

PM Modi's Historic Visit to Guyana: Strengthening Ties with the Caribbean

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What's in today's article?

- Why in News?
- What is CARICOM?
- Why PM Modi visited Guyana?
- Key Highlights of the visit

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a visit to the small Caribbean country of Guyana, the first visit by an Indian PM in 56 years. He received a warm welcome in Guyana as President Irfan Ali broke the protocol to receive PM Modi at the airport.

During this visit, PM Modi also co-chaired the **second India-CARICOM Summit** alongside Grenada's PM (who is the current Chair of CARICOM) and other CARICOM leaders.

What is Caribbean Community (CARICOM)?

- **About**

- **CARICOM** is a regional organization established in 1973 under the **Treaty of Chaguaramas**.
- It aims to promote economic integration, shared foreign policy, and functional cooperation among member states while ensuring the sustainable development of the region.
- Stretching from The Bahamas in the north to Suriname and Guyana in South America, CARICOM comprises states that are considered developing countries.
- Except for **Belize**, in Central America and **Guyana and Suriname** in South America, all Members and Associate Members are island states.

- **Members**

- It is a grouping of **twenty-one countries**: fifteen Member States and six Associate Members.

- **Pillars of Integration:**

- **Economic Integration:** Focuses on creating a single market and economy through the Caribbean Single Market and Economy (CSME).
- **Foreign Policy Coordination:** Ensures member states speak with one voice on international issues.
- **Human and Social Development:** Promotes education, health, youth development, and gender equality across the region.
- **Security Cooperation:** Aims to address common challenges like crime, border security, and disaster management.

Why PM Modi visited Guyana?

- **Strengthening Historical and Cultural Ties**

- Guyana, home to one of the oldest Indian diasporas, has a population of approximately 3,20,000 people of Indian origin, constituting 43.5% of the country's total population.

- **Energy Security and Hydrocarbon Cooperation**

- Guyana is emerging as a global oil hub, expected to surpass Venezuela in oil production by 2026.
- With massive reserves and rapid GDP growth driven by oil discoveries, Guyana offers India a crucial opportunity to diversify its crude oil imports.

- **Expanding Defence Partnerships**

- India has strengthened Guyana's defence capabilities by supplying Dornier 228 planes and offering a Line of Credit for the purchase of patrol vehicles, radars etc.
 - This marks India's first-ever defence Line of Credit with a Caribbean nation.
- Guyana's growing defence market aligns with India's strategic and economic interests.

- **Enhancing Trade and Economic Cooperation**

- India is partnering with Guyana in diverse sectors, including agriculture, biofuels, IT, and pharmaceuticals. Key contributions include:
 - Building critical infrastructure like the National Cricket Stadium and solar traffic lights.
 - Supporting projects such as regional hospital upgrades, road linkages, and ocean-going vessels.
 - Promoting bilateral trade, which remains low but shows positive growth potential.

- **Competing with China's Influence**

- Guyana's strategic location and rich resources have attracted significant Chinese investments in infrastructure under the Belt and Road Initiative.
- India is countering this influence by committing to infrastructure projects such as a \$100 million road project in Georgetown.
- Unlike China, India's approach focuses on local engagement and long-term partnerships, which are better received by Guyana's population.

- **Global South and Strategic Alliances**

- PM Modi's visit reflects India's broader strategy to enhance ties with smaller countries as part of its Global South agenda.
- Guyana's economic potential, driven by oil wealth, makes it a pivotal partner in this vision.

Key highlights of the visit

- **PM Modi conferred with The Order of Excellence of Guyana**

- President of Guyana conferred upon PM Modi the highest national award of Guyana, "The Order of Excellence".
 - He became only the fourth foreign leader to be conferred with the highest National award of Guyana.

- **Agreements Across Key Sectors**

- India and Guyana signed 10 Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) to deepen cooperation in various sectors. These include:
 - **Health and Pharmaceuticals:** Collaboration on regulation and supply of affordable medicines, including to CARICOM countries.
 - India agreed to establish a Jan Ausadhi Kendra in Guyana to improve access to affordable medicines..
 - **Hydrocarbons:** Cooperation in crude sourcing, natural gas, infrastructure development, and the entire hydrocarbon value chain.
 - **Agriculture:** Joint activities, R&D, exchange of information and personnel, and food security initiatives.
 - Cooperation in agriculture was also expanded, with India contributing millet seeds to support Guyana's food security.
 - **Digital Transformation:** Capacity building, training, exchange of best practices, and public official collaborations.
 - **Banking and Payments:** Deployment of India's UPI-like real-time payment system in Guyana.

- **Defence and Capacity Building**

- India committed to skill development and capacity building in Guyana, especially in defence.
 - Earlier this year, India had gifted two Dornier aircraft to Guyana.
- PM Modi emphasized cooperation in infrastructure, energy, and food security, highlighting India's ongoing support for Guyana's growth.

- **Collaboration in New Areas**

- The leaders identified new areas of cooperation, including:
 - **Education and Human Capital Development**

- **Technology Transfer and Food Processing**
 - **Ayurvedic Medicine and Vaccine Manufacturing**
 - **Symbolic Initiatives**
 - PM participated in the symbolic planting of a sapling under the *Ek Ped Ma Ke Naam* initiative.
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Q.1. Why is PM Modi's visit to Guyana significant?

PM Modi's visit to Guyana is historic, being the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 56 years. It strengthens India's ties with the Caribbean, focusing on cultural connections, energy security, defence, and trade collaborations while countering China's influence in the region.

Q.2. What were the key outcomes of PM Modi's visit to Guyana?

The visit saw 10 agreements in areas like hydrocarbons, agriculture, and defence. PM Modi was conferred Guyana's highest national award and co-chaired the India-CARICOM Summit, emphasizing cooperation in infrastructure, education, and digital transformation.

News: [Modi first Indian PM to visit Guyana in 56 years, signs 10 pacts to expand ties](#) | [MEA](#) | [CARICOM](#) | [Economic Times](#) | [Hindustan Times](#)

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