using EO Data and Capacity Building. In July 2022, the signing of the SCA on Crop Monitoring, Drought Assessment, and Capacity Building conveyed they will to continue cooperating. It is noteworthy to

highlight the relevance of the specific topics covered by both SCAs closely related to the temperature changes that the planet has been experiencing in the last years, setting a likely new area of bilateral research on climate change and natural disasters.

The establishment of the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) promoted by Mexico during the 2021 Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit will undoubtedly be a platform to increase the AEM-ISRO cooperation on a multilateral basis, extending the best practices and results to the Americas while enabling an increasing presence of India in that continent.

This brief recap of the most relevant actions between Mexico and India during 2022 shows the new dynamism that the post-pandemic world is lending to the bilateral scientific and technological ties while integrating innovative areas of cooperation that will benefit both countries.

By **Vanessa Espinosa Aguirre**
Head of Culture, Cooperation & Education Affairs Embassy of Mexico to India



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Both countries signed a Bilateral Agreement on Science and Technology Cooperation on July 23, 1975. Under this legal umbrella, Mexico and India have had modest yet steady cooperation; nonetheless, the visit of Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard last March opened the door to broadening the scientific and technological cooperation between the two countries. With a clear foresight of the next step of the bilateral relation, Minister Ebrard's official visit to India had a significant cooperation component, ranging from medical research to space collaboration.

The scientific delegation accompanying Minister Ebrard was composed of senior officers and scientists of two main public universities of Mexico, along with the Director General of one of the leading Mexican research institutes and the then Director General of the most prestigious national health institute for internal medicine and nutrition. Their aim was clear: to establish new contacts and interactions with relevant Indian actors in the health, medical, and pharmaceutical sectors. It is impossible to ignore that this selection was a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which revealed the vulnerabilities of the health systems around the world but also reflected the objective of Mexico's President, Andres Manuel López Obrador, to transform the health system in the country.

The scientists held meetings with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), several of its institutes and other research organisations, pharmaceutical companies, and academic institutions spearheading scientific research and development in India. It was, however, the official encounter between the Foreign Minister, this scientific delegation, and the Minister of AYUSH that gave a pioneering turn to the whole visit.

Although Mexico's long history of natural medicine has its roots in the ancient Pre-Columbian civilisations, Mexican traditional medicine is not "institutionalised" as the Indian one is. Nevertheless, because of the pandemic, there has been increasing recognition of its benefits as an adjuvant preventive medicine. Thus, it is decidedly practical to have a rapprochement with the ancient Indian systems of medicine to start its incorporation into the curricula of higher education institutions in Mexico to make it available to the general population. This step will undoubtedly, increase and improve the study of our traditional medicine.

The meeting between Minister Ebrard and the Chairperson of the Indian Space Research Organi-



highlight the relevance of the specific topics covered by both SCAs closely related to the temperature changes that the planet has been experiencing in the last years, setting a likely new area of bilateral research on climate change and natural disasters.

The establishment of the Latin American and Caribbean Space Agency (ALCE) promoted by Mexico during the 2021 Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit will undoubtedly be a platform to increase the AEM-ISRO cooperation on a multilateral basis, extending the best practices and results to the Americas while enabling an increasing presence of India in that continent.

This brief recap of the most relevant actions between Mexico and India during 2022 shows the new dynamism that the post-pandemic world is lending to the bilateral scientific and technological ties while integrating innovative areas of cooperation that will benefit both countries.

By Vanessa Espinosa Aguirre
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sation (ISRO) was an assertion of the strong bilateral ties on space cooperation. On this, Mexico and India have been building a successful path of collaboration in the last decade. In 2014, the Mexican Space Agency (AEM) and ISRO signed an MoU on space cooperation aimed at peace whose first outcome was the 2020 Specific Cooperation Agreement (SCA) on Forest Fire Management using EO Data and Capacity Building. In July 2022, the signing of the SCA on Crop Monitoring, Drought Assessment, and Capacity Building conveyed they will to continue cooperating. It is noteworthy to



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