

'PM Modi has ties with all... I want to make Chile hub for India in the region': Chilean President Gabriel Boric

In an interview to The Indian Express Wednesday, the 39-year-old Boric, President since 2022, expressed admiration for what he called was the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi had "relationships with everyone".

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Chilean President Gabriel Boric Font in New Delhi on Wednesday. (Express photo by Tashi Tobgyal)

FLAGGING closer cooperation with India as both sides work towards an economic partnership on critical minerals and technology, visiting President of Chile Gabriel Boric Font slammed the

US, saying President Donald Trump “represents everything I oppose.”

In an interview to [The Indian Express](#) Wednesday, the 39-year-old Boric, President since 2022, expressed admiration for what he called was the way Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#) had “[relationships with everyone](#)”. Excerpts:

You are just 39, leading a country. How do you see today’s global challenges?

To analyze what’s going on today, it’s important to have a glance at the long history. So, of course, these days are difficult, but so were the days before 1914, or in the ’30s, or the days of the Ottoman empire... the world has never been a quiet place. Nowadays, everything is more interconnected...

The decline of the global powers, especially the United States, has brought a change in the geopolitical order. And the rise of countries from the south, as China, after the humiliation of the 19th century and the incredible, incredible things that India has done in the last few decades are clearly changing the balance of power in the world.

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In that scenario, Latin America has a lot to say. Even though we are, as Gabriel Garcia Marquez said, we cannot live in a magical realism...

While we see J D Vance humiliating the Europeans in Munich or Putin defying the international order, or Israel violating human rights... in Latin America, we respect international order, human rights, and we are keen to collaborate with all nations.

Chile is a country that proves we can have strong relationships with China, with the European Union, with countries of the region, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia, Peru, United States, Asia-Pacific, and, with my visit, it is to strengthen our relationship with India, the biggest democracy in the world. I think we have a lot in common with India. Of course, we also want to learn more about the spirituality you have here. That is something that Mr Modi mentioned (to me). My wish and my goal is to make Chile the hub for India in Latin America.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of Chile Gabriel Boric Font. (Photo: X/@MEAIndia)

One of the things India would like to collaborate on is the vast reserves of copper and lithium that Chile has. How do you view this area of cooperation?

It is absolutely part of the discussions... Chile is the biggest producer of copper and the second-biggest producer of lithium and we are (doing) long-term investments to assure that those reserves will last long. We want to, of course, not only export the raw material, but also add value to them. This is one of the things we discussed with Prime Minister Modi, that the lithium, copper, molybdenum and other renewable energies, other minerals, critical minerals are going to be in the CEPA — the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement — that we have decided to start negotiating.

What's part of the CEPA negotiations and what other areas of cooperation are you looking at?

For India, critical minerals are important and, for us, technology is important. I understand that agriculture is a very sensitive issue here... so we are very flexible about it, but it is important to work on that. Another issue (is) the way we react to natural disasters. So the CEPA — it's not only economic, it's more comprehensive because we face common challenges.

We talked about cultural cooperation as well. We believe that Chile is a place where films can be shot and Bollywood can look at it.

Something that is important for us is, not only the exploration of minerals, but also exchanging techniques, the know-how that we have developed to mine them as we have one of the biggest underground mines in the world.

Antarctica is also important, and it was part of the treaties we signed.

Would you like to host Prime Minister Modi in Antarctica?

Yes, I told him. I told him — I know that Mr Modi has travelled throughout the world — I know he hasn't been to Antarctica. I have been to Antarctica five times. I went to the South Pole in January. It's a long and difficult trip, but I would be glad if Mr Modi, the Prime Minister of the biggest country in the world, can set his foot in this amazing continent that is Antarctica.

US President Trump has disrupted the world with his economic policies, and the tariffs he wants to impose on all countries. How do you view his policies so far?

The world nowadays is absolutely interconnected. If any country or leader thinks he can save for himself without collaborating or just kicking allies or enemies, that might bring some success in the short term, but in the long term, it won't last. So the strategy of my country, Chile...we are a medium-sized country, of 20 million inhabitants... is to diversify and interconnect and cooperate with all nations. That's why my trip to India is important. We do not depend anymore on the United States. We do not like bullies in government, we think that the way countries can develop, over the long term, is (by) taking care of their institutions. Trump, as you have seen in the US, is challenging the institutions, including the judiciary.

We don't want to depend on one country, on or especially on one leadership. I think he is wrong. He, Mr Trump, represents everything I oppose. So I strongly believe in respecting human rights, in respecting people who are weaker, in respecting international law and the cooperation within nations and not in isolation. So we are going through different paths.

How do you view China's rise since your country has developed strong ties with China. Do you see China filling the vacuum left behind by the US?

My experience with China has been very interesting, because they always talk about multilateralism. They never talk about the United States. They are not worried about retaliation.

They say they want to do business with everyone, and they want respect. And respect must be reciprocal. We respect China. China respects us. It's okay, but we don't want to depend on

China. We are not going to change one dependency for another. That's why I'm here in India. One of the things that has impressed me about Mr Modi is that he, at the same time, can talk to (Volodymyr) Zelenskyy, (Vladimir) Putin, (Donald) Trump and Xi (Jinping). He has relationships with everyone. He, of course, represents a big country. We are strategic, we want to have independence strategically but also talk to everybody who wants to talk.

What is your sense of India's presence in Latin America?

I think Latin America lacks India, it has to have more of India...not only commercial goods, not only cheap manufacturing, but especially the culture of India, the understanding that everything is not about just the present.

What you've done, taking so many people out of poverty, what you've done... investing in science, in innovation, what you've done, or what you are doing, facing the challenges of the climate change is something that has to be in collaboration with other countries. For example, the Pacific. We share the Pacific, so I hope we can work together a lot more in the defence of our land, our Earth is the only one we have. And as Mr Modi said, Chile is one of the places where Yoga and Ayurveda are most practised. I think that India has a lot of space to grow in Chile and Latin America. So I hope that this trip here helps in that direction.

As the millennial President of Chile, what is your advice to the millennials?

First of all, get away from your cell phones. Read more, read history, read poetry, read literature, literature from your country and abroad, and question, question the rules, and question yourself. Think for yourself. Please be aware of fake news, and I insist, think for yourselves and to act, you cannot act just for yourself. You have to act in collaboration with others. Change the world for the better. It's not a personal question, it's a collective question. That is politics.



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Shubhajit Roy, Diplomatic Editor at The Indian Express, has been a journalist for more than 25 years now. Roy joined The Indian Express in October 2003 and has been reporting on foreign affa [... Read More](#)

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