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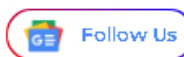
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# EAM heads to LAC Region: Indo-Pacific, food and energy and more to be the focus

*The focus is expected to be on energy and food security, space cooperation, renewable energy, climate change, among others.*

Written by [Huma Siddiqui](#)

February 23, 2023 18:56 IST



EAM Jaishankar holds talks with Guyanese Vice President Bharrat Jagdeo

To deal with India's growing energy needs and to expand the defence exports basket, external affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar is set to travel to four countries in the Latin American and Caribbean Region in April.

Though the agenda of the visit to the four countries — Colombia, Panama, Dominican Republic and Guyana — is still being firmed up, the focus is expected to be on energy and food security, space cooperation, renewable energy, climate change, among others.

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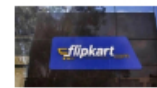
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between the two, says EAM Jaishankar

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Last November Saurabh Kumar, Secretary (East), Ministry of External Affairs was on a ten day four nation tour to the region and he visited Colombia, Panama, Guyana and Venezuela.

During the visit to Colombia and Guyana the talks centered around deeper cooperation in the energy sector and also on strengthening trade and economic ties.

#### India and Colombia

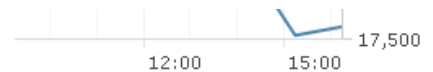
In 2021 the former Vice President and Foreign Minister Marta Lucía Ramírez of Colombia was in India and the discussions in India were more on deepening cooperation in automobiles especially Electric Vehicles, Pharmaceuticals including vaccines, shipping and logistics, space cooperation among other issues.

India is Colombia's third largest market for oil. Financial Express Online has reported earlier quoting former Ambassador of Colombia to India Mariana Pacheco that ONGC Videsh has important investments in oil fields in her country. And there is an increasing collaboration with Colombian oil company Ecopetrol.

**Also Read:** [India looking at deepening ties with LAC region for energy security](#)

In 2021 the two countries had signed an MoU on aerospace development for peaceful purposes and under this MoU there is an ongoing space cooperation. And Colombia is keen to get India's support in harnessing the benefits of space technology for national development research.

And bilateral trade has gone up more than by 130 percent which is



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due to oil exports to India. According to the former ambassador Colombia could also be a gateway for India to the rest of the Americas.

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## **India & Panama**

The minister will be visiting Panama where MoS Meenakshi Lehi has already been there and earlier last month the foreign minister of that country was in India for Pravasi Bhartiya Divas. And there are 20,000 Indians living there which has a dollarized economy. It is also considered as “Hub of Hubs” – Bridge of the World and Heart of Universe.

### **Why is Panama important?**

This country could help in connecting 4PL logistics services, Freight Forwarders, also setting up warehousing, supply chain management as well as value addition. India could also work on opening some bank branches in Central American Panama as it is seen as the Banking and Finance Hubs of Americas. And, during the minister’s forthcoming visit there could be talks related to having direct flights between the two countries.

Also Read: <https://www.financialexpress.com/defence/india-to-focus-on-relations-with-lac-region-lekhi-to-tour-panama-chile-and-honduras/2506678/>

## **India & Guyana**

As reported earlier this Caribbean nation is all set to take over South American Brazil as oil producer in the region. India has been buying more crude from this country as it is expanding its import basket to meet the growing energy needs.

The visit will take place following the approval by the Union Cabinet of the Air Services Agreement between India and the Government of Co-operative Republic of Guyana. The Air Services Agreement is expected to come into force after the exchange of diplomatic notes between the two sides and this will enable a framework for provision of air services between the two countries.

This will help in seamless connectivity and will also provide commercial opportunities to the carriers of both the countries.

## India and Dominican Republic

In pursuit of India's "national priority of growth and development or 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas'," in early 2022 two new missions were opened up in the LAC Region – in Paraguay and Dominican Republic. The opening up of the two missions is expected to further deepen India's presence in the region and to also open up new markets for companies and improve goods and services.

**Also Read:** [India expands its presence in the Latin America & Caribbean Region; New Indian missions start operations next month](#)

With the Indian Embassy opening in Santo Domingo it will be easier for both sides to identify new areas of cooperation and investments including building nano satellites, space exploration, oceanography, cyber security, Artificial Intelligence, infrastructure projects, textiles, and more.

It could also be considered as an important logistics hub and will make it easier to connect with Central America. The Caribbean nation is already a member of two important institutions which are led by India — the CDRI and the International Solar Alliance.



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