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# THE CONSULAR CHRONICLES



# SPRING 2022





Hon. Consular Corps  
Diplomatique-India



## EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

Greetings

After two long years we are happy to welcome Springtime - a season of color and rejuvenation. The world is slowly but surely recovering from the uncertainty of the covid era to a more normal time. However experts advise us to remain cautious.

The season of new beginnings, we bring you news around the nation. The Consular night was recently held in New Delhi and details and images of the evening are covered.

News from FICAC, an Interview with H.E Consul General of New Zealand, An overview of Argentina - India relations as told by H.E Consul General of Argentina, The Royal Heritage of the Tranvcore and much more are packed in this edition of the ConsularChronicles.

Our editorial team has included a few images of Spring shared by the Members of HCCD - India

Everyone at the Consular Chronicles wishes you good health and a very Happy season of joy.

As always, we look forward to your suggestions and comments.

Stay Safe – Stay Well

**Surbhi Sharma**

Editor

Consular Chronicles

Honorary Consul of Spain

## WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER



**Hon. Ms. Amita Desai**

Honorary Consul of Germany at Hyderabad



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## HCCD - INDIA

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**K L Ganju**, o.c.v.c. (cdr.)  
Consul General (Hy.)  
Advisor to the Foreign Minister  
Union of the Comoros  
President – HCCD – India

I am very pleased to inform all Hon'ble Members of HCCD – India that the 'Consular Day' was celebrated on 30th March, 2022 at Hotel ITC Maurya, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. H.E. Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Govt. of India was invited as Chief Guest. Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) also attended the function as Guest of Honour. Many Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Hony. Consuls, MEA and other Govt. officials also attended. On this day, "Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize" was jointly conferred on Padma Bhushan Dr. Krishna Ella and Padma Bhushan Mrs. Suchitra K. Ella. This year Dr. Bhai Mohan Singh Trophy was also jointly given to Hon'ble Mr. Vijay Kalantri, Hony. Consul of Uzbekistan & Sr. Vice President of HCCD – India and Hon'ble Mr. Purrushottam Bhaggeria, Hony. Consul of Moldova and Secretary General of HCCD – India. 'Consul of the year trophy' was jointly given to

Hon'ble Mr. Suresh Chukkapalli, Hony. Consul of South Korea in Hyderabad and Hon'ble Mr. Mohan Suresh, Hony. Consul of Rwanda in Bangaluru. Apart from this, six Hon'ble Members were given Medal of Honour. These all medals and trophies were given by Hon'ble Minister.

The above mentioned decorations were given after consultation with all the chapters through their vice presidents. The decision was unanimous. I may also inform that this year the function was covered by media especially in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

Before I close, I would like to write few lines about Padma Bhushan Dr. Krishna Ella and Padma Bhushan Mrs. Suchitra K. Ella. They are the CMD and Joint CMD of Bharat Biotech International Ltd. respectively. The company is producers and manufacturers of Covaxin which has been supplied all over the world to cure / prevent Covid – 19.

HCCD – India is proud to present "Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize" jointly on both of them.

God bless you all!!

### SECRETARY GENERAL'S MESSAGE



**Purrshottam Bhaggeria**  
Hony. Consul of Moldova  
Secretary General, HCCD- India  
Director, World Federation of  
Consuls (FICA)

I am very pleased to inform my Hon'ble colleagues that the 'Consular Day' Programme was very successfully conducted on 30th March, 2022. The efforts made by the Hon'ble President and other Board members are the reasons for the success. This year 12 individuals were decorated with 'Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize', 'Bhai Mohan Singh Trophy' and 'Medal of Honour'. All the decorations were given through the hands of H.E. Mrs. Meenakshi Lekhi, Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs and Culture. The programme was attended by Ambassadors, High Commissioners, MEA and other Govt. officials, Hony. Consuls and who's who of Delhi. The event was covered by the media in Delhi and other places.



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## CONSULAR DAY CELEBRATIONS

Consular Day was celebrated on 30th March, 2022 at Hotel ITC Maurya, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi. H.E. Ms. Meenakshi Lekhi, Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Govt. of India was invited as Chief Guest. Padma Vibhushan Dr. Sonal Mansingh, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) also attended the function as Guest of Honour. Many Ambassadors, High Commissioners, Hony. Consuls, MEA and other Govt. officials also attended. On this day, "Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize" was jointly conferred on Padma Bhushan Dr. Krishna Ella and Padma Bhushan Mrs. Suchitra K. Ella.



Hon'ble Mr. Purrshottam Bhaggeria receiving  
Dr. Bhai Mohan Singh Trophy



Hon'ble Mr. Mohan Suresh receiving Consul of the  
Year Trophy



Hon'ble Mr. Vijay Kalantri receiving Dr. Bhai Mohan  
Singh Trophy



Hon'ble Mr. R. A. Goenka receiving Medal of  
Honour.



Hon'ble Mr. Suresh Chukkapalli receiving Consul of  
the Year Trophy.



Hon'ble Mr. R. Muthu receiving Medal of Honour.





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Hon'ble Mr. C. S. Prakash receiving Medal of Honour.



Hon'ble Mr. R. G. Rajjappa receiving Medal of Honour.



Hon'ble Mr. Madhusudhan receiving Medal of Honour.



Hon'ble Dr. Nissar receiving Medal of Honour on behalf of Hon'ble Mr. G. V. Prasad.



Certificate of Appreciation presented to Ms. Ritu Manchanda.



Certificate of Appreciation presented to Mr. Sunil Kunj.



Hon'ble Mr. K. L. Ganju with Hon'ble Mr. Vivek Burman.



Lamp lighting ceremony L to R Hon'ble Mr. Purrshottam Bhaggeria, Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs, Hon'ble Mr. Vijay Kalantri and Hon'ble Mr. K. L. Ganju.





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Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize Ceremony



Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize Ceremony





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## How Honorary Consular are hidden champions of Diplomacy

By Uttara Malhotra

They are not recognised as diplomats, making their job far more challenging. Here goes how?

It was like any other award event night if you saw it for the first time. But, here, the nostalgia of being an Indian and representing your country was what differentiated this from the rest. It was all about celebrating and appreciating the efforts of diplomats that are not recognised as so by the government of India. They also put their lives in danger as they travel to nations that do not have Indian consular offices and, therefore, representation.



But many have worked with the heart to serve their nation and bear the expenses on their own, 'said Mr K L Ganju, Consul General (Hy.) and Advisor to the Foreign Minister, Union of Comoros, President. The Government of India authorises all to represent the country's best interest in these smaller independent nations across the globe. But they don't get remunerated or recognised openly for this effort either.



Recently, Mr. Ganju, along with Members of the Board of Directors of Honorary Consular Corps Diplomatique-India, organised an evening to mark the annual Consular Day. The event felicitates and recognises the exceptional work done by Indian individuals to support the growth of multiculturalism and peace society.

This year Padma Bhushan awardee Dr. Krishna Ella, Founder and CMD of Bharat Biotech International Ltd. and Padma Bhushan Mrs. Suchitra K. Ella, Co-Founder and Joint Managing Director of Bharat Biotech International Ltd. (the producers of Covaxin for Covid-19) were conferred with the prestigious "Vivek Burman (Dabur) Peace Prize".

Speaking on the sidelines of the event, Mr. Ganju explained how important the Hony Consuls in India play in providing consular services and developing economic and bilateral relations between the sending and the receiving countries. He stressed how he has been providing these services through his finances between India and the Union of Comoros. More than 230 such councils are functioning in countries with no Indian Ambassadors placed.

These Hony consuls are usually affluent Indian citizens running their business and doing this 'unpaid job', maintaining a balance of a 'two-tier diplomacy' without any prior experience in doing so anyway.

"However, we do it because it gives a sense of pride in representing our own country. We only wish we get some recognition and, at times, some support from the External Ministry of hearing our suggestions added Mr. Ganju, who has been decorated with the highest civilian award by Comoros for his work to create a trade route between India and the Union of Comoros.

The Chief Guest for the event was Meenakshi Lehi, Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture, Govt. Of India, New Delhi and Padma Vibhushan, Dr. Sonal ManSingh, Member of Parliament Rajya Sabha), was the Guest of Honour. Ambassadors, High Commissioners and Hony. Consuls from all over India were also participating. Ms. Lekhi proudly applauded the fact that Indian pharmaceuticals have won a place on the global map and that the Honorary Consuls have an essential role in buttressing the External Ministry's efforts.







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## AROUND THE NATION

### CHENNAI



Dr Velu had the great opportunity of meeting with Ms Reenat Sandhu, Secretary (West) Ministry of External Affairs and Ms Neeta Bhushan, Joint Secretary (Central Europe) as Special Guests to commemorate 30 years of diplomatic relations between India and Estonia at dinner hosted by HE Katrin Kivi. Dr Velu received a Letter Of Appreciation and was recognised as a Citizen Diplomat .



Ministry of External Affairs and Honorary Consulate of Myanmar in Chennai celebrated India@75.



Honorary Consul of Spain Mr. Antony Lobo with Consul General of France at Pondichery







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## AROUND THE NATION

### HYDERABAD

H.E. Mr. Chang Jae Bok, Ambassador of Korea to India, led a delegation of distinguished officials from the Embassy of Korea in Delhi visited Hyderabad. The delegation included Ms. Gu Jung Hyun, Spouse of the Ambassador, Lt. Col. Kim Hyunsoon, Defense Attaché, Mr. Lee Hyo-hee, Science & Tech Attaché, Mr. Lee Seunghoon, Second secretary (Political), Ms. Kang Yeonsoo, Second secretary (Political), Ms. AhnHyesun, Political officer & Mr. Kim DongKyu, Director General of KOTRA, Bangalore.



Mr. Suresh Chukkapalliwas bestowed the "Trade Day" award for promoting bilateral trade between the two countries.



On the 4-day visit, the delegation met and interacted with the Hyderabad Korean Association members, senior executives of Korean companies, various renowned companies in the IT and Defense sectors, and Educational Institutes.



As a token of appreciation for the visit and support extended, Mr. Chukkapalli gifted a hand-painted portrait of the Ambassador.



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His Excellency and the delegation visited Bharath Biotech and were welcomed by Padma Bhushan holder Dr. Krishna Ella, Chairman & Managing Director and his daughter Dr. Jhalla Ella, who is a dermatologist by profession.

Mr. G V Prasad receiving the Medal of Honour. The medal was presented by the members of HCCD-Hyderabad Chapter.





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Mr. Nawab Mir Nasir Ali Khan, Honorary Consul of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Hyderabad for Telangana and AP and his spouse Begum Mehar Fatima Khan, hosted a grand iftar party, as part of the holy month of Ramazan, at their residence Xanadu in Jubilee Hills, yesterday evening.

The Iftar guests present included Joel Reifman, U.S. Consul General in Hyderabad and Perry Melton; Andrew Fleming, Deputy High Commissioner of United Kingdom and his spouse Van Fleming; Vikram Jain, Trade Commissioner, Consulate General of Canada; Salil Khader, Cultural Affairs Specialist, US Consulate; Clark Ledger, Consular Chief, U.S. Consulate General of the USA and his spouse Sheila; Orhan Yalman, Consul General, Republic of Turkey in Hyderabad and his spouse Aslihan OZMEN; Jayesh Ranjan, IAS, Principal Secretary (I&C), Govt. of Telangana; Dasari Balaiah, IRS, Regional Passport Officer & Head of Branch.





## AROUND THE NATION

### BANGALORE



Inauguration of direct flight from Bengaluru to Addis Ababa



H.E Ambassador of Morocco to India visited Bengaluru.



Honorary Consul of Côte d'Ivoire with students



Iftar dinner hosted by Shabeena Sultana Honorary Consul of Tunisia and Vikaram Vishwanth Honorary Consul of Peru



H.E AMBASSADOR of ESTONIA visited Bengaluru recently.





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## HERITAGE OF INDIA - THE KINGDOM OF TRAVANCORE

Legend has it that in the early eighteenth century, a young prince in Kerala encountered god in a dream. The deity of the Sri Padmanabhaswamy Temple—now celebrated as the world's wealthiest Hindu shrine—appeared before Rajah Martanda Varma, it is said, with a special command. The temple had fallen on hard times, losing much of its ancient glory; and so, Sri Padmanabhaswamy ordered the prince to renovate it, restore its magnificence, and re-establish the deity's primacy. Of course, the divine power added, this would cost money, so he gave Martanda Varma special permission. Go out, he said, and conquer all the lands and territories you can—and with the treasure and wealth that would accrue through victory, rebuild the temple and fulfil the divine command.



It is a wonderful story that hints at the conquest and war through which Travancore state was forged. When Martanda Varma, scion of a petty kingdom at the southern tip of Kerala, came to power in 1729, the whole of the coastline was dotted with small principalities. At their helm sat princelings whose wealth came from trade with Arabs and Europeans. But Martanda Varma was not one to endorse the status quo—early in his reign, he centralised power in his hands by annihilating his nobility; then he raised a standing army, which would march through all of southern Kerala, till kingdom after kingdom fell before it. By the end of his life in 1758, Martanda Varma was the most powerful man in the region, having also defeated the powerful Dutch company, while maintaining a close friendship with the ascendant English.

His heir, popularly known as Dharmarajah ('the meritorious king') and Kilavan Rajah ('the old king'), presided over Travancore for forty years thereafter, till 1798. He was just as fascinating. On the one hand, he was Padmanabha Dasa: all of Travancore's rulers from 1750 down till the state ceased to exist 200 years later, ruled as 'servants' of their deity. And yet, Dharmarajah also participated in Mughal court culture, shaped by Persianate influences, sporting titles given to him by the Nawab of Arcot. Meanwhile, he picked up English too—a European was stunned in the 1780s when Dharmarajah spoke to him in this language. Politically, during his reign, all his predecessor's conquests were consolidated, and Travancore even fought off military threats from the formidable Tipu Sultan of Mysore.





But escaping Mysore's aggression came at a price. By the time Dharmarajah died, Travancore had entered into a 'subsidiary alliance' with the British East India Company. His successor, a teenager, failed to withstand the resultant pressure, which would transform Travancore from a British ally to a vassal state. He surrounded himself with bad advisers, lost the sympathy of his people, saw mutiny in his army and in the end, after a rebellion against the British, the latter disbanded his troops. From here on, Travancore would become a tributary state under the Company, and later the British Crown. In just over a decade after Dharmarajah's demise, his heir had squandered much of what he and Martanda Varma built.

However, there was a silver lining to things. For the next nearly two decades—from 1811 until 1829—the kingdom was under the rule of women. Rani Gowri Lakshmi Bayi (reigned 1811-1814) used diplomacy to prevent the British from annexing her kingdom. Her sister, Gowri Parvathi Bayi (reigned 1814-1829) was also astute, balancing her position as a queen against colonial pressures successfully, and bringing back to Travancore economic vitality and political stability. Both the ladies commanded immense respect with their overlords: indeed, in some respects Travancore was saved by these two women, even if some critics state that they were perhaps a bit too submissive to the British.

In 1829 a young Rajah again succeeded to power. Swathi Tirunal (reigned 1829-1846) was a bright but gentle figure. He was deeply conscious of his autonomy; and this meant he chafed against the demands made of him as a British vassal. Though he began his rule with energy and ran a successful administration, the overbearing nature of the representatives sent by the British to his court, resulted in frustration. In his mind, justifiably, so long as tribute was paid, the British had no business meddling in his affairs; the British, however, did not see it quite like that. In the end he lapsed into depression and died young, aged only 33. But this was not before he made his mark in another area: Swathi Tirunal was a Carnatic composer and polyglot of high talent, and his reign was a cultural flashpoint in Travancore's history, attracting artists, musicians, scholars, and many others to the state.



The next ruler, Uthram Tirunal (reigned 1846-1860) was unlike his brother. While very much committed to his position as Padmanabha Dasa, he was also one of the most anglicised rulers of Travancore. He loved the company of foreigners, studied modern medicine, collected machines and gadgets from abroad, and even read the Bible. When visitors called on him, he would with delight show off his daughter, who spoke English as perfectly as he did. He also managed his relationship better with the British: his minister was a man they approved of, and the advice of the Company's representative was sought and acted on in all important matters. Unfortunately for the Rajah, while diplomatic relations with the British were cordial, his state's finances led to trouble—it took the threat of annexation for things to be rectified.





UthramTirunal was succeeded by his two nephews, AyilyamTirunal (reigned 1860-1880) and VisakhamTirunal (reigned 1880-1885). Both these men were figures of great personality. Having received an English education, they were comfortable in British society like their uncle. But simultaneously, they were shrewd enough to devise strategies to minimise interference in their state. Since one charge against UthramTirunal had been his poor financial management, both men obsessively ensured that Travancore would always have a revenue surplus. At the same time they built roads, tanks, canals, schools, and a modern infrastructure, which earned their kingdom the tag of a 'model state'. By the 1870s, in fact, Travancore was one of India's best-governed principalities, even surpassing British-ruled territories in many respects.

The result of the strong foundations built by these two rulers was that their successor, Mulam Tirunal (reigned 1885-1924), could govern for nearly forty years without too much trouble: there was a system in place, there were increasing revenues, and the head of the state was not only respected in the wider British-Indian context, but also within. Of course, there was also a growth of political activity in the state and the ruler had personal imperfections, but for the most part his subjects resided in a very well-governed principality. MulamTirunal was not the kind of man who liked confrontation, but he was, it is said, capable of defying British orders if needed—when, during World War One, it was hinted to him that Travancore should make large 'donations' to the British war effort, the man refused. He would rather spend funds on his own people than on a war occurring in a faraway continent.

The final chapter in Travancore's history was again, interestingly, dominated by women. The state was under the regency of Sethu Lakshmi Bayi (reigned 1924-1931) for seven years, which were a time of great prosperity. Indeed, the British viceroy himself commended the queen by declaring that the progress seen in Travancore in her short time on the throne was at a pace above that of all the recent rulers. She was a woman of conservative tastes and high principles, who impressed the colonial establishment as well as Indian nationalists both—in fact, Mahatma Gandhi, after meeting her, marvelled at her simplicity. Her regency was so popular that even officials of independent India in the early 1950s would comment on how much the people of Travancore continued to revere her.

Sethu Lakshmi Bayi was succeeded by her nephew Chithira Tirunal (reigned 1931-1949), who was the son of her sister, Sethu Parvathi Bayi. Though Travancore's final ruler was a man, the real power behind his throne was his mother. She was a woman of unorthodox personality, personal courage, and a committed feminist. Sethu Parvathi Bayi had great ambitions for the state and oversaw the establishment of its own university and various industrial works, even as Travancore's revenues grew so much as to place it among the top five states in India. Chithira Tirunal, supported by his mother, is also celebrated for his Temple Entry Proclamation of 1936, which for the first time allowed Hindus of marginalised castes access to temples—the very first temple thrown open to Dalits was that of Sri Padmanabhaswamy.



After the integration of Travancore in 1949 into the Indian Union, its royal family ceased to enjoy power. But they continue to command public reverence to this day by their association with the temple to Sri Padmanabhaswamy. In other words, even if the kingdom is no more, the dynasty's position as servants of the deity has not lapsed—in the temple there must always be a Rajah to lead processions and preside over religious rituals: a right that has been affirmed by the Supreme Court of India. And so Martanda Varma's line continues, not as princes or royalty but as subordinates to a god and custodians of one of India's most important religious shrines. In a sense they are still obeying orders given to their ancestor all those centuries ago, by their deity; the idea that was seeded by god himself through a dream continues even in the twenty-first century.

Feature Credits : Sandeep & Gitanjali Maini Foundation And Manu S Pillai who has authored 3 Successful Books Ivory Throne, Rebel Sultans, False Allies.



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## NEWS FROM FICAC

### **On the 25th of November, 2021, in Istanbul, FICAC Co-organized the Gusi Peace Prize 2021**

The Gusi Peace Prize is a private award given by the Gusi Peace Prize Foundation, based in Manila, Philippines. The Gusi Peace Prize is given to recognize individuals and organizations who contribute to global peace and progress through a wide variety of fields. The awards ceremonies are held yearly in Manila, Philippines, on the fourth Wednesday of November. Due to Covid 19 pandemic, Ambassador Gusi asked to President of FICAC, Hon. Aykut Eken, to co-organize the event in Istanbul, Turkey.

The Gusi Peace Prize is referred to in Presidential Proclamation No. 1476 signed by President of the Philippines H.E. Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, on 17 March 2008, declaring every fourth Wednesday of November as "Gusi Peace Prize International Friendship Day".

This Gusi Peace Prize was founded by its now chairman, Mr. Barry Gusi in 2002. The reason behind establishment of this peace award was to continue the ancestral legacy, as well as, to pay special tribute to Captain Gemeniano Javier Gusi (World War II Guerilla Warrior) who subsequently became a politician and a human rights activist in the Philippines.







**Professor the Honourable Arnold Foote OJ. CD. JP., Former President of FICAC, 2006 – 2015, passed away on December 2, 2021**

It is with great sadness that President Hon. Eken has been informed by his spouse Patricia, of the demise, on Thursday, the 2nd of December, 2021, of the Honourable Arnold Foote, 87. Arnold Foote had loomed large in diplomatic relations in Jamaica, the wider Caribbean, and the World, earning several accolades.

Foote founded Advertising and Marketing (Jamaica) Ltd (AdMark), in 1964, now a leading agency with regional and international affiliations. AdMark played a significant role in the development of the ethical standards and principles that govern the advertising and marketing sector in Jamaica and the Caribbean today.



In 1995 he was appointed Honorary Consul of the Republic of Turkey in Jamaica.

He was then elected by his fellow Consuls to lead the Consular Corps in Jamaica.

In 2006, Arnold Foote was elected President of the World Federation of Consuls (FICAC).

Under his presidency FICAC opened to new horizons and its reach, aims and activities expanded.

Foote released his biography *The Making of a Global Visionary: Journey through Love, Faith, Injustice and Vindication*.

For his work, Foote has received many awards including receiving the Order of Distinction, Commander in 1997 for his work in advertising and the promotion of trade and the Order of Jamaica in 2010 in recognition of service to Jamaica and internationally in the fields of advertising, sports and diplomacy.

He was also honoured by the Consular Corps of Jamaica for outstanding service. Also in 2010 he was awarded with the Order of Jamaica, in recognition of his service to Jamaica and internationally in the fields of advertising, sports, and diplomacy.

Arnold is survived by his wife Patricia (nee Mills) and his three children; Roma, Arnold Foote III, and Kimberly, six grandchildren Arnella, Alexis, Danielle, Brittany, Katelyn and Arnold.

FICAC President, Hon. Aykut Eken, expressed to Patricia, Roma, Arnold III and Kimberly, condolences on behalf of the Board of Directors and the Members of FICAC and has declared a three-day morning.



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On the 10th of December, 2021, ITW from Hon Pradeep Shrestha, former President of Honorary Consular Corps Nepal and Honorary Consul of South Africa in Nepal

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O0pXns-byug>



Philippines Consular Corps celebrated its 50th Anniversary in December, 2021



Dean of the Consular Corps David Ambrus of Hungary, Vice Dean of the Consular Corps Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr. of Romania





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**Special Invitation for FICAC Summit, March 10, 2022 at 01.00 pm CET!**

<https://mailchi.mp/ficacworld/ficac-2022-summit-14789605>



**H.E. Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca, Former President of Malta**

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca was unanimously approved by Parliament as the ninth President of Malta after being active in politics for forty years, and serving in Parliament for sixteen years. As Minister for the Family & Social Solidarity, she initiated numerous social reforms.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca dedicated her life to the wellbeing of the most vulnerable in society, and contributed to bring about effective changes in the social policies of Malta. Coleiro Preca founded and chairs The Malta Foundation for the Wellbeing of Society, The Malta Trust Foundation, and The Emanuele Cancer Research Foundation Malta.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca presides over a number of entities, where she continues to strive to be a voice for the voiceless and a lobby for change. She is currently President of Eurochild, a European network of organisations and individuals working with and for children in Europe, especially those affected by poverty and disadvantage; and the Archbishop's delegate on the COMECE, the Commission of the Bishops' Conferences of the European Union.

Marie-Louise Coleiro Preca is acclaimed internationally as an eminent speaker covering poverty and social inclusion, inequalities, peacebuilding, the empowerment of women, gender, violence, migration and children's rights.



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## SPECIAL GUEST - Interview with H E Mr. Ralph Hays, Consul General and Trade Commissioner, New Zealand by Alban Rodricks



**H E Mr. Ralph Hays**  
Consul General and  
Trade Commissioner, New Zealand

### 1. What is your impression about Mumbai and what do you like about it?

There is a Māori proverb that says 'What is the most important thing in the world? The response is: He tangata, he tangata, he tangata which translates to "It is the people, it is the people, it is the people". My biggest impression about Mumbai has been the people. Their generosity and hospitality is outstanding. In a way, I feel there is a real connect between New Zealand and Indian culture in this area.



**Alban Rodricks**

### 2. Is there anything of New Zealand that you miss, and would you like to bring it to India?



One of the main things I miss is the outdoor experiences that New Zealand has to offer and its close connection to nature. However, this is not unique to

Mumbai and is common in other big cities I have lived in. When I took the family on a campervan tour of the South Island, we were reminded of this special feature when visiting albatross colonies, penguins and seeing other wildlife on a daily basis. I know the Maharashtra Ministry of Tourism understands the benefit of preserving nature for all and continues to support a variety of project such as the Tillari Conservation Reserve.



### 3. Ease of doing business in New Zealand is a question on people's mind. Could you suggest how best people could explore New Zealand for business?

Even though covid-19 has made travel challenging, New Zealand is still very much open for business. If an Indian business wants to export to New Zealand from India, we would ask them to get in touch with one of their

relevant Export Promotion Agencies.

Alternatively, they may also directly reach out to the India New Zealand Business Council (<https://www.inzbc.org/>) or Auckland Chamber of Commerce (<https://aucklandchamber.co.nz/international-trade/import-and-export-support/doing-business-in-nz/>) by writing to [internationaltrade@chamber.co.nz](mailto:internationaltrade@chamber.co.nz) for making connections with their NZ based local member companies for discussing joint business prospects.







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**4. New Zealand is a welcoming country with rich history. What would you recommend to a first-time traveler to see and do when visiting New Zealand?**

Personally, I would recommend visiting the South Island of New Zealand as the nature and scenery is outstanding. I might be slightly biased here as I grew up in a small city at the bottom of the South Island but places like Queenstown and Fiordland National Park are simply stunning. I've attached a few photos below.



There is a joke that you can experience four seasons in one day. Yes, four seasons in one day is a reality. Especially in places like the West Coast of the South Island. Always pack a raincoat regardless of the weather forecast!





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**5. Food is always a high on people's mind whether business or pleasure could you share some of the local delicacies which is a must try for any traveler as it is known as a food lovers paradise.**

This is a tricky question as New Zealand is blessed with a wide variety of quality foods that are made and grown with love and care. Our farmers and growers have a special connection to the land and sea and understand that if nature thrives, people thrive too. I guess our point of difference would be our fresh produce such as golden kiwifruit, avocados, apples etc. These

can all be found on India's Big Basket e-commerce platform during the right time of the season. New Zealand wine is also some of the best in the world, especially our pinot noir and Sauvignon blanc that leverage our volcanic soils to add something special to the taste. Finally, if you are a bit of a sweet tooth like me, then a simple pavlova with a slice of kiwi fruit on top is always a winner.



**6. Which is your favourite place in New Zealand and why**

My personal favourite place would be the Queenstown and lake Wakatipu. I have many a fond memory of being out on the lake and spending time at the Skyline adventure park enjoying the gondola, luge rides and fantastic scenery. See

<https://www.skyline.co.nz/en/queenstown/>

Finally, we have a Tourism New Zealand team here in Mumbai that are always happy to support you with your plans.







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## SPECIAL FEATURE : ARGENTINA - INDIA RELATIONS

Argentina – India Relations : a brief overview as told by His Excellency Guillermo E. Devoto Consul General, Argentina to Mr. Alban Rodricks

Argentina, like India, is a developing country, both are members of G20 and both have young populations. They share big surfaces, India being the 7th largest country in terms of size with 3,278,263 square kilometres and Argentina 8th with 2,789,400 km<sup>2</sup>. Both have the same kind of climate diversity with the southern part of Argentina being the coldest, closest to the Antarctica, while for India the northern part is the coldest. Both have impressive mountain ranges, the Andes in Argentina and the Himalayas and Karakoram in India.



We collaborate closely in multilateral issues, such as in science and technology areas, nuclear, defence, space.

Argentina established a Consulate in Calcutta in the 1920s, which was transferred to Delhi as an Embassy in 1950. Argentina opened a Consulate General and Trade Promotion Centre in Mumbai in April 2009. Since 2019 we share a Strategic Partnership that we aim to deepen further in all aspects.

The commercial ties have been increasing steadily. In 2021 trade between our nations reached 5,7 billion usd, a 72,12% increase with respect to 2020, situating India as our 4th principal trade partner, after Brazil, China and USA and 4th destination of our exports. Our exports to India reached 4,3 billion USD, a 71,5% annual increase. Our imports of Indian products also increased 74% with respect to 2020. Argentina has a trade surplus with India of 2,9

The main product that we export to India is soy oil, reaching 3,3 billion USD worth of exports in 2021. Soy oil represented 85% of our exports to India in 2020. We also export soy flour and pellets, finished leather, cereals, residual chemicals and allied products, pulses, as well as gold and wines. It is our goal to keep increasing and to diversify the bilateral trade, advance in market access negotiations and identify commercial and investment opportunities.

Argentina is a vast country, rich in natural resources with ten times the agricultural production needed to feed its people. Biotechnology, machinery, satellites, drones, etc. are areas well developed to serve the agriculture business in the country. Argentina is also rich in oil and gas, mining, lithium and renewable energies, offering very good opportunities for foreign investment





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The country is also at the forefront of technological start-ups, several of which have ascended to 1bn-dollar stock valuations, putting them in the category of unicorns. The pandemic has spurred digital development as it led to privileging the use of virtual media and automation and robotics tools.

These Argentine firms are present in India: Globant in IT software, Techint in civil engineering, Namastrade, vegetarian protein, and Wabi2B, a digital application. The high-technology firm INVAP, that delivers projects for nuclear, aerospace, radars, chemical and medical sectors, is constructing a radioisotope production plant

at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre in Mumbai for use in cancer tests.

The following Indian companies have established operations in Argentina: TCS, Mahindra Comviva, Infosys, AEGIS-ESSAR, Crisil, UPL, Bajaj Motorcycles, CEAT. TVS, Royal Enfield, Hero, Glenmark, Godrej and Sri Sri Tattva.

The trade arrangement Mercosur (formed by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay) has a Preferential Trade Agreement with India dating from 2004 that gives preferential access, ranging from 10% to 100% on 452 and 450 tariff lines respectively. There is a drive to expanding the scope of this PTA, by increasing the number of products covered and increasing the tariff concessions agreed by each side.



There are more tourists coming to India from Argentina than vice versa. Both countries have a lot to grow in this area since both have unique tourist destinations.







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## SPRING TIME

Spring, also known as springtime, is one of the four temperate seasons, succeeding winter and preceding summer. A time where we see colour all around us. When it is spring in the Northern Hemisphere, it is autumn in the Southern Hemisphere and vice versa.



Bangalore



Bangalore



Bangalore



Bangalore



Bangalore



Slovenia





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## SPRING TIME



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Albania



Albania



Albania



Albania



Albania

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STAY SAFE