



MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



भारत 2023 INDIA
वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्

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सत्यमेव जयते

**MINISTRY OF
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



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Introduction and Synopsis

India and the World in 2023

2023 was a watershed year in Indian foreign policy that saw comprehensive, intense and fruitful engagement with the rest of the world, reflecting India's rising international profile and global stature. Bilateral interactions with key partners around the world were accompanied by India's leadership in plurilateral and multilateral settings, including the G-20.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) successfully carried out its pragmatic and outcome-oriented foreign policy to advance India's national interest, expanding its decisional space and promoting its security; promoting the rules-based international order and strongly advocating for meaningful and early reforms of multilateral institutions.

This was accomplished on the backdrop of a global environment under growing stress. In 2023, the international system continued to navigate a complex web of interconnected challenges. Long-standing structural inequities were aggravated by the lasting effects of the COVID pandemic. This was made worse by rising prices and supply chain disruptions triggered by conflict in Europe, West Asia and other parts of the world. Resource challenges, financial constraints, disrupted trade and climate events added to the burdens of countries, especially in the Global South. The world was engaged in a struggle to address these challenges, amidst rapid technological advancements and growing geopolitical tensions.

To address these challenges, throughout the year, India took an active stance on a number of issues, including security, technology, trade and climate change. It also strengthened its strategic partnerships with other like-minded countries. In contrast to the prevailing global environment, India offered a renewed confidence to the world. This was backed by robust economic growth, on the foundation of transformative domestic reforms and technology-enabled public service delivery. Further, India's mammoth contribution of over 30 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses to 101 countries and international organisations was an example of its dedication to global health and solidarity.

In a historic moment, India assumed the Presidency of the G-20 for the first time on December 1, 2022. A key objective of India's Presidency was also to take the G-20 closer to the people of India and make it a 'People's G20', through the spirit of *Jan Bhagidari*. India's G-20 Presidency theme of 'One Earth, One Family, One Future' rooted in its ancient philosophy of '*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*' found resonance across the world. India hosted over 200 G-20 meetings in 32 different work-streams in 60 cities across the country. Importantly, India also made efforts to incorporate the views and aspirations of the Global South while shaping the G-20 agenda. To this end, India organised a two-day Voice of Global South Summit on 12-13 January 2023. The Summit was held in virtual format, with 10 sessions in total. It saw participation of Leaders and Ministers from 125 developing countries of the Global South.



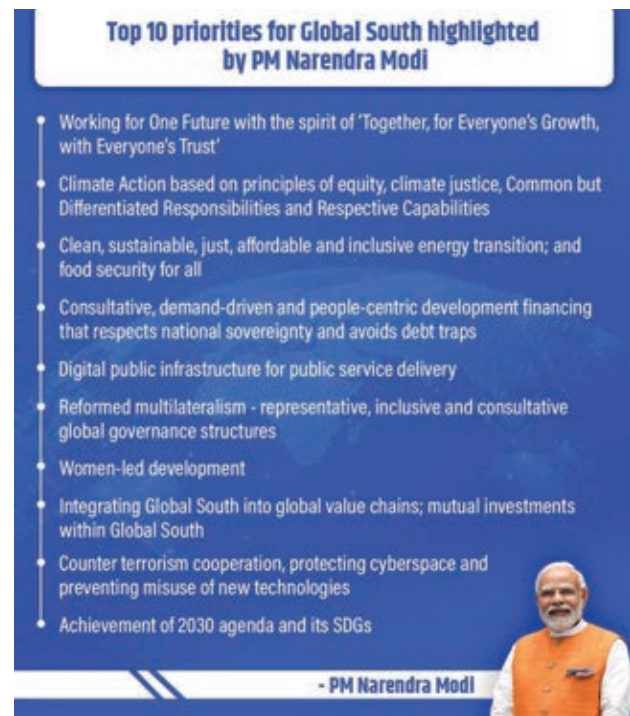
Prime Minister along with President of the United States Joseph Biden, President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva and other dignitaries participated in the G20 Session at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, September 2023.

India successfully hosted the G20 summit in New Delhi on 9-10 September. Leaders & representatives from the G20 countries and special invitees were received at the G20 New Delhi Summit. India also welcomed the Presidents of the African Union, Asian Development Bank, World Bank, European Commission, European Council; Chair of the Financial Stability Board, Managing Director of the IMF, Director-Generals of the ILO, WTO, WHO, ISA, CDRI; Secretary Generals of the UN and OECD at the G20 Summit.

In a testament to India's diplomacy, the New Delhi G20 Summit produced a consensus "New Delhi Leaders' Summit Declaration" despite an environment of rising geopolitical tensions and differences. This declaration addressed global issues like the impact of conflicts on food, energy, and financial stability. It emphasised the need for focusing on sustainable growth, the role of digital infrastructure in trade, the need to strengthen financial institutions, address debt in economically disadvantaged nations, and gender equality for the 2030 Agenda. The summit also condemned terrorism. India successfully proposed including the African Union in the G20 and initiated the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor for regional integration. India also launched the Global Biofuels Alliance with 19 countries and 12 international organisations, marking a significant diplomatic achievement.

The 2nd Voice of Global South Summit was held again in virtual format on 17 November 2023. The focus of this 2nd Summit was to share the beneficial outcomes and progress achieved in the agenda of the Global South during India's G-20 Presidency, and to deliberate the way forward for the Global South to achieve our shared objectives. In the Concluding Leaders' Session of the

2nd Voice of Global South Summit, Prime Minister summarised the key deliberations in the form of 10 driving principles that could guide Global South's new paradigm of cooperation.



Prime Minister summarised the key deliberations in the form of 10 driving principles that could guide Global South's new paradigm of cooperation in the Concluding Leaders' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit.

On 22 November, India hosted a concluding G20 Leaders' Summit in virtual format. The main objective of the Virtual Summit was to review and accelerate progress on the outcomes of the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit held in September 2023. It was attended by 21 HoS/Gs (including India), one Vice President, 8 Ministers and 11 Heads of International Organisations.

India also hosted the SCO summit in 2023, which further strengthened its diverse geopolitical engagement.

Cultural diplomacy thrived in the year. During India's Presidency of the SCO, Varanasi was nominated as the first-ever SCO Tourism and Cultural Capital. Separately, the Sacred Ensembles of Hoysalas and Santiniketan earned the UNESCO World Heritage status, while UNESCO inscribed the Gujarati folk dance 'Garba' on its Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. Kozhikode was designated as the UNESCO 'City of Literature' and Gwalior as the 'City of Music' in the latest UNESCO list of Creative Cities Network. The World Hindi Conference in Fiji witnessed representation from 50 countries, underscoring Hindi language's cultural prominence and outreach.

India further reinforced its credentials as a reliable First Responder in crises- both in the region and beyond. It was one of the first countries to initiate search, rescue and relief operations after a devastating earthquake struck Türkiye in February 2023. It also

sent relief supplies to Syria at the same time. In December, India announced immediate relief assistance to Papua New Guinea in the wake of a volcanic eruption. Throughout the year, India continued to provide humanitarian aid to those in need, including in Ukraine, Palestine, Myanmar, Afghanistan and Nepal.

In 2023, India actively collaborated with the global community to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and worked with partner countries towards capacity-building, best practice exchanges, and information sharing.

In its commitment to the safety of its citizens across the world, India undertook Operation Kaveri and Operation Ajay in 2023. Under Operation Kaveri, India evacuated a total of 4097 people from Sudan, including 3961 Indian nationals and 136 foreign nationals. 1309 Indians returned to India under Operation Ajay, from Israel. To ensure that Indians avail of the opportunities in the global marketplace, India entered into innovative migration and mobility arrangements with several countries in 2023.

The year witnessed several important high-level diplomatic engagements. In 2023, the Hon'ble President of India visited Suriname and Serbia, which provided impetus to the ongoing momentum in bilateral relations. On behalf of the Government of India, the Vice President visited the UK in May 2023 to attend the coronation ceremony of King Charles III.



Prime Minister virtually inaugurated DAKSHIN - Global South Centre of Excellence during the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, November 2023



Vice-President attended the Coronation Ceremony of King Charles III in London, May 2023.

Prime Minister visited Japan, Papua New Guinea, Australia, United States of America, Egypt, France, UAE, South Africa, Greece and Indonesia to participate in various high-level bilateral engagements, plurilateral and multilateral meetings.

Prime Minister also participated in several virtual and in-person Summit-level meetings including the G20, G7 summit, Quad Leaders' Summit, BRICS Summit, SCO Summit, 1st and 2nd Voice of Global South Summits and the COP 28.

EAM visited Cyprus, Austria, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Fiji, Australia, Uganda, Mozambique, Guyana, Panama, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Bangladesh, Sweden, Belgium, South Africa, Namibia, Tanzania, Thailand, Indonesia, United States of America, Vietnam, Singapore, Kyrgyz Republic, Portugal, Italy, United Kingdom, and Russia to participate in various diplomatic engagements.

EAM joined the 12th Vishwa Hindi Sammelan celebrations in Fiji and participated in the second EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum (EIPMF) in Sweden; first Ministerial meeting of the India-EU Trade Technology Council in Belgium; India-CARICOM meeting in Guyana, India-SICA meeting in Panama; BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in South Africa; Foreign Ministers' Meetings under the ASEAN framework, namely ASEAN-India, East Asia Summit, and ASEAN Regional Forum in Indonesia; the 12 Foreign Ministers' Meeting of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) in Thailand; 78th UNGA High-Level Session in New York; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of Government (CHG) meeting in Kyrgyzstan; and the Council of Ministers' meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) in Sri Lanka.

During the year EAM received in New Delhi Foreign Ministers of Panama, Thailand, Canada, New Zealand, Egypt, El Salvador, Czech Republic, Denmark, Mauritius, Israel, Bangladesh, Republic of Korea, Bhutan, Philippines, Maldives, Japan, Honduras, Bolivia, North Macedonia, Nigeria, Malta, Tanzania, Malaysia, Seychelles, Suriname, Rwanda, and Benin. EAM chaired the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in Delhi, Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting in Delhi, G20 Development Ministers Meeting in Varanasi, SCO Foreign Ministers Meeting in Goa and co-chaired the India-US 2+2 and India-Australia 2+2 in Delhi along with Raksha Mantri.

MoS (VM) visited UAE (January), Sri Lanka (February), Australia (February), Singapore (February), Fiji (February), Saudi Arabia (May), Bahrain (May), Brunei (May), Malaysia (June), Maldives (June), Syria (July), Kuwait (August), Oman (October), Congo (October), Tanzania (November), Kenya (November), Japan (November) and Mauritius (November). In Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, MoS (VM) oversaw the evacuation of Indian citizens from Sudan under Operation Kaveri. The other visits aimed at enhancing bilateral cooperation, promoting trade and investment, and engaging with the Indian diaspora.

MoS (ML) visited Cuba (January), Guatemala (January), El Salvador (January), Bolivia (January), Greece (January), Croatia (April), Slovenia (April), North-Macedonia (July), Netherlands (November), Hungary (November), and Bulgaria (November-December). The visits focused on a broad spectrum of areas including political and economic cooperation, cultural exchanges, trade and investment, health, and sustainability.

MoS (RRS) visited Fiji (May), Singapore (May), New Zealand (September), Vietnam (September) Timor-Leste (September-October), Republic of Marshall Islands (October), and

Malaysia (November-December). These promoted economic collaboration, education, community development, cultural exchange, and the strengthening of diplomatic ties.

These visits underscore India's continued diplomatic efforts to foster robust international ties and cooperation across multiple sectors and regions.

In 2023, India welcomed high-level visiting delegations (Head of State/ Head of Government/Foreign Minister) from Germany, Italy, Japan, Australia, Bhutan, Republic of Korea, Cambodia, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, Dominican Republic, Malta, Tanzania, Kenya, and Oman, apart from leaders visiting India for the G-20 Summit.

'Foreign Office Consultations' (FOC) is an institutional mechanism for dialogue between Ministries of External Affairs of partner countries. In 2023, India held FOCs with 50 countries: Slovenia (January 06, 2023); UK (January 16, 2023); USA (January 31, 2023); Serbia (February 03, 2023); France (February 06, 2023); Slovakia (February 10, 2023); Kazakhstan (February 13, 2023); Iraq (February 20, 2023); Iceland and Uruguay (March 06, 2023); Albania (March 23, 2023); Chile (March 31, 2023); Denmark (April 01, 2023); Canada, Australia and Estonia (April 12, 2023); Republic of Congo (April 13, 2023); Peru (April 15, 2023); El-Salvador (May 01, 2023); Kuwait (May 02, 2023); Zambia (25 May, 2023); Austria (May 30, 2023); Romania (June 13, 2023); Greece (June 14, 2023); Brazil (June 21, 2023); Ecuador (June 24, 2023); Ukraine (July 13, 2023); Brunei (July 25, 2023); Lao PDR (July 27, 2023); Malawi (August 04, 2023); Thailand, Cameroon and Uzbekistan (August 07, 2023); Angola (August 11, 2023); New Zealand (August 19, 2023); Samoa (August 22, 2023); Singapore (September 18, 2023); Malta (September 29, 2023); Spain (October 09, 2023); Andorra (October 11, 2023); UK (October 16, 2023); Finland (November 01, 2023); Georgia (November 06, 2023); Armenia (November 18, 2023); Lithuania (November 21, 2023); Bangladesh (November 24, 2023); Iran (November 26, 2023); Myanmar (December 06, 2023); Burundi (December 12, 2023); and Botswana (December 14, 2023).

India's Neighbourhood First Policy is an effort to accord institutional policy priority across all relevant arms of the Government towards our partners in our immediate neighbourhood: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. It has been one of the defining features of India's foreign policy since 2014. It was conceived to forge strong neighbourhood relations based on a consultative, non-reciprocal and outcome-oriented approach.

India's approach to Afghanistan continues to be guided by its historical relations, friendship with its people and relevant UN Resolutions. Since June 2022, an Indian technical team is positioned in Kabul and actively supports the people of Afghanistan with humanitarian assistance. In this endeavour, India has supplied several shipments of humanitarian assistance consisting of 50,000 MTs of wheat, 250 tons of medical aid

and 28 tons of earthquake relief aid. These consignments were handed over to the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health (IGICH) and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS).

Under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarship scheme, India granted fresh admissions to more than 2000 Afghan students, including 301 girls. For the academic year 2023-24, ICCR started to provide online scholarships for 1000 Afghan students through e-Vidya Bharti portal. Continuing its collaboration with Afghan National Agricultural Science and Technical University (ANASTU), India is providing online scholarships for Afghan students in agricultural sciences. Further, India has partnered with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Afghanistan to provide assistance for the welfare of Afghan drug user population, especially women. Under this partnership, India has supplied 11,000 units of female hygiene kits, baby food and hygiene kits, blankets, clothing, footwear, medical aid and other miscellaneous items to UNODC, Kabul. These items are being distributed by UNODC in its Drug Treatment centres across Afghanistan.

The relationship between India and Bangladesh is a crucial element of India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy. In 2023, the strong bilateral relations between the two nations saw further advancement as the countries continued to engage closely in various areas, including interactions at the highest level. Bangladesh is India's top regional trading partner in the neighbourhood, with robust economic ties. In 2022-23, bilateral trade reached USD 14.22 billion, making India the largest Asian export market for Bangladesh.

Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister of People's Republic of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina in September 2023, when PM Hasina visited India to participate as a guest country leader in the G-20 Leaders' Summit. The two leaders jointly welcomed the operationalisation of the Agreement on the use of the Chattogram and Mongla Ports signed in May 2023. Three MoUs aimed at facilitating cooperation in digital payment mechanisms, renewal of the Cultural Exchange Programs (CEPs) and collaboration on agricultural research were signed during the visit.

Development partnership is a priority area of bilateral cooperation. India has extended concessional financing in the form of loans and grants of approximately USD 10 billion to Bangladesh, making it India's largest development partner. A significant part of India's Line of Credit (LOC) projects, including the Khulna- Mongla Port rail line, were completed this year. This project, along with two other projects were jointly inaugurated by both Prime Ministers on 1 November 2023 in a virtual ceremony. High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) continue to be an active pillar of India's development assistance in Bangladesh and include construction of student hostels, academic buildings, skill development and training



Prime Minister welcomed the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina, at the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

institutes, cultural centres, orphanages, and restoration of common cultural heritage.

India and Bhutan enjoy exemplary bilateral relations. 2023 witnessed significant growth with particular focus on cross-border connectivity, trade, investments, education, energy cooperation, youth skilling and technology. The King of Bhutan, H.E. Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck paid two official visits to India in April and November 2023. Foreign Secretary visited Bhutan in January 2023 to co-chair the 4th India-Bhutan Development Cooperation talks. He visited Bhutan again in July 2023 for bilateral discussions. India has consistently been Bhutan's top trading partner – both as an import source and as an export destination, accounting for about 80% of Bhutan's overall trade. Cooperation in the hydropower sector remains one of the central pillars of India-Bhutan ties of friendship and engagement. India is presently constructing two hydro-electric projects in Bhutan: Punatsangchhu-I (1200 MW) and Punatsangchhu-II (1020 MW).

India has supported 83 Project Tied Assistance (PTA) projects with a budget of INR 2800 crore and 524 High Impact Community Development Projects/Small Development Projects worth INR 850 crore in Bhutan. Additionally, a program grant of INR 850 crore was provided. India further offered a Trade Support Facility of INR 400 crore for Bhutan's 12th Five Year Plan.

India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy and Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) outlook worked in tandem to tackle shared concerns and advance mutual interests. EAM visited the northern atolls of Maldives in January 2023, during which, EAM and the then FM held bilateral talks and witnessed exchange of several agreements. In May 2023, Raksha Mantri visited Maldives

on an official visit and held talks with the then Defence Minister of Maldives Ms. Mariya Didi to enhance defence cooperation and strengthen the longstanding partnership between India and Maldives. Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the newly-elected President of Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, on 01 December 2023, on the sidelines of the COP-28 Summit in Dubai.

India-Maldives bilateral trade reached USD 414 million in 2023. India's development cooperation includes ongoing key infrastructure and high-impact grant projects in Maldives. India is supporting over 65 high-impact grant projects in areas of health, education, capacity building, culture & sports and 07 large key infrastructure projects under EXIM Bank's concessional Lines of Credit (LoC).

Myanmar is an important neighbouring country and is India's land link to ASEAN. India and Myanmar also share strong civilisational, historical and people-to-people ties. The current security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar has remained a cause of concern, as it has direct implications for India. We have called for complete cessation of violence, resolution of issues through dialogue, release of political detainees and Myanmar's return to the path of democratic transition at the earliest.

EAM met U Than Swe, on the sidelines of the 12th Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) meeting in Bangkok on July 16, 2023. India has a significant development cooperation portfolio of approximately USD 2 billion in Myanmar, with most of the projects being undertaken under grant-in-aid. Sittwe Port, a part of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTTP) was inaugurated in May 2023.

India's bilateral relationship with Nepal has consistently gained momentum, with a focus on connectivity and capacity building.



Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal with the Prime Minister in New Delhi, June 2023.

Prime Minister of Nepal, Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', visited New Delhi, Indore and Ujjain in May and June 2023. During the bilateral meeting held on 01 June 2023 in New Delhi, the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal reviewed the entire spectrum of the bilateral agenda between India and Nepal.

India provides substantial financial and technical assistance to Nepal for implementation of large development and infrastructure and connectivity projects, as well as small development projects/ high impact community development projects in key areas of education, health, irrigation, rural infrastructure, livelihood development, etc. all across the country. A series of cross-border connectivity projects like rail links, roads, Integrated Check Posts are under development with India's grant assistance. On 03 November 2023, a 6.4 magnitude earthquake struck Jajarkot and East Rukum districts in Western Nepal, resulting in over 150 fatalities and significant infrastructure damage. India, adhering to its Prime Minister's pledge to be a First Responder, provided four batches of relief materials to Nepal.

India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. India's consistent position is that issues, if any, between India and Pakistan should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence. The onus is on Pakistan to create such a conducive environment. In 2023, India enabled 5,937 Indian pilgrims to visit shrines in Pakistan for events like Baisakhi and Gurupurab, while 921 Pakistani pilgrims visited religious sites in India for Urs celebrations. Additionally, 84,251 pilgrims visited Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan via the Kartarpur Corridor. India and Pakistan exchanged lists of prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody, on 01 July 2023. A total of 478 Indian fishermen and 08 Indian civilian

prisoners were repatriated from Pakistan. The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, participated in the SCO Council of Heads of State Meeting virtually on 04 July 2023. The then Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari participated in the SCO Foreign Ministers Meeting (FMM) in Goa on 04-05 May 2023.

India continues to convey its concerns regarding the incidents of vandalism/desecration of places of worship and cultural heritage of minority communities as well as discrimination, killing, abduction, forced conversion and marriages of the members of the minority communities in Pakistan.

India-Sri Lanka relations made substantial progress in 2023, in-line with India's 'Neighbourhood First' and SAGAR policies. High-level engagements between the countries continued, with the President of Sri Lanka visiting India on 21 July 2023, during which he met the Hon'ble President and Prime Minister. During the visit of Sri Lankan President, MoUs on renewable energy, economic development initiatives in Trincomalee (Sri Lanka), cooperation in Animal Husbandry and the Network-to-Network Agreement between National Payments Corporation of India (NIPL) and Lankan Pay for UPI acceptance in Sri Lanka were signed. EAM paid an official visit to Sri Lanka on 19-20 January 2023. The extraordinary financial aid of USD 4 billion provided by India to Sri Lanka in 2022, aimed at addressing the nation's severe socio-economic challenges, further solidified bilateral ties in 2023.

The Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a unique regional organisation linking South Asia with Southeast Asia, and

advancing India's key foreign policy priorities of strengthening economic and connectivity linkages under the 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies. India is currently leading the Security Sector out of a total of seven priority sectors under BIMSTEC Cooperation. MoS (RRS) participated in the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting virtually, which was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Thailand Don Pramudwinai in March 2023. India hosted the 10th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime in New Delhi on 12 January 2023.

India's relationship with island countries in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) deepened during the year. Leadership and Ministerial level interactions with countries provided much-needed guidance in advancing bilateral ties. During the year, India continued its developmental assistance and capacity-building support to IOR countries. On 08 September 2023, during the G20 Summit in Delhi, the Prime Minister met with Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth. India has also been cooperating in execution of several large infrastructure development projects in Mauritius. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Seychelles, Sylvestre Radegonde undertook his first official visit to India as Foreign Minister from 22-24 November 2023 and had discussions with EAM. India approved export of 800 tons of non-basmati rice to Seychelles on special request to ensure food security of the country.

India's engagement with Southeast Asian countries and countries in the Indo-Pacific also takes place under the overall framework of the Act East Policy. Prime Minister participated in

the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and 18th East Asia Summit on 07 September 2023 at Jakarta.

Prime Minister also met Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh and held bilateral talks in Hiroshima on 20 May, on the sidelines of the expanded G7 Summit and again interacted informally during the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC (COP28) in Dubai on 01 December. In February, the link between India's UPI and Singapore's PayNow was virtually launched, in the presence of Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong. Prime Minister and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. of the Philippines held a brief meeting on the sidelines of 20th ASEAN-India Summit on 7 September in Jakarta. EAM visited Jakarta in July to attend the meetings under the ASEAN framework, namely ASEAN-India, East Asia Summit, and ASEAN Regional Forum.

Raksha Mantri visited Indonesia for ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) on 16 and 17 November. EAM visited Vietnam from 15-18 October 2023. EAM visited Singapore from 18-21 October 2023. These high-level political exchanges and convening of established institutional mechanisms such as joint commission meetings, foreign office consultations, defence and trade dialogues provided impetus to the engagement with this region.

The year witnessed the maiden State Visit by King of Cambodia, His Majesty Norodom Sihamoni to India from 29-31 May. The visit marked the culmination of year-long celebrations of the 70th Anniversary of India-Cambodia Diplomatic relations.



Prime Minister was welcomed by President of Indonesia Joko Widodo to the 20th ASEAN-India Summit, September 2023.

In May 2023, India and ASEAN organised their first Maritime Exercise in South China Sea. India assumed the role of Vice-Chair of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for the term 2023-25.

During the year, India continued with its deepening of strategic engagement with countries in the Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister visited Australia on 22-24 May 2023 and held a bilateral meeting with his Australian counterpart. They agreed to take the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to new heights in the next decade. The bilateral defence collaboration has diversified to include extensive defence exercises, regular exchange of visits and interactions. Both countries also share the vision of a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific. Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese held the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10 March 2023 in New Delhi, during the State Visit of Australian Prime Minister from 08-11 March. EAM and Foreign Minister Penny Wong held the 14th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue (FMFD) on 21 November 2023, taking stock of the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation.

Prime Minister visited Papua New Guinea and co-hosted the 3rd Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III Summit) jointly with the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, H.E. James Marape on 22 May 2023. Launched in 2014, FIPIC involves India and 14 Pacific Island Countries (PICs), namely, Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. On the sidelines of the FIPIC Summit, Prime Minister interacted with the Prime Ministers of Papua New Guinea, Fiji,

New Zealand, Cook Islands, Samoa, Tuvalu, Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, the Presidents of Nauru, Palau and Kiribati, the Premier of Niue, Minister from Marshall Islands, and the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum. During the visit, the Prime Minister was conferred the highest civilian awards of both Fiji and Papua New Guinea, that is, the 'Companion of the Order of Fiji' and the 'Companion of the Order of Logohu' respectively.

India's approach to the Indo-Pacific region centres on advocating for a region that is free, open, inclusive, and governed by rules. India believes in the importance of respecting the sovereignty and territorial boundaries of every nation in the region, treating all nations equally, resolving conflicts peacefully, refraining from the use or threat of force, and strictly following international laws, rules, and regulations. The Prime Minister participated in the Quad Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima, Japan on 20 May 2023, along with his counterparts from Australia, Japan, and the US. The Quad Leaders released a Vision Statement articulating their principled approach for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific, and upholding the principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of disputes. The Quad Foreign Ministers formed the Quad Working Group on Counter Terrorism in New Delhi earlier in March. Quad Leaders also launched initiatives to promote climate action, infrastructure development, cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, secure cyberspace, health security, maritime domain data sharing, space cooperation and to counter terrorism in the Indo-Pacific region.



Prime Minister with the leaders of Pacific Island Countries at the 3rd Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation in Papua New Guinea, May 2023



Prime Minister participated in the Quad Leaders' Summit in Hiroshima, Japan, May 2023 May 2023

The Ministerial Meeting of the 3rd Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) was held in San Francisco on 14 November 2023. India was represented by the Minister of Commerce and Industry at the meet.



Prime Minister addressed a Joint Sitting of the US Congress, June 2023 May 2023.

The Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership between India and the US is founded on shared democratic principles, convergence on security and strategic interests, and a common perspective of a rule-based international order. India-US relations acquired a new momentum in 2023 with both countries charting a futuristic roadmap. High-level dialogues continued with two Leader-level engagements and several wide-ranging high-level interactions. Prime Minister made a historic State Visit to the US in June 2023 at the invitation of President Biden. In addition to a bilateral meeting with President Biden, he addressed a Joint Meeting of US' Congress, interacted with business and thought leaders and the Indian community. The visit saw the announcement of several outcomes and initiatives across sectors, especially in critical technologies, defence, commerce, renewable energy, and people-to-people ties.

President Biden's visit to New Delhi from 08-10 September 2023, to attend the G-20 Leaders' Summit, was his first as Head of State. EAM visited Washington D.C. for a bilateral visit in September 2023. Economic, trade, people-to-people and political ties continued an upward trajectory through wide-ranging engagements and collaboration.

The 5th India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, co-led by Raksha Mantri and EAM and their US counterparts, Secretary Anthony Blinken and Secretary Lloyd Austin, was held on 10 November 2023 in New Delhi. Defence partnership, which is a key pillar of the India-US strategic partnership witnessed an intensification in joint military exercises, defence industrial collaborations, technology transfer, defence trade, cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy efforts.

India-US trade reached USD 191 billion in 2022. The US has been India's largest goods trading partner since the financial year



Hon'ble President was welcomed by the President of Serbia in a ceremony at the Presidential Palace in Belgrade, June 2023

2021-22, with rapid growth in sectors such as energy, defence, manufacturing, and information technology. The inaugural meeting of Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET), co-chaired by the National Security Advisors (NSAs) was held on 31 January 2023 in Washington DC with the participation of high-ranking domain experts from both sides.

India-Canada relations are based on strong people-to-people ties and robust economic linkages. Canada participated in India's G20 presidency proceedings through Ministerial and official level participation. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended the G-20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi on 09-10 September 2023.

India-Russia bilateral ties continued to strengthen, reflecting the shared interests in a complicated geopolitical scenario. Prime Minister had telephone conversations with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin, in June and August 2023. President Vladimir Putin participated in the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit Chaired by the Prime Minister on 22 November 2023. EAM visited Moscow and Saint Petersburg on 26-29 December 2023 and had detailed discussions on the whole gamut of bilateral issues as well as regional issues of mutual interest with the Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov, and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. EAM also called on President Putin. Bilateral trade in 2022-23 increased by more than three times to USD 49.4 billion, with Russia becoming India's 5th largest trading partner.

India's relations with European countries and the European Union (EU) witnessed a renewed momentum with several high-level meetings and summits. Hon'ble President undertook a State Visit to Serbia from 07-09 June 2023. This marked her first

visit to Europe and the first-ever visit by a Head of State from either country.

Prime Minister visited Greece and France. EAM visited Belgium, Sweden, Cyprus, Austria, Italy, Portugal, and the UK. The visits involved discussions on a range of issues of bilateral, regional, and global relevance. In Brussels, on 16 May, EAM along with the Commerce and Industry Minister and the Minister of State for Information Technology & Skill Development & Entrepreneurship attended the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), which facilitated exchange of critical technologies relating to an array of domains including artificial intelligence, quantum computing, semiconductors, and cybersecurity. Prime Minister met the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi. In addition to political level engagements, India and EU also engaged through Foreign Policy and Security Consultations, High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility, India-EU Human Rights Dialogue, and Security and Defence Consultations.

The year 2023 marked 25 years of India-France Strategic Partnership. Prime Minister visited France on 13-14 July and attended Bastille Day, as the Guest of Honour. He was conferred with France's highest honour, the 'Grand Cross of the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour)'. India also celebrated 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations with Italy and Luxembourg in 2023. Bilateral relations with Italy were upgraded to the level of Strategic Partnership in March 2023. EAM visited Italy in November 2023. During the visit, significant agreements on Migration and Mobility Partnership and Cultural Cooperation with Italy were signed. EAM also visited the UK in November 2023.

Prime Minister's visit to Greece in August 2023 resulted in the elevation of bilateral relations to Strategic Partnership. Prime Minister was also conferred with the award 'The Grand Cross of the Order of Honour' during the visit, becoming the first foreign Head of Government to receive this honour. Another significant milestone in the growing relations with Europe was the organisation of the 2nd India- Nordic Baltic Business Conclave jointly by MEA and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in New Delhi on 22-23 November 2023. Ministers, senior officials, and businesspersons from Nordic-Baltic countries and India participated in the Conclave.

There were several high-level incoming visits from Europe. Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz paid a State Visit to India on 25-26 February 2023. Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni visited India on 02 March for a State Visit and attended the Raisina Dialogue as the Chief Guest. Seven Heads of State from Europe visited India for the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023.

During the year, India and Japan expanded their bilateral engagement, further strengthening the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Japan, Kishida Fumio met thrice in 2023. This included a two-day visit of Prime Minister Kishida to India from 19-21 March. Prime Minister travelled to Japan from 19-21 May 2023 to participate in the expanded G7 Summit in Hiroshima, where India had been invited. During the visit, Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with Prime Minister Kishida. Further, both Prime Ministers also participated in the 5th QUAD Leaders' Summit held in Hiroshima on 20 May 2023. During their interactions, the two leaders discussed the constructive work done throughout the year focusing on the objectives of their

respective G7 and G20 presidencies, particularly in bringing the aspirations of the Global South to the fore.

India's engagement with China is complex. Chinese attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the LAC in the Western Sector starting from April-May 2020 have disturbed the peace and tranquillity along the LAC. Both nations are seeking to resolve LAC issues in Eastern Ladakh, evidenced by multiple meetings under the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) and Senior Military Commanders since June 2020. This dialogue led to disengagements in various areas. Ongoing discussions continue through diplomatic and military channels, aiming for early disengagement in remaining areas, resumption of patrolling as in the past, and restoration of peace and tranquillity. High-level bilateral meetings in 2023, including those during international forums, emphasised the need for resolving outstanding issues for normalcy in bilateral relations, underlining mutual respect, sensitivity, and interests. India remains engaged with China on various multilateral platforms.

The Special Strategic Partnership between India and the Republic of Korea (RoK) got an impetus in 2023 owing to several high-level exchanges and meetings of bilateral dialogue mechanisms. The year 2023 also marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and RoK.

Relations between India and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) remain on an even keel. India has been consistently supportive of efforts to bring about peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy.



Prime Minister along with the leaders paid tributes to the Hiroshima Victims at the Peace Memorial Park and Museum in Hiroshima, May 2023

India and Mongolia share civilisational, historical, cultural, and spiritual ties. Mongolia, being a landlocked country bordering China and Russia, considers India as an important 'third' and 'spiritual neighbour'. Our development partnership has assumed significance.

The historic ties between India and the Gulf countries continued to deepen and strengthen. Prime Minister met H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE thrice in 2023, first during his visit to UAE in July 2023, followed by the visit of the UAE President to India for the G20 Summit, and lastly, during the visit of the Prime Minister to UAE for the COP-28 Summit. Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud visited India for the G-20 Summit from 09-10 September 2023 and was on a State visit on 11 September 2023. During the visit, the Prime Minister and Crown Prince co-chaired the first Leaders' Meeting of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council. Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik of Oman also paid a State visit to India on 15-17 December 2023. EAM visited UAE thrice in 2023.

Gulf countries continued to be among the top trading partners of India. With a bilateral trade of more than USD 184 billion, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was the top regional grouping for trade with India in 2022-23. Investment flows also continue to be robust. The cumulative FDI from GCC countries currently stands at about USD 20 billion. India's energy imports from the region also remain substantial. The 8.7 million strong Indian community continued to remain a strong bridge between India and the Gulf countries.

Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the President of Israel Isaac Herzog on 01 December 2023, on the sidelines of the COP28 Summit in Dubai. Prime Minister expressed his condolences on the loss of lives in the 07 October terror attacks and welcomed the release of Israeli hostages. Prime Minister reiterated the need for continued and safe delivery of humanitarian aid for the affected population. As strategic partners, India and Israel under the I2U2 Framework have agreed to increase joint investment in six key areas of water, energy, transport, space, health, and food security.

In 2023, the historic and deep-rooted relationship between India and Iran continued to strengthen with robust bilateral cooperation. Prime Minister met the President of Iran, Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi at the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg on 24 August 2023. On 27 April, Defence Minister of Iran Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani met with Raksha Mantri on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting in India. On 2 June, EAM met with Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of the Friends of BRICS Summit in Johannesburg. Iran was a special guest at the first meeting of India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar Port, which was held in Mumbai on 13 April 2023.

There was sustained momentum in India's traditionally close ties with countries in the Eurasian region. Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and EAM met during the former's visit to New Delhi in March 2023 to attend the Raisina Dialogue. Under India's chairmanship of the SCO, a decision to commence the process of inducting Belarus as a Member State was adopted by the SCO Members. India also actively engaged with the region under the SCO format.

India-Ukraine bilateral engagement continued to develop. Prime Minister met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 20 May 2023 in Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G7 Summit. The First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Emine Dzhaparova earlier visited India on 9-12 April. India participated in the meetings of the National Security Advisors and Political Directors on the implementation of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula. India continued to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Ukraine.

India and Africa have a solidarity rooted in history and cooperation on many issues and as fellow members of the Global South, India maintained its special focus on the region. India's efforts ensured that the African Union (AU) became a permanent member of G20 during the New Delhi Summit in September 2023.



Prime Minister met President of Comoros and the Chairperson of the African Union Azali Assoumani on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

India continued its development partnership with Africa by implementing various projects, including in drinking water, irrigation, solar electrification, power plants, railways, agricultural and healthcare. Bilateral trade between India and Africa stood at approximately USD 98 billion in 2022-23 and continues to grow. India continues to work with African nations

to promote regional security, foster stability and enhance defence capabilities. The 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership was held from 14-16 June 2023 in New Delhi. India's relations with Africa in the defence sector and maritime security witnessed a paradigm shift with several Ministers from African nations participating in the Defence Ministers' Conclave hosted on the margins of Aero India 2023. India also offers a large number of training slots under the ITEC Programme both in civil and in the defence sector as well as scholarships for higher education through ICCR. In addition, India is currently implementing a flagship online educational project called e-Vidya Bharati and Arogya Bharati (e-VBAB) Network Project for African students to pursue online Undergraduate/Postgraduate/ Diploma/Certificate programmes.

2023 was also a momentous year for India-Egypt bilateral relations. President of Egypt Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi paid his 2nd State Visit to India from 24-27 January 2023 as the Chief Guest of India's 74th Republic Day celebrations. President Sisi met with the Hon'ble President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and EAM during the visit. Prime Minister paid his first-ever State Visit to Egypt from 24 - 25 June, at the invitation of President Sisi. During the visit, Prime Minister was conferred Egypt's highest civilian honour, the 'Order of the Nile' in recognition of his efforts in strengthening India-Egypt ties.

India remained proactively engaged with Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Lebanon, Sudan, Eritrea, Djibouti, South Sudan, Syria, Somalia, and Tunisia in the West Asia and North Africa region. Under the aegis of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum, the 6th India-Arab Partnership Conference titled "New Horizons in Investment, Trade & Services" was organised on 11-12 July 2023 in New Delhi.

In 2023, India's long-standing and amicable ties with the 15 nations of East and Southern Africa region also flourished, marked by numerous significant achievements. This vibrant and robust relationship was reinforced through a series of high-level visits throughout the year, as well as official meetings under various bilateral dialogue frameworks. The collaboration extended to defence and maritime domains, strengthened development partnerships, and saw a rise in bilateral trade and investment.

The year also witnessed State visits by Presidents of Kenya and of Tanzania. 2023 marked 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Ethiopia. Prime Minister met Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali in Johannesburg on 24 August, on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit. Prime Minister also met Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa on 23 August in Johannesburg on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit. In addition, the inauguration of the first off-shore campuses of IIT-Madras in Zanzibar, Tanzania and the National Forensics Science University in Jinja, Uganda was a significant development in India's abiding commitment to capacity-building in the Global South.

The Central and West African region comprises 25 countries in the West, Northwest, Central and Southwest Africa, and is home to the continent's largest population, and fastest growing economies. India's diplomatic presence in Africa expanded with the opening of a resident Mission in Cabo Verde in 2023. India enjoys warm and cordial relations with all the countries in the region. Nigeria was a special invitee country during India's G20 Presidency, and Nigerian President Bola Tinubu visited India for the G20 Leaders' Summit in September. Currently, India has around 2000 troops deployed with the United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO), including Police Units, experts and troops.

The Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region remained an important area of focus for India's foreign policy during the year. India continued its efforts to strengthen its relations and diversify engagements with the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean region.

Hon'ble President and PM received Presidents of Guyana and Suriname on the sidelines of Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, reflecting the strong historical connection with the Caribbean region. Hon'ble President of India participated in the 7th Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit in January 2023 in virtual format as a special guest, fostering deeper ties. Hon'ble President was decorated with the highest civilian honour of Suriname, 'The Grand Order of the Chain of Yellow Star' during her visit to the country in June. Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting with the President of Brazil Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. EAM held bilateral meetings with visiting foreign ministers of Panama, El Salvador, Argentina, Brazil and Mexico and Honduras. EAM visited several countries in the region, including Guyana and Panama, promoting cooperation in the post-pandemic scenario, through discussions with regional groups like Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and System of Integration of Central America (SICA). The 9th CII India-LAC Conclave under the theme "Furthering Economic Partnerships for Shared & Sustained Growth" was organised in New Delhi on 3-5 August 2023 with the participation of high-level delegations, senior Government officials and business sector representatives from India and 33 LAC countries.

India-LAC bilateral trade surged to almost USD 50 Billion during the financial year 2022-23. The Indian Embassy in the Dominican Republic was formally inaugurated during the year. India continued its development partnership association with Latin America and Caribbean countries through assistance in the form of grants and lines of credit.

As a strong supporter of the rules-based international order, India continued to participate and promote international cooperation and multilateralism.

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation to the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg themed, "BRICS and Africa:



Prime Minister at the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, August 2023

Partnership for Growth, Sustainable Development, and Inclusive Multilateralism.”

EAM participated in the 11th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting (chaired by Brazil) held on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on 22 September 2023.

Prime Minister attended the COP-28 Presidency’s Session on “Transforming Climate Finance” on 01 December in Dubai, UAE. He emphasised the Global South’s concerns and priorities, stressed the need for adequate climate finance to help developing nations achieve their climate goals and Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs, and welcomed the establishment of Loss and Damage Fund and UAE’s Climate Investment Fund at COP-28.

India has been an active and engaged member of the United Nations. The highlight of 2023 was the UN General Assembly (UNGA) session, ‘Sustainable Development Goals Summit’ which was held on 18-19 September 2023. EAM led the Indian delegation for the High-Level Week at the 78th session of UNGA and addressed the General Debate in New York on 26 September 2023. India continued its efforts to move the process of UN Security Council (UNSC) reforms forward, including by engaging actively in the ongoing Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process on UNSC reform, which conducted in-person meetings with webcasting for the first time in the 77th UNGA session and began work on a digital repository of important documents relating to this process. India’s engagement at the UN endeavoured to voice the key concerns of the Global South, namely, effective response to the menace of terrorism, and

roadmap for reformed multilateralism. India remains the largest cumulative contributor to UN Peacekeeping, contributing over 278,000 troops since the beginning of the UN Peacekeeping Missions in 1950s. As of October 2023, India ranks third with 6,073 personnel across 10 of 12 missions. By end-2023, 178 Indian Peacekeepers had sacrificed their lives while serving in UN peacekeeping Missions.

Development cooperation has emerged as a pivotal component of India’s foreign policy, demonstrating a marked expansion in recent years. It encompasses a comprehensive array of instruments, including grant assistance, Lines of Credit (LoCs), High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), technical consultancy, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, educational scholarships, and capacity-building programs for civilian and military training under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). The deployment of these instruments is guided by the specific needs of partner countries, ensuring technical and financial feasibility.

India has strengthened efforts towards collaboration in emerging technologies with partners in bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral settings. In 2023, India demonstrated its commitment to enhancing global cyber cooperation by participating in a number of cyber dialogues focusing on cyber security issues, data protection, cybercrime and internet governance related issues, in consultation with other stakeholders in Government of India. India also actively engaged in promoting its economic interests through numerous bilateral and multilateral interactions with trade and investment partners. India achieved significant milestones in promoting foreign investment, bilateral trade, tourism, education, and healthcare in 2023.

India has been a dynamic participant in various global platforms focused on disarmament, non-proliferation, and international security, always considering its own national security priorities and objectives in the global security context. Throughout the year, India engaged in bilateral discussions and shared its views in regional and multilateral gatherings on these topics. The country emphasised its enduring dedication to achieving universal and unbiased nuclear disarmament, as well as its support for worldwide peace and security in domains like space, maritime, and weapons of mass destruction.

India has been working towards establishing institutional mechanisms to foster the global mobility of Indian workers, students, academicians, researchers, and businesspersons. India has been engaging with its partner countries to conclude Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements such as Migration and Mobility Partnerships and Labour Mobility and Labour Welfare Agreements, which establish a robust framework for legal migration of Indian citizens. During 2023, agreements/MoUs on Migration and Mobility Partnership were signed with Austria, Australia and Italy and Labour Mobility Agreements with Mauritius and Israel.

In 2023, India conducted a number of Consular Dialogues, and also signed and operationalised Visa Waiver Agreements. The issuance of Passports has emerged as one of the most noticeable statutory and citizen-centric services rendered by the Ministry of External Affairs. The Ministry has been making quantitative and qualitative changes so that passports can be delivered to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner and in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and by a committed, trained, and motivated workforce. The Ministry rendered a record 1.64 crore Passport Services in 2023.

India's diaspora is over 32 million strong and it is the top remittance receiving country in the world, with an inward flow of remittance to the tune of USD 125 billion in the year 2023.

The 17th *Pravasi Bharatiya Divas* (PBD) Convention was organised in Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 08-10 January 2023 in partnership with the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The theme of the 17th PBD Convention was "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's progress in *Amrit Kaal*." About 3,500 diaspora members from 70 countries attended the Convention, which was organised as a physical event after a gap of four years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2023, signing of several MoUs between State Governments with foreign counterparts was facilitated in areas involving trade/investment promotion, skill development, agriculture research and other domains.

During the course of the year, the Ministry co-hosted several international conferences, both in India and abroad, in partnership with prominent think tanks and academic institutions, in addition to the four flagship annual conferences of the Ministry- the Raisina Dialogue, Global Technology Summit, Asian Economic Dialogue, and the Indian Ocean Conference.

Digital outreach was also a significant focus, with the Ministry actively using social media platforms to disseminate information useful for the general public. This included maintaining and expanding presence on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn, thus reaching a wide audience domestically and internationally.

The Ministry received the approval of the Union Cabinet for the 5th Cadre Review of the Indian Foreign Service and the opening of 09 new Missions to be implemented between 2023-27. Further, the Cabinet approved the opening of a new Mission in Timor-Leste, as well as consulates in Marseilles in France, and Brisbane in Australia.

The Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service conducted various training programmes for different levels of officers and personnel of the Ministry, members of other civil services and foreign diplomats. The First Global South Young Diplomats Forum had participants drawn from 30 countries. The 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats saw participation of 52 diplomats representing 52 countries.

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) continued to promote cultural exchanges and outreach on India's soft power globally. ICCR offered 3775 scholarship slots to foreign nationals for the academic year 2023-24. The "*Gyan Setu*" application was launched in February 2023 to streamline scholarship processes. ICCR sponsored 76 cultural delegations and sent 18 busts and statues of iconic leaders to various countries. The council also supported 38 Indian Cultural Centres worldwide.

The Ministry excelled in commemorating *Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav* by organising 15,000 global events, earning the distinction of the 'Best Performing Ministry.'

CHAPTER

1

India's Neighbourhood

Afghanistan

India and Afghanistan have a strong relationship based on historical links, cultural relations and strong people-to-people ties. Post August 2021, India's approach towards Afghanistan continues to be guided by its historical friendship

and the UNSC Resolution 2593.

Since August 2021, India has sent several shipments of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan consisting of 50,000 MTs of wheat and nearly 250 tons of medicines and medical/surgical items.



Government of India partnered with the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) to distribute 47,500 metric tons of wheat across UNWFP centres in Afghanistan, August 2023

India has also partnered with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Afghanistan, to provide assistance for the welfare of the Afghan drug-user population, especially women. Under this partnership, India supplied 11,000 units of female hygiene kits, baby food, general-use hygiene kits, blankets, clothing, footwear, medical aid and other miscellaneous items. These items are being distributed by UNODC's drug treatment centres across Afghanistan.

Education and capacity building programmes are an important aspect of India's development partnership with Afghanistan. Under the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) scholarship scheme, India granted fresh admissions to more than 2000 Afghan students, including 301 girls. ICCR began providing online scholarships for 1000 Afghan students through e-VidyaBharti portal in the academic year 2023-24. India continues to offer online scholarships for Afghan students in agriculture-related fields, in collaboration with the Afghan National Agricultural Science and Technical University (ANASTU). The two countries continued to interact in the sporting realm this year. Afghan players visited India to participate in various sporting events like the International Chess Olympiad, Cricket-IPL and ICC Cricket World Cup.

In 2023, India actively engaged in regional and international efforts to maintain stability and peace in Afghanistan and participated in various meetings/formats including UN-led meetings in Doha, Moscow Format, Tashkent Conference, and the Oslo Forum, among others. The National Security Advisor (NSA) participated in the 5th Multilateral Meeting of Secretaries of Security Council/NSAs on Afghanistan (08 February, Moscow) and in the 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Secretaries/NSAs of the Security Council (17 October, Kazakhstan) to discuss issues related to Afghanistan. India hosted the first India-Central Asia Joint Working Group Meeting on Afghanistan on 07 March.

Bangladesh

India and Bangladesh share bonds of history, language, culture, and other shared interests. The bilateral ties between the two countries achieved further progress in 2023 with both sides maintaining close engagement in diverse areas, including at the highest level.

High Level Visits

As an important neighbour and one of India's closest partners, Bangladesh holds an important place in India's Neighbourhood First policy. The two countries commenced the settlement of trade in Indian Rupee (INR) from July.

Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina visited India from 08-10 September to attend the New Delhi G20 Summit on the

invitation of the Prime Minister. Three MoUs for cooperation in areas of cultural exchanges, agricultural research and digital payment mechanisms were signed during the visit.

Foreign Minister of Bangladesh Dr. AK Abdul Momen, visited New Delhi to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting and G20 Development Ministers Meeting held in March and June, respectively. EAM visited Dhaka in May to attend the 6th Indian Ocean Conference. India also served as the venue for several Ministerial level visits from Bangladesh under the G20 track.

Foreign Secretary visited Dhaka from 15-16 February. During his visit, he called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and held Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) with his counterpart. The next round of India-Bangladesh FOCs was held in New Delhi in November. These consultations followed-up on the varied deliverables of the bilateral relationship.

The year witnessed several other engagements between the two countries under bilateral institutional mechanisms including Joint Working Group and Joint Steering Committee on Power in May, 53rd Director-General Level Talks (DGLTs) between the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) in July, Joint Group of Customs meeting in August, Joint Working Group on Trade in September, Sub-Group on Infrastructure in November and Shipping Secretary Level Talks in December.

Development Partnership

Development partnership is a priority area of bilateral cooperation. India has extended concessional financing in the form of loans and grants, worth approximately USD 10 billion to Bangladesh, making it India's largest development partner. The Khulna-Mongla Port rail line was jointly inaugurated by both Prime Ministers in a virtual ceremony, held on 01 November. A significant portion of this India-assisted Line-of-credit (LOC) rail line has been completed, and the project marks India's first rail line connecting the Mongla port.

High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) constitute an active pillar of India's development assistance efforts in Bangladesh. These projects include the construction of student hostels, academic buildings, skill development and training institutes, cultural centres, orphanages, and restoration of common cultural heritage.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Bangladesh is India's largest trading partner in the region. The bilateral trade during 2022-23 was USD 14.22 billion, with India retaining its position as Bangladesh's largest export destination in Asia. Both countries are negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) as Bangladesh awaits

graduating from its Least Developed Countries (LDC) status in 2026.

Power and Energy Cooperation

Cooperation in the power and energy sector has become one of the hallmarks of India-Bangladesh relations. Bangladesh imports 1160 MW of power from India, of which 1000 MW is from the Bheramara (Bangladesh)-Baharampur (West Bengal) interconnection, while 160 MW is from the Comilla (Bangladesh)-Tripura interconnection. The Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the 131 km long India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline for transport of High-Speed Diesel to Bangladesh on 18 March 2023. The pipeline was built through grant assistance provided by the Government of India.

India, under its Line-of-Credit is implementing projects including, Barapukuria-Bogura-Kaliakoir 400 KV transmission line, undertaking infrastructure development for power evacuation facilities of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant and the Madarganj 100 MW Solar Power Plant to augment power generation, transmission, and capacity in Bangladesh. The 1320 MW Maitree Super Critical Thermal Power Plant Project at Rampal, was executed under India's Concessional Financing Scheme and built at a projected cost of USD 1.68 billion. The Unit-II of Maitree Super Thermal Power Plant was jointly inaugurated by both Prime Ministers on 01 November.

Connectivity

Connectivity has been a priority area of bilateral cooperation. Both sides are working to facilitate seamless movement of people and goods, in both bilateral and sub-regional contexts. Efforts are being made to revive the traditional rail, road and waterways and establish new ones; to foster greater economic and people-to-people ties on both sides.

The operationalization of the 'Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports (ACMP)' has facilitated the movement of transit cargo to-and-from North-East India to the rest of the country. The Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the Akhaura-Agartala cross border rail link in a virtual ceremony on 01 November. The rail link marks a milestone moment in India-Bangladesh relations as it will connect Northeast-India with Bangladesh by rail for the first time.

Five out of six pre-1965 rail links have been revived between India and Bangladesh, following the operationalisation of the Haldibari (India)-Chilahati (Bangladesh) rail link. India and Bangladesh are also undertaking dredging of two critical stretches of the Brahmaputra and Kushiya rivers on India-Bangladesh Protocol routes. These efforts intend to boost connectivity of the North-Eastern States of India with the rest of the country and Bangladesh. Additionally, the two countries are finalising the implementation of the BBIN Motor Vehicle Agreement to boost sub-regional connectivity.



Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina and the Prime Minister jointly inaugurated the Agartala-Akhaura cross-border rail link via video-conferencing, November 2023. The inaugural train was simultaneously flagged-off from Nischintapur in west Tripura.

Defence and Security Cooperation

There is active cooperation between various agencies of both countries on issues pertaining to security and border management including issues such as drug and human trafficking. Mechanisms for the peaceful and cooperative management of the 4,096 kms-long international border are actively focused on joint inspection of boundary pillars and boundary demarcation, including riverine boundaries.

Significant bilateral exchanges took place in the defence sector in 2023. A defence Line-of-Credit worth USD 500 million is currently being utilised to supply equipment to the Bangladesh armed forces.

Chief of Army Staff (CAS) of Bangladesh Army SM Shafiuddin Ahmed visited India in June. This incoming visit was followed by a reciprocal visit from the Chief of Army Staff of India (CoAS) to grace the Army Passing Out Parade in Bangladesh, upon the invitation of the CAS. The CoAS served as a Chief Guest for the event. The 5th Annual Defence Dialogue and 4th Tri-Services Talks were held from 20-21 August in Dhaka to comprehensively review ongoing defence cooperation. Defence Advisor to the Prime Minister, Major General Tarique Siddiqui represented Bangladesh at the Aero India Show in Bangalore. The Chief of Naval Staff of Bangladesh Navy Admiral Mohammad Nazmul Hassan paid a visit to India in September to discuss naval cooperation. This was his first foreign visit since assuming charge.

Minister of War Affairs of Bangladesh, Mozammel Haque visited India in October to hand over the scholarships to descendants of war veterans, in a ceremony presided-over by the MoS for Defence.

People-to-People Exchanges

A 12-member startup delegation visited India from Bangladesh in May, to kickstart the 'India-Bangladesh Startup Exchanges' as envisaged by the Prime Ministers of both countries. This was followed by a reciprocal visit of a 10-member Indian startup delegation to Dhaka in July.

Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

Bangladesh is an important partner country, under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) program. The country annually witnesses 800 participants, availing benefits of the ITEC training courses. In February 2022, India launched a dedicated website for Bangladeshi students aspiring to study in premier Government of India educational institutes, including the IITs and NIITs. The website allows the students to pursue under-graduation, postgraduate and PhD courses.

Bhutan

India and Bhutan enjoy exemplary bilateral relations, characterised by mutual trust, understanding, goodwill and excellent people-to-people contacts across all levels. These ties of friendship witnessed significant growth in 2023 with particular focus on cross-border connectivity, high level interactions, trade and investments, education; energy cooperation, youth skilling and technology.

Energy cooperation witnessed sustained engagement during the year. The 17th and 18th Authority Meetings of Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric Project Authority (PHPA)-II were held in February and September, respectively. Meetings of the technical expert group formed for PHPA-I were held in 2023. The two sides also agreed to extend the existing energy cooperation in non-hydro renewables, such as solar and wind energy, hydrogen and e-mobility.

Bilateral cooperation in education, capacity building, STEM and space sector intensified in 2023. The outlay for the Ambassador's scholarship for Bhutan, launched by the Government of India doubled, while cooperation in medical and legal studies strengthened. Indian teachers were recruited to teach in Bhutanese schools, in order to fill the gap of STEM teachers in Bhutan. Cooperation in the space sector expanded with the inauguration of a ground station for the India-Bhutan Satellite (SAT) in Thimphu in March.

High Level Visits

The King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck paid two official visits to India on 03-05 April and 03-10 November, respectively.

In April, the King of Bhutan visited New Delhi and called on the Hon'ble President. In addition, he met the Prime Minister, EAM and senior officials of the Government of India. The two sides reviewed all aspects of the bilateral relationship, identified potential sectors for future bilateral cooperation and deliberated on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

Bhutan also joined the International Big Cat Alliance and the Global River Cities Alliance as a Founding Member. During his November visit, the King held discussions with the Prime Minister, EAM and senior officials of Government of India. The King's November visit marked his first official trip to the state of Assam and Maharashtra, where he interacted with the Governor and Chief Minister of the States.

In August, Princess Sonam Dechan Wangchuck visited India to enhance bilateral ties in the area of legal studies and judiciary. Furthermore, the Princess served as the Chief Guest at the convocation ceremony of the National Law School of India University, Bengaluru.



King of Bhutan Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck called on the Hon'ble President in New Delhi during his official visit to India, April 2023

Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Bhutan Dr. Tandi Dorji, participated at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi (March), Minister of Energy & Natural Resources of Bhutan Loknath Sharma attended the India Energy Week 2023 (February), Partnership Summit (March) and the inauguration of the International Big Cat Alliance (April). Health Minister of Bhutan Dechen Wangmo participated at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)'s Advantage Health Care-India exhibition (February). Finance Minister of Bhutan Namgay Tshering participated in the Asia Economic Dialogue held in Pune (February).

A Parliamentary delegation led by Speaker of the National Assembly of Bhutan Wangchuk Namgyel visited India from 05-11 February. The delegation called on the Hon'ble President and the Vice-President and met with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and EAM. During the visit, the two sides signed an MoU on strengthening parliamentary relations between the Lok Sabha and the National Assembly of Bhutan.

Health Minister of Bhutan Dechen Wangmo participated in the 1st 'Voice for Global South Summit' hosted by India in virtual format from 12-13 January. In the 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit held in November, Bhutan participated in three sessions- Chief Advisor of the Interim Government Chogyal Rigdzin participated in the Inaugural Leaders' Session, Advisor to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Chewang Rinzin participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session and Advisor to the Ministry of Health Karma Hamu Dorjee participated in the Health Ministers' Session.

Foreign Secretary visited Bhutan on 18-20 January and 06-07 July to co-chair the 4th and 5th edition of India-Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks. Both sides reviewed the projects covered

under the Government of India's assistance to Bhutan under the 12th Five Year Plan and discussed potential areas of cooperation for the upcoming 13th Five Year Plan of Bhutan for 2024. In addition, Foreign Secretary of Bhutan Pema Choden visited India from 28-29 July to discuss India-Bhutan economic cooperation and development partnership.

Development Cooperation

Under the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) of Bhutan, India supported 83 Project Tied Assistance projects with an outlay of INR 2800 crores, 524 HICDPs/Small Development Projects at an outlay of INR 850 crores and Program Grant amounting INR 850 crores. India also extended Trade Support Facility amounting to INR 400 crores for Bhutan's 12th FYP. Additionally, India announced that it would step-up support for Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan, during the King of Bhutan's visit to New Delhi in April.

The Government of India continues to support Bhutan's Gyalzung Project – an initiative of the King of Bhutan to equip the youth with critical skills and contribute towards nation-building efforts. Notable development projects inaugurated in year include- Jigme Singye Wangchuck School of Law, Pemagatshel Dzong, hostel facilities and laboratory at the College of Natural Resources in Punakha, Khasadrapchu and Begana bridges in Thimphu, Diana Kuenphen Zam bridge in Samtse, Digital Drukylul and Upgraded Central Schools.

Energy Cooperation

Cooperation in the hydropower sector remains one of the central pillars of India-Bhutan ties of friendship and engagement. At present, India is constructing two hydro-

electric projects in Bhutan, namely- Punatsangchhu-I (1200 MW) and Punatsangchhu-II (1020 MW). During the King of Bhutan's official visit to India, it was agreed that the India-Bhutan energy partnership will extend to the area of non-hydro renewables, such as solar as well as in green initiatives for e-mobility. Secretary of the Ministry of Energy and National Resources of Bhutan Karma Tshering visited India on 16-17 March and 12-14 October to review the bilateral energy cooperation.

Trade and Connectivity

India has remained Bhutan's top trading partner, accounting for about 80% of Bhutan's overall trade. Since 2014, India's trade with Bhutan has tripled from USD 484 million in 2014-15 to USD 1615 million in 2022-23, with the balance of trade in India's favour.

India agreed to consider setting up an Integrated Check Post (ICP), along India-Bhutan border near Dadgiri (Assam), in addition to the ICP at Jaigaon/Pheuntsholing announced during the King of Bhutan's visit in April. India also agreed to designate Darranga (Assam)/Samdrup Jongkhar (Bhutan) as an ICP between Bhutan and India, to facilitate the entry and exit of third country nationals by land route, for enhancing connectivity and tourism.

In order to improve cross border connectivity, both sides agreed to take forward two rail links between India and Bhutan, one each at Kokrajhar-Gelephu and Banarhat-Samtse. In December, the Government of India extended an additional Standby Credit Facility (SCF) for Bhutan, valid for a period of five years.

Education and Capacity Building

India continues to facilitate capacity-building efforts for Bhutan's government officials and professionals/entrepreneurs, across various fields. Bhutan has been allotted 325 in-person training slots for upgrading administrative and technical skills of government officials and private sector employees under India's ITEC program. In addition, Bhutanese civil service officers annually receive training at premier Indian administrative and other special training institutions and academies.

India provides over 1,200 scholarships to Bhutanese students annually for studying in India across a wide range of disciplines including medicine, pharmacy, and engineering among others, under various scholarship schemes. During the King of Bhutan's visit to India in November, the leaders jointly announced the decision to double the outlay under Ambassador's Scholarship Scheme from INR 4 crores to INR 8 crores and allocate additional MBBS seats in medical colleges in Assam for the Bhutanese students. India and Bhutan continue to collaborate on faculty-exchange of STEM teachers. Under

the Youth Exchange Programme, an NCC delegation visited Bhutan to participate in Bhutan's National Day Celebrations on 17 December.

Space Cooperation

A delegation led by the Secretary (Department of Space) and the Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) paid an official visit to Bhutan from 13-14 March to inaugurate the ground earth station of the India-Bhutan SAT.

In September, ISRO organised a technical training of remote-sensing technologies for the officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan and discussed the potential applications of remote-sensing technology in governance with the Executive Forum of Secretaries of the Royal Government of Bhutan and officials of the King's Secretariat. At present, India and Bhutan are working on a Joint Action Plan on Space Cooperation.

Cultural Cooperation

The India Bhutan Foundation (IBF) continues to support the Bhutan Echoes-Drukyl's Literature Festival, held under the patronage of the Queen Mother Gyalum Dorji Wangmo Wangchuck. The annual Bhutan Echoes was held from 04-06 August in Thimphu. The 21st IBF meeting held in Thimphu on 04 August approved 12 projects across a range of sectors such as culture, arts, environmental conservation, sports, film and academic exchanges.

A delegation of senior Bhutanese Buddhist monks from Bhutan's Central Monastic Body visited India in October to enhance shared bilateral linkages to Buddhist cultures and traditions. The visit was facilitated under the aegis of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

Maldives

India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, commercial links and vibrant people-to-people relations. The two countries enjoy cordial and multi-dimensional relations based on shared democratic virtues, values of peaceful co-existence, and the rule of law. Both nations are key players in maintaining safety and security of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), thus contributing to the India-led vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

High Level Visits

Prime Minister met the President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Muizzu on the sidelines of COP28 Summit held in Dubai in December 2023.



Prime Minister met the President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Muizzu on the sidelines of COP28 Summit held in Dubai, December 2023

In January, EAM during his official visit to Northern Atolls in Maldives, witnessed the handing over of two sea ambulances to the Maldives' Ministry of Defence under the HICDPs Scheme and jointly inaugurated the Sh. Foakaidhoo Community Centre with the then Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdulla Shahid. The community centre was facilitated under India's grant assistance. EAM also witnessed the ground-breaking of the Hanimaadhoo International Airport Development Project in H.Dh Hanimaadhoo. The airport is being constructed under the Government of India's concessional Line-of-Credit. In addition, EAM witnessed the signing of agreements / MoUs viz. Development of the Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company (MIFCO) Felivaru Cold Storage Complex under the Government of India's concessional Line-of-Credit, Development of a sports complex in G.Dh Gadhdhoo under HICDPs scheme, and an Additional grant assistance of MVR 100 million for the HICDP Phase II.

The Raksha Mantri, during his official visit to Maldives in May attended the ceremony for the commissioning of a replacement ship for Huravee in the presence of the then President of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih. He also gifted an additional Landing Craft to the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF). In addition, he and the then Defence Minister of Maldives Mariya Didi jointly laid the foundation stone for the MNDF Coast Guard 'Ekatha Harbour'. The Harbour is being developed by Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL), under Government of India's grant.

MoS (VM) during his official visit to Addu City and Malé in June, jointly inaugurated three eco-tourism zones with the then Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdulla Shahid. These eco-tourism zones were located in Addu city and were developed under India's HICDPs scheme. MoS (VM) also witnessed the ground-

breaking ceremony of the Addu Land Reclamation Project and the Gan International Airport Development Project; both funded under Government of India's concessional Line-of-Credit. In addition, MoS (VM) oversaw the exchange of 10 MoUs under HICDP Phase-II and handed over Anti-TB Medicines to the then Director General of Public Health Maimoona Aboobakuru.

In July, the then Foreign Minister of Maldives Abdulla Shahid during his official visit to New Delhi witnessed the exchange of nine HICDP MoUs under HICDP Phase II. The Establishment of Prosthetics and orthotics manufacturing workshop in Hulhumale' Hospital was inaugurated in August. In November, Minister of the Earth Sciences visited Maldives to attend the inauguration ceremony of the President of Maldives Dr. Mohamed Muizzu.

People-to-People Exchanges

India remained the top source market for Maldives' tourism for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022, due to enhanced connectivity and the implementation of the Open Skies Arrangement. With more than 1.85 lakhs Indian tourist arrivals in 2023, India ranks 2nd with an 11% market share in Maldives' tourism sector. Improved connectivity and visa-free arrangements have also enabled thousands of Maldivians to visit India for medical, business and tourism.

Education and Capacity Building

A large number of Maldivians visit India for various in-person capacity building training, study tours, exposure visits, seminars, workshops, higher education and cultural exchanges.

The MoUs on capacity building signed this year, include: MoU between Maldives National University and Cochin University of Science and Technology for Academic Exchanges, MoU on Cooperation on Immigration Matters, and MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants (ICA) of the Maldives.

In 2023, more than 1000 Maldivians visited India under institutional MoUs and ITEC programmes, offering in-person training across areas such as- Civil Services, Customs, Judiciary, Media, Local Governance, Audit, Sports, Anti-Corruption, Human Rights, Right to Information, Police, Defence, and Aviation Security, among others.

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) held a six-month long athletics training camp in Bangalore for Maldivian athletes. This camp improved the performance of Maldivian athletes at various international events and helped them secure 3 bronze medals at Indian Ocean Island Games 2023. Around 200 Maldivians benefitted from MEA's flagship ITEC scheme (in-person & e-ITEC) in 2023 and 06 Maldivians are currently undergoing higher education under the ICCR Scholarship programme.

The iconic Olympus Theatre at Malé was renovated under the HICDPs scheme and inaugurated in February.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Bilateral trade has seen a steady growth in the past few years, due to the expansion of the India-Maldives development partnership. Bilateral economic trade in 2023 reached nearly USD 430 million. The existing bilateral arrangement for restrictions-free export of nine essential commodities has ensured food security in Maldives, amid volatility in global markets.

Development Cooperation

India's development cooperation with Maldives touched new heights in 2023, through ongoing key infrastructure and high-impact grant projects in the region. India is supporting over 65 high-impact grant projects in areas of health, education, capacity building; culture and sports and 07 key infrastructure projects under EXIM Bank's concessional Line-of-Credit. These projects include the development of a bridge connecting 4 islands, water and sanitation projects in 34 islands, development of sea ports, airports, roads, reclamation in Addu City and expansion of fish processing. India has also extended a Defence Line-of-Credit worth USD 50 million and a sports-sector Line-of-Credit worth USD 40 million to Maldives. Apart from the above, Indian companies are constructing 4000 social housing units in Maldives under Buyers' Credit scheme of EXIM Bank. The progress in the implementation of key projects is being reviewed regularly.

Defence and Security Cooperation

Defence and security have been major areas of cooperation between India and Maldives and the countries continued to engage in this regard through mechanisms such as the – 7th Deputy National Security Adviser level meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave (July) and the 2nd India-Maldives Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism meeting (July). Deputy Defence Minister of Maldives and the Vice Chief of Defence Force of Maldives attended the Aero India Exhibition held at Bengaluru, in February.

The Defence Secretary attended the 4th edition of Defence Cooperation Dialogue held in Maldives in March and handed over medical equipment for Senahiya Military Hospital, Male. The 12th edition of Indian Army-Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) Joint Exercise 'Ekuverin' was held in Maldives in June, and the 6th edition of India-Navy-MNDF joint Exercise 'Ekatha' was held in Maldives in June-July. INS Investigator was deployed to Maldives from Jan-Feb to undertake the 3rd joint Hydrographic survey in the Northern Maldives.

In matters of capacity building, more than 100 capacity building slots were used by MNDF and Maldives Police Service (MPS) in 2023. The Government of India provided 2 Indian helicopters

and a Dornier aircraft to the MNDF. These have served as an asset for the MNDF and have facilitated 519 medical evacuations, 57 search missions and 148 joint surveillance operations in the region. Additionally, a team of Medical Specialists and Paramedics from the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS) has been serving the Maldivian population at MNDF's Senahiya Hospital, Male and sharing their expertise with the MNDF doctors.

Myanmar

Myanmar is an important neighbouring country that shares an approximately 1,700-km long border with India. Myanmar is India's bridge to the ASEAN and a vital component of both India's Neighbourhood First and Act East Policy. India and Myanmar also share strong civilizational, historical and people-to-people ties. The current security and humanitarian situation in Myanmar has remained a cause of concern, as it has direct implications for India. India has called for complete cessation of violence, resolution of issues through dialogue, release of political detainees and Myanmar's return to the path of democratic transition at the earliest.

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing security situation, significant progress on various connectivity and socio-economic development projects have been made this year. Sittwe Port, a part of Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project (KMTP) was inaugurated in May.

EAM met U Than Swe, on the sidelines of the 12th Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC) meeting in Bangkok on 16 July.



EAM met U Than Swe on the sidelines of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation meeting in Bangkok, July 2023

The 20th round of India-Myanmar Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in New Delhi on 06 December. Both sides held discussions on a wide range of issues such as border and security, trade, commerce and connectivity, status of bilateral development projects in Myanmar, and concerns related to transnational crimes.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

The total bilateral trade between the countries accounted for USD 1.76 billion, with India's exports pegged at USD 807 million in the year 2022-23. Myanmar's pulses export to India increased in 2023, due to the Government of India's announcement on the import of Black Matpe (Urad) and Pigeon Pea (Tur) under the Open General License regime. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) recently approved a mechanism of trade settlement in INR to boost trade between India and Myanmar. The RBI has designated Punjab National Bank (PNB) as the nodal agency to coordinate the implementation of the trade settlement plan with the Government of Myanmar.

Development Cooperation

India has a significant development cooperation portfolio of approximately USD 2 billion in Myanmar, with most of the projects being undertaken under grant-in-aid. The two countries are in the final stages of negotiations for signing a Line-of-Credit worth USD 270 Million. There is specific focus on regional connectivity initiatives through projects such as the KMTTP and India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway. Sittwe Port, a part of KMTTP was inaugurated in May. Additionally, India has been implementing people-centric development projects in the region under the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) in Chin State and the Naga Self-administered Zone and under Rakhine State Development Programme (RSDP) for construction of bridges, roads, schools and small health centres, among others.

Education and Capacity Building

India has been offering capacity building opportunities to Myanmar, under various schemes like ITEC, ICCR Scholarships and other training programs. Nearly 396 Myanmar officials attended in-person and virtual training programs in India, across diverse areas including- English, computer science, medicine, law and engineering. Myanmar students have also availed scholarships at Indian universities under ICCR's scholarship schemes and various PhD fellowships offered to ASEAN students. Nine out of twenty ICCR scholarship slots were utilised by students from Myanmar in FY 2022-2023.

India continued to maintain ties with the beneficiaries of its capacity building programmes through the ITEC Day celebrations, held on 19 September.

Cultural Cooperation

President of ICCR visited Myanmar in August and conferred the ICCR Distinguished Alumni Award on the Deputy Minister for Investment and Foreign Economic Relations Dr. Wah Wah Maung. President of ICCR also unveiled a portrait of Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak at India Centre and interacted with various Indian diaspora groups.

Humanitarian Assistance

India under 'Operation Karuna' provided medical supplies and relief materials for the people of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Mocha in May 2023. The humanitarian assistance was delivered via four Indian Navy Ships and included food items, tents, portable generators, clothes, water pumps, medicines, tarpaulins, hygiene and sanitary items, wheelchairs and face masks. India's HADR efforts serve as a testimony to its role as a 'First responder' in the region.

Nepal

India and Nepal share close and friendly relations characterised by age-old historical and cultural linkages, open borders and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts. India has maintained a continued momentum in the bilateral ties with Nepal, under its Neighbourhood First Policy. The policy aims to promote greater physical, economic, energy, digital, cultural and infrastructure connectivity in the region, bolstered by development and capacity building efforts.

Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' visited New Delhi, Indore and Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh in 31 May-03 June. During the bilateral meeting held on 01 June in New Delhi, the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal reviewed the entire spectrum of the bilateral agenda between the two countries. Major outcomes of Prime Minister Dahal's visit include the inauguration of ICP Nepalgunj, ground-breaking ceremony of Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline Project (MAPL) Phase-II, mirror ICPs in Sunauli (India) and Bhairahawa (Nepal), inaugural freight train operation of Bathnaha-NCY and the handing over of Jayanagar-Kurtha rail section to the government of Nepal. The bilateral visit also witnessed announcements such as - handing over of Foundational Learning Survey (FLS) Report of Raxaul-Kathmandu rail link, and training and capacity building of Nepali rail officials in the Indian Railway institutes. Additionally, the leaders announced the construction of two bridges across Mahakali River at Shirsha, Jhulaghat in Nepal, aimed at connecting them with the Champawat and Pithoragarh districts in India, under a grant to boost Indo-Nepal connectivity.

At present Nepal exports more than 650 MW of power to India. Indian companies are currently developing large hydroelectric projects in Nepal including Arun III (900 MW), Lower Arun (679

MW), Arun-4 (490 MW), West Seti and SR-6 (1200MW) and Upper Karnali (900 MW).

High Level Visits

India's relations with Nepal are also characterised by regular high-level exchanges, extensive trade and economic linkages, a forward-looking development agenda, and people-to-people contacts.

Since May 2014, there have been 16 exchanges at the level of Head of State/ Head of Government. The Prime Minister of Nepal Pushpa Kamal Dahal paid a visit to New Delhi, Indore and Ujjain during his official visit to India from 31 May-03 June.

The Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Prachanda on 05 August. The two leaders reviewed various aspects of the India-Nepal bilateral cooperation and followed-up on discussions held during Prime Minister Prachanda's visit to India. Prime Minister Prachanda also participated and virtually addressed the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) held on 17 November. India and Nepal have around 42 bilateral institutional mechanisms, across various sectors.

Some of the recent bilateral engagements include: 8th Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Joint Working Group (JWG) on Railways from 20-21 April, Oil and Gas sector 4th WG on 25 April, 5th JPMC on Terai Road projects on 07 October, 4th JPMC on Reconstruction projects on 08 October, 15th Meeting of Nepal-India Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues (BCGSI) from 04-06 October and the 7th APF-SSB Talks from 06-08 November.

Other Delegation Level Visits

A three-member delegation headed by the then Defence Minister of Nepal Hari Prasad Upreti and accompanied by the then Vice Chief of the Army Staff Lt Gen Saroj Pratap Rana and Lt Col Naresh KC from Nepali Army, attended the 14th Edition of Aero India Exhibition at Bengaluru from 13-15 February. Chief of the Army Staff General Prabhu Ram Sharma, attended the Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC) from 24-28 September.

An Indian Delegation working on the PM Gati Shakti Initiative visited Nepal from 18-20 July. This development was followed by a reciprocal visit from a twenty-five member delegation from 13-19 October. Twenty-five Joint Secretaries of Nepal from various Ministries and Departments participated in a study visit organised by the Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA), New Delhi from 13-20 September. A seven-member delegation from Nepal, participated in the Raisina Dialogue in March. The provincial governments of Nepal organised several

bilateral exchanges among youth delegations, journalists, think tanks and representatives in India.

Defence and Security Cooperation

India's defence cooperation endeavours with Nepal span across a wide range of sectors. India has been assisting the Nepal Army in its modernisation efforts by supplying equipment. A number of defence personnel from the Nepal Army, attend training courses in various Indian Army training institutions. The Indo-Nepal Battalion-level Joint Military Exercise 'SURYA KIRAN' is conducted alternately in India and in Nepal. The 17th edition of Exercise 'SURYA KIRAN' was held in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand, from 24 November to 07 December. Since 1950, India and Nepal have been awarding each other's Army Chiefs with the honorary rank of General, in recognition of the mutual harmonious relationship between the two armies.

Operation Maitri and Post-Earthquake Reconstruction Assistance

The Government of India was the first responder in the wake of the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, and carried out its largest disaster relief operation, 'Operation Maitri.' India extended USD 1 billion to Nepal, as part of its long-term assistance for post-earthquake reconstruction in sectors including– housing, education, health, culture and heritage. These projects were reviewed by the Joint Project Monitoring Committee on 08 October, in Kathmandu. Government of India successfully handed over 50,000 reconstructed houses in Nepal's Gorkha and Nuwakot districts on 15 November 2021, at an assistance of USD 150 million. The work on reconstruction of more than 130 hospital/ health centres and cultural heritage sites in Nepal is under various stages of implementation; while projects under the Educational Sector have been completed and are awaiting inauguration.

Jajarkot Earthquake Assistance

On 03 November, the western part of Nepal (Jajarkot & East Rukum districts) was hit by a 6.4 Magnitude earthquake, resulting in the loss of nearly 150 lives. In this hour of crisis, India in line with the Prime Minister's commitment of being the first responder handed over four tranches of earthquake relief materials to the Government of Nepal from 05-21 November.

These tranches contained approximately 35 tonnes of relief supplies including 250 tents and tarpaulin sheets, 5000 blankets and 5000 sleeping bags, vital medicines, medical equipment such as surgical equipment and portable ventilators.



India provided emergency relief assistance to earthquake-affected districts of Jajarkot and Rukum in western Nepal, November 2023

Development Cooperation

The Government of India provides substantial financial and technical assistance to Nepal for implementation of large-scale development, infrastructure and connectivity projects, as well as small development projects/ HICDPs in key areas of education, health, irrigation, rural infrastructure and livelihood development, all across the country. A series of cross-border connectivity projects like rail links, roads, Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) are currently under implementation with the grant assistance provided by Government of India.

Despite COVID restrictions, work on the ongoing connectivity and developmental projects have continued to show considerable progress. As on date, all 14 Terai Road packages have been completed under Government of India's assistance of INR 500 crores and handed over to the Government of Nepal. India and Nepal have also expanded their bilateral cooperation to include new initiatives in the areas of agriculture, railways and inland waterways connectivity.

There is steady progress in developing cross-border rail networks between India and Nepal, including the operationalisation of the Jayanagar-Bardibas cross-border section and Jogbani-Nepal Customs Yard rail section. Indian assistance has helped to construct 807 kms of the 1024 km-long East West Highway, which serves as one of Nepal's lifelines today. Apart from this, the assistance offered by India has also helped construct the 6-lane major bridge across the Mechi River, connecting Kakarbhitta in Nepal to Panitanki in West Bengal. This bridge is a part of the Asian Highway-02 and will provide critical connectivity to Nepal. The countries conducted the groundbreaking of a cross

border motorable bridge over the Mahakali River at Dharchula in Uttarakhand in September 2022.

Cooperation in Water Resources

Cooperation in water resources, primarily concerning the common rivers, is an important area of bilateral cooperation. A three-tier bilateral mechanism (with Ministerial meetings at the apex) were established in 2008 to discuss issues relating to flood management and inundation. India has been providing assistance to Nepal in the area of river-training and embankment construction, to strengthen and extend embankments along the rivers in Nepal. Discussions on flood management and inundation related matters are facilitated through bilateral mechanisms like India-Nepal Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management (JCIFM).

Power and Energy Cooperation

The Prime Ministers jointly carried out the ground breaking ceremony of 400 KV Gorakhpur-Butwal transmission line, during Prime Minister Dahal's visit to India in June. The visit witnessed the signing of an MoU for the development of 480 MW Phukot-Karnali project by National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) and Vidhyut Utpadan Company Limited (VUCL Ltd), Nepal and the Project Development Agreement for the development of 669 MW Lower Arun between Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam (SJVN) and the Investment Board of Nepal (IBN).

In addition, India announced its decision to facilitate the first trilateral power transaction from Nepal to Bangladesh through

the Indian grid, with an export of up to 40 MW of electricity. This mechanism will enable Nepal to capitalise on its access to the real-time market, day ahead market and medium-term power agreements, and export up to 631 MW of electricity to India. Additionally, India agreed to fund the Bheri Corridor, Nijgadh-Inaruwa, Gandak-Nepalgunj transmission lines and associated substations under Line-of-Credit, at an estimated cost of more than USD 600 million.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

India was Nepal's largest trading partner in FY 2022-2023, with bilateral trade crossing USD 11 billion. The revised Transit Treaty signed in June provides access to India's inland waterways for Nepal's transit trade. There are over 150 Indian ventures operating in Nepal, primarily engaged in power, banking, insurance, education, pharmaceuticals, agro-products and manufacturing sectors. Investments by Indian firms in Nepal account for nearly 33% of its FDI revenue; amounting to INR 5537.25 crores. India's top exports to Nepal include- petroleum, iron and steel machinery, cereals and vehicles, whereas its top imports from Nepal include- edible oils, tea, coffee, spices and synthetic yarn.

Education, Cultural Cooperation and People-to-People Exchanges

India and Nepal extend visa-free entry in their respective territories to each other's nationals. Nearly 8 million Nepalese citizens live and work in India while around 6,00,000 Indians reside in Nepal. Indians account for about 30% of the foreign tourists in Nepal. Over the years, India's contribution to human resource development in Nepal has been an important aspect of its bilateral relationship with the country. In 2023, students from Nepal were awarded 1242 Indian scholarships and granted 484 slots under the ITEC programme.

Pakistan

India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan. India maintains that issues between the two countries should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully in an atmosphere free of terror, hostility and violence. The onus is on Pakistan to create a conducive environment. Pakistan however continues to sponsor cross border terrorism against India, restrict normal trade and connectivity, people-to-people exchanges and engage in hostile, fabricated propaganda to vilify India.

Pakistan continues to engage in hostile, fabricated anti-India propaganda and disinformation operations, particularly in respect of Jammu & Kashmir. The Government of India has completely and unequivocally rejected all such actions and

statements by Pakistan in their entirety, especially on matters which are completely internal to India. The Government has engaged with the international community at high levels on India's position and Pakistan's role in aiding and abetting terrorism in the region particularly against India in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and beyond.

Terrorism emanating from Pakistan and territories under Pakistan's control is a core concern. India has persistently asked Pakistan to respect the January 2004 commitment of not allowing its soil and territory under its control to be used for terrorism against India, and to take credible, verifiable and irreversible steps to end cross-border terrorism. There has however been no let-up in cross-border terrorism, infiltration and illegal smuggling of arms into India across the Line-of-Control (LoC) and the International Boundary. Pakistan is yet to show any sincerity in delivering justice to the families of the victims of 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

India has consistently raised the issue of Pakistan's continued support for cross-border terrorism and terrorist infiltration at various bilateral, regional and multilateral forums. In such outreach, credible inputs regarding the Pakistani-origins of the captured terrorists have been shared. India's call to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations has been reflected in a number of outcome documents issued after bilateral summit-level meetings with various countries, as well as at regional and multilateral fora. On 16 January, the UN Sanctions Committee designated Abdul Rehman Makki, head of Lashkar-e-Taiba's political affairs and a key conspirator of several terrorist attacks against India, including the Mumbai attack as a UN-proscribed terrorist.

All instances of ceasefire violations, cross-border infiltration, illegal construction along the border, violations of bilateral agreements, smuggling of narcotics and weapons, including through the use of drones have been taken up with Pakistan.

High Level Visits

The then Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif, participated in the SCO Council of Heads of State Meeting held in a virtual format on 04 July, under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister.

The then Foreign Minister of Pakistan Bilawal Bhutto Zardari participated in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Foreign Ministers Meeting held in Goa from 04-05 May. The Minister's visit was part of the multilateral SCO meeting organised by India, during its rotating SCO Presidency from 16 September 2022 to 04 July 2023.

Several Pakistan leaders participated in other SCO Ministerial meetings in a virtual format, under the Chairmanship of India.

The meetings witnessed the participation of the then Federal Minister for Climate Change Sherry Rehman, in the 4th SCO Meeting of Heads of Ministries on Environmental Protection, held on 18 April, Member Disaster Risk Reduction Muhammad Idrees Mahsud in Meeting of Heads of Agencies for Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations, held on 20 April, and Lt. Gen Inam Haider Malik in the SCO Expert Meeting of Heads of Agencies for Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations, held on 19 April.

Religious Pilgrimages

Religious pilgrimages between India and Pakistan are facilitated under the 1974 Bilateral Protocol on Visits to Religious Shrines. In 2023, the Government facilitated pilgrimages to Pakistan on the occasions of Baisakhi, Barsi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Gurupurab, Shadani Darbar and Kataraj Dham to Pakistan, through which 5937 Indian pilgrims visited various shrines in Pakistan. During the same period, 921 Pakistani pilgrims visited religious shrines in India as part of five pilgrimages (Urs of Hazrat Amir Khusro, Urs of Hazrat Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, Urs of Hazrat Mujaddid Alf Sani, Urs of Hazrat Khwaja Allahudin Ali Ahmad Sabir, and Urs of Hazrat Nizamuddin Auliya). From 01 January-26 November, the Government also facilitated the visit of 84,251 pilgrims to the holy Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Narowal, Pakistan through the Kartarpur Corridor.

Humanitarian Issues - Prisoners and Fishermen

In line with the understanding reached under the 2008 Bilateral Agreement on Consular Access, India and Pakistan exchanged lists of prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody on 01 July. Pakistan acknowledged the custody of 42 civilian prisoners and 266 fishermen who are either Indians or are believed to be Indians. Similarly, there were 343 civilian prisoners and 74 fishermen from Pakistan in Indian custody. As a result of persistent efforts by the Government of India, 2639 Indian fishermen and 66 Indian civilian prisoners have been repatriated from Pakistan since 2014. In 2023, 478 Indian fishermen and 08 Indian civilian prisoners were repatriated from Pakistan. India has sought early consular access, release and repatriation of the remaining Indian nationals in Pakistan's custody.

Treatment of Minorities in Pakistan

The Government of India has raised the issue of atrocities against the members of minority communities in Pakistan. It has also conveyed its concerns regarding the incidents of vandalism/desecration of places of worship and cultural heritage of minority communities as well as discrimination, killing, abduction, forced conversion and marriages of the members of the minority communities in Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an important neighbour with whom engagements are prioritised under India's Neighbourhood First and SAGAR policies. Bilateral relations with Sri Lanka continued to strengthen in 2023, following the unprecedented emergency financial support extended by India in 2022. Interactions with Sri Lanka further intensified in 2023 through various leadership-level engagements and initiatives focused on deepening economic, cultural and people-to-people ties.

High Level Visits

President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe paid an official visit to India from 20-21 July 2023, marking his first visit to the country since assuming current responsibilities. He called on the Hon'ble President, Prime Minister and met the EAM. President Wickremesinghe's first visit concluded with the exchange of an MoU on cooperation in the field of renewable energy, the Network-to-Network Agreement between NIPL and Lanka Pay for UPI application acceptance in Sri Lanka, a Memorandum of Cooperation for economic development projects in Trincomalee district of Sri Lanka and a Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) in the field of Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Earlier in the year, President Wickremesinghe participated in the Concluding Leaders' session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) held on 12-13 January.



Prime Minister met President of Sri Lanka Ranil Wickremesinghe in New Delhi during his official visit to India, July 2023

Speaker of the Sri Lankan Parliament Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana led a delegation of Sri Lankan Parliamentarians to India from 16-20 December, at the invitation of the Speaker of Lok Sabha. The visit provided opportunities for exchanging best parliamentary practices. The delegation held meetings with the Speaker of Lok Sabha called on the Vice-President and met EAM.

Earlier in the year, EAM paid an official visit to Sri Lanka from 19-20 January. During the visit, EAM called on President Wickremesinghe, the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka Dinesh Gunawardena and held detailed discussions with his counterpart, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka M.U.M. Ali Sabry.

MoS (VM) paid a visit to Sri Lanka on 03-04 February to participate in the 75th Independence Day celebrations. He called on President Wickremesinghe and Foreign Minister M.U.M. Ali Sabry on 04 February. MoS for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying and Information & Broadcasting visited Sri Lanka from 9-12 February to attend the handing over ceremony of Jaffna Cultural Centre. He called on President Wickremesinghe and Minister for Fisheries of Sri Lanka Douglas Devananda during the visit.

India participated in the 23rd Council of Ministers (COM) meeting and the 25th Committee of Senior Officials of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) held in Colombo on 11 October. The Indian delegation was led by EAM. In this meeting, India assumed the role of the Vice Chair of IORA for the year 2023-25, followed by the Chairship in 2025-27.

Infrastructure and Community Development

President Wickremesinghe and EAM inaugurated the building for the Kandyan Dance Academy in Palkekele, in a virtual format and handed over 350 housing units built with Government of India's grant assistance in Galle, Kandy, Nuwara Eliya, Anuradhapura and Badulla Districts on 19-20 January. EAM also handed over 50 buses supplied under an ongoing credit line for the supply of 500 buses, to the Minister of Transport and Highways of Sri Lanka, Bandula Gunawardena. During the visit both sides exchanged letters to increase the budget of individual projects as well as the overall financial capital for the implementation of grant initiatives carried out under India's HICDP framework.

In a separate visit on 11 October, EAM called on President Wickremesinghe and discussed a diverse range of areas pertaining to bilateral ties between the two countries. The leaders exchanged a 'Letter of exchange and acceptance regarding Phase-4 of the flagship Indian housing project for construction of 10,000 houses' in the plantation areas; and the 'Letter of exchange for Infusion of Additional Funds in Nine ongoing HICDPs.' EAM handed over 126 houses in Badulla,

Matale and Matara districts under phase-3 of Indian Housing project, 48 houses in Matale, and 64 houses in Hambantota under Model Village projects. He also unveiled a joint logo commemorating 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In addition, the leaders exchanged a Joint Venture Shareholders' agreement between National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation and the Cargills Group of Sri Lanka.

A passenger ferry service between Nagapattinam in India and Kankesanthurai near Jaffna, in the Northern Province of Sri Lanka commenced on 14 October. The ferry was flagged-off from Nagapattinam by EAM through video conferencing, while India's Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways flagged off the ferry live. The ceremony was addressed by the Prime Minister and President Wickremesinghe over video-conference. The Ministry supported Tamil Nadu Maritime Board with INR 8 crore as financial assistance for augmenting infrastructure at the Nagapattinam port for commencing the ferry services.

Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs (FM) inaugurated branches of State Bank of India (SBI) in Trincomalee and Jaffna during her visit to Sri Lanka from 01-03 November. She launched the construction of 10000 houses in plantation areas of Sri Lanka under Phase IV of Indian Housing Project, installed RO plants in Schools, inaugurated the upgraded Thondaman Vocational Training Centre, and handed over school bags and notebooks for students. The signing of an amendment to the MoU for grant assistance of USD 15 million for promotion of Buddhist ties and a MoU for solar electrification of places of worship across Sri Lanka was also carried out during the Minister's visit.

Nearly 2500 Indian pilgrims including fishermen and clergy participated in the annual St. Anthony's Festival held in Katchatheevu from 03-04 March. The Government of India provided financial assistance for organising the festival.

Defence Cooperation

The 7th Annual Defence Dialogue at Defence Secretary level between India and Sri Lanka was held in New Delhi from 23-25 February. Defence Secretary, Gen (Retd) Kamal Gunaratne and then Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force Air Marshal S.K. Pathirana, along with a delegation comprising senior officers from the Sri Lanka Army and Navy attended the meeting. Various ongoing defence cooperation initiatives were jointly reviewed and new avenues for engagement were identified during the Annual Defence Dialogue.

Chief of Indian Air Force Staff visited Sri Lanka from 01-04 May. During the visit, he called on President Wickremesinghe, Prime Minister Gunawardena, and held meetings with Sri Lankan

Minister of State for Defence, Defence Secretary, Chief of Defence Staff and Service Commanders. He donated two sets of AN-32 propellers to the Commander of Sri Lanka Air Force at Katunayake Air Base, on behalf of the Government of India and laid the foundation stone for the 'India-Sri Lanka Friendship Auditorium'. The Auditorium is being built at the Sri Lankan Air Force Academy in Trincomalee, through Indian grant assistance.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

On 16 January, India was the first official bilateral creditor that provided financing assurances for Sri Lanka to the IMF. This strategy was followed by other creditors, and eventually enabled

Sri Lanka to secure the approvals of IMF for the Extended Fund Facility on 20 March.

Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs (FM) led a five-member official delegation as well as a high-powered business team from Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) to Sri Lanka from 01-03 November. During her visit to the country, FM called on President Wickremesinghe and Prime Minister Gunawardena. She was the Guest of Honour at 'Naam 200' event held on 02 November commemorating 200 years since the arrival of the Indian-Origin Tamils to Sri Lanka. She also delivered the keynote address at the "India-Sri Lanka Business Summit: Enhancing Connectivity, Partnering for Prosperity" on 03 November.

CHAPTER

2

Indian Ocean Region

Comoros

India-Comoros relations strengthened in 2023, especially in the context of India's Presidency in G20 and the Presidency of Comoros in the African Union.

President of Comoros Azali Assoumani visited India for the G20 Summit held on 09 and 10 September, and held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister on 10 September. He expressed his gratitude to the Prime Minister for India's efforts towards making the African Union a full member of G20. He also participated in the G20 Virtual Summit held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, on 22 November.

The President of Comoros sent a video message for the concluding session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) held in virtual format under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 17 November.

Earlier this year, Foreign Minister of Comoros Dhoihir Dhoulkamal visited India for the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting on 01-03 March. He held a bilateral meeting with the EAM on 01 March and discussed various aspects of bilateral relations. Minister of Economy and Industry of Comoros, Ahmed Ali Bazi, attended the G20 Development Ministers Meeting from 11-13 June in Varanasi.

Additionally, there were visits bolstering defence cooperation. The Delegate for Defence in the Presidency of Comoros

Mohamed Ali Youssoufa, participated in the Goa Maritime Conclave held in Goa from 29-31 October 2023 and met the Chief of Indian Naval Staff. Indian Naval Ship 'Trishul' visited Comoros from 31 May-02 June and was anchored-off Anjoun Island. During the visit, Indian Navy personnel and Comorian Navy undertook joint training activities and sports events. A medical camp for about 500 local people was also conducted by the Doctor of INS Trishul. Chief of Land Force of Comoros, Lt.Col.Kamali Ali, participated in the Africa-India Joint Military Exercise (AFINDEX) in Pune from 28-30 March. Technical Advisor to the Chief of Staff of the Comorian Army, Col. Said Hamza, participated in 'Aero India 2023', held in Bengaluru from 13-17 February.

Two officials from the Directorate General of Civil Security under the Ministry of Interior of Comoros took part in the Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise held from 09-11 October in Goa.

On 07 December, India issued notification permitting export of 20,000 MT of non-basmati white rice to Comoros through National Cooperative Exports Limited from prevailing export restrictions.

A cultural troupe of 20 artists and craftsmen from Comoros took part in the Surajkund International Crafts Mela held from 03-18 February at Surajkund in Haryana.

Madagascar

2023 witnessed further deepening of India-Madagascar partnership. The then Interim President of Madagascar, Richard Ravalomanana, participated in the Inaugural Session of the 2nd VOGSS, held under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister on 17 November.

Foreign Minister of Madagascar Yvette Sylla met EAM on the sidelines of the 78th Session of the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September in New York, and reviewed the progress in bilateral relations. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development of Madagascar Vina Marie-Orlea took part in the 1st VOGSS held virtually on 12-13 January. Minister of Economy and Finances, Rindra Hasimbelo Rabaririnarison, represented Madagascar at the Finance Ministers' Session of 2nd VOGSS on 17 November.

Secretary General of the Ministry of Energy and Hydrocarbons Razanajatovo Tianalisoa Lauriana represented Madagascar at the 'India Energy Week – 2023' held in Bengaluru from 06-08 February. Secretary General of Ministry of Digital Transformation Andry Rasoanaivo and Chief Digital Officer of the Digital Governance Unit of Madagascar Rahaingonjatovo Nirina participated in the Global Digital Public Infrastructure Summit, held on sidelines of the 3rd meeting of G20 Digital Economy Working Group held in Pune on 12-13 June. Secretary (Economic Relations) attended the Investiture ceremony of President of Madagascar Andry Rajoelina on 16 November in Antananarivo.

Strengthening defence ties between two countries, the Vice Chief of Naval Staff of Madagascar, Capt. Mamy Rakotomanga met the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Southern Naval Command on the sidelines of the Goa Maritime Conclave held in Goa from 29-31 October. INS Trishul visited Toamasina Port in Madagascar as part of 'Ocean Ring of Yoga', from 19-22 June, coinciding with the celebrations of the 9th International Day of Yoga. The personnel of INS Trishul undertook Casualty Evacuation/VBSS/Small Arms Training with personnel of Malagasy Navy, Army, Gendarmerie and Police. Two ships of the First Training Squadron (ITS) of the Indian Navy- INS Tir, and Indian Coast Guard Ship Sarathi- made a Port call to Antsiranana on 20-23 March. The ships undertook various training activities with Malagasy Navy.

A 5-member Indian Navy Mobile Training Team on-board INS Sharda, visited Antsiranana Port on 17 November, to impart technical training to the officers of Malagasy Navy for a period of two weeks. INS Sumedha visited Antsiranana Port from 04-06 December as part of Port calls in the Indian Ocean Region. Director General of National Office of Risk and Disaster

Management of Madagascar, Maj. Gen. Elack Olivier Andriakaja participated in the Annual Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise hosted by Indian Navy in Goa from 09-11 October.

In order to further strengthen India-Madagascar development partnership, a MoU for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects with India's Grant Assistance was signed by Ambassador of India and Foreign Minister of Madagascar Yvette Sylla in Antananarivo on 11 September. On 07 December, India issued notification permitting export of 50,000 MT of non-basmati white rice to Madagascar through National Cooperative Exports Limited from prevailing export restrictions.

Twenty two officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other Ministries/Agencies of Madagascar underwent two special executive training programs on English language conducted by the English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad, under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Programme during August- September 2023.

Twenty Malagasy artists/craftsmen participated at the Surajkund International Crafts Mela held from 03-18 February at Surajkund (Haryana).

Mauritius

The special and time-tested relationship between India and Mauritius is underpinned by shared history, ancestry, culture, tradition and rich people-to-people ties. Based on shared values like democracy and pluralism, this privileged relationship has evolved over the years to encompass newer areas including economic cooperation and maritime security in the strategically important Indian Ocean Region. The high-level of trust and mutual understanding between the two sides is reflected in regular high-level political exchanges. The two countries have also been cooperating in execution of several large infrastructure development projects in Mauritius.

High Level Visits

Mauritius was invited to participate as a Guest Country in the G20 Meetings under India's G20 Presidency. Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius Pravind Kumar Jugnauth participated in the G20 Leaders' Summit from 09-10 September 2023. He also held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister, on the sidelines of the Summit. Prime Minister Jugnauth also joined the Prime Minister and the leaders of Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, USA, Brazil, Argentina and UAE, in launching the Global Biofuels Alliance on 09 September. He also participated in the G20 Leaders Virtual Summit on 22 November.



Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Kumar Jugnauth met Prime Minister on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

Under the G20 framework, representatives from the Government of Mauritius participated in various G20 meetings including foreign, tourism, education, labour and employment, energy, environment and climate, women empowerment, health, digital economy and cultural ministers' meetings. Speaker of the Mauritius National Assembly, Sooroojdev Phokeer, participated in the 9th G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit (P20) on 13 October.

Deputy Prime Minister of Mauritius, Louis Steven Obeegadoo, visited India from 09-11 February to participate in South Asia's Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE 2023) in New Delhi. He also held meetings with EAM, Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs, and Minister of Tourism, Culture & Department of North Eastern Region, and discussed issues of mutual interest.

MoS (VM) visited Mauritius from 01 and 02 November to represent India at the commemoration of the 189th Anniversary of the arrival of Indentured Labourers in Mauritius as a 'special guest'. During the visit, MoS called on President Prithvirajsing Roopun and Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. Along with Maneesh Gobin, Attorney General and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade of the Republic of Mauritius, MoS jointly inaugurated 'UTSAV: India Mauritius Shopping Carnival' as part of the celebrations of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Mauritius. A joint commemorative postage stamp was released, to mark the 75th anniversary.

On 01 November, MoS (VM) witnessed the signing of a MoU between ISRO and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (MRIC) for the joint development and launch of a

satellite for Mauritius for Earth Observation-based applications in agriculture, forestry, weather forecast and ocean observation. On 02 November, he joined Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth in inaugurating two India-assisted development projects- the 8 MW Solar Power Plant at Henrietta which showcased shared commitment to environment- friendly, green solutions; and a sports complex at L'esperance which is the first of 96 new Community Development Projects being implemented in Mauritius with grants from India.

NSA led the Indian delegation for the 6th NSA-level Meeting of the Colombo Security Conclave hosted by Mauritius on 07 and 08 December. A delegation led by Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance, Mahen Seeruttun, visited Mumbai, Bengaluru and New Delhi from 06-13 February 2023 on a promotional mission of the Mauritius International Financial Centre (MIFC).

Earlier in the year, a delegation from the Election Commission of India, led by the Chief Election Commissioner, visited Mauritius from 22-24 September and held meetings with the Electoral Commissioner of Mauritius on enhancing cooperation between the Election Management Bodies of the two countries.

Foreign Secretary visited Mauritius from 12-14 April, and called on Prime Minister Jugnauth; former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade Alan Ganoo; Secretary for Foreign Affairs, J. Nayeck; Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service Premode Neerunjun and opposition party leaders. Secretary (CPV & OIA) led the Indian delegation for the 3rd Ministerial Conference on Maritime Security held in Mauritius on 14-16 November.

Visit of Deputy CM of Maharashtra: Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, Devendra Fadnavis, arrived in Mauritius on 28 April 2023 for a 2-day visit. A MoU was signed between the Economic Development Board of Mauritius and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) on the occasion. He also unveiled a statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, which was donated by ICCR.

On the defence cooperation front, INS Sharda also made a Port call at Port Louis to commemorate 'Pravasi Diwas'.

Events/Summits

President of the Republic of Mauritius Prithvirajsing Roopun participated in the 6th Indian Ocean Conference held from 12-13 May 2023 in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Following this, he also visited Kolkata, where a civic reception was hosted by India Foundation.

The 9th International Yoga Day was celebrated in Mauritius on 21 June 2023, in collaboration with the Government of Mauritius, onboard Mauritius Coast Guard Ship 'Barracuda' at Port Louis harbour, in the presence of the President Prithvirajsing Roopun, dignitaries and more than 300 participants.

On 17 November, Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth participated in the Inaugural Leaders' Session of the 2nd VOGSS. Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change Kavyass Ramano participated in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS. Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development Dr. Renganaden Padayachy had participated in the Finance Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS, from 12-13 January 2023.

A delegation comprising more than 500 persons and 8 Ministers/Parliamentarians from Mauritius participated in the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention held from 08-10 January in Indore. Fazila Minister of Social Integration, Social Security and National Solidarity Jeewa-Daareeawoo, and Minister of Arts and Cultural Heritage, Avinash Teeluck, participated in the panel discussions.

Minister of Finance, Economic Planning and Development Dr. Renganaden Padayachy participated in the 7th edition of the Invest Madhya Pradesh – Global Investors Summit held from 11-12 January, in Indore.

Minister of Energy and Public Utilities, Georges Pierre Lesjongard, participated in the India Energy Week 2023, from 06-08 February, in Bengaluru.

Soodesh Callicurn, Minister of Labour, Industrial Relations, Employment and Training and former Minister of Commerce and Consumer Protection participated in the CII Partnership Summit 2023 from 13-14 March, in New Delhi.

The then Minister of Agro-Industry and Food Security and Attorney General Maneesh Gobin participated in the First Global Conference of the International Year of Millets 2023 held in New Delhi from 17-19 March.

The IORA Secretariat hosted a 'High-Level Strategic Dialogue' in Mauritius with the theme 'IORA's 25-Years – Reflection, Review and Renewal'. Joint Secretary (Indo-Pacific) participated in the Dialogue as well as the session on IORA Indo-Pacific Outlook which was held from 23-24 June, for IORA's African Member States.

A Cultural Exchange Programme was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius for the period 2023-2026 on 06 July. The Programme aims to promote cooperation in the fields of arts and cultural heritage and allows for the organisation of exhibitions on folk art and traditions.

A delegation led by the Joint Chief Hydrographer to the Government of India, visited Mauritius for the 13th Meeting of the Indo-Mauritian Joint Committee on Hydrography, which was held from 12-14 July 2023.

MoUs/ Projects with Mauritius

The Rose Hill-Réduit segment (phase-III) of the India-assisted Metro Express project (covering a trajectory of 3.4 km) was officially inaugurated on 22 January 2023 by Prime Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth. At Réduit, he also inaugurated the Mahatma Gandhi Metro Station, in the context of the celebrations marking the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and Mauritius.

On 08 February, a MoU was signed between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation (MSDTF) for establishment of the ICCR Chair for the Gurukul Purohit Course.

In 2023, MoUs were also signed between the High Commission of India in Mauritius, PMO of Mauritius and the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development of the Republic of Mauritius (National Development Unit) for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Clusters II to XII) with Indian grant assistance.

On 28 April, a MoU was signed between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India, and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, Government of Mauritius in order to foster cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT).

On 10 May, a MoU was signed between the Government of India and the Government of Mauritius for Recruitment and Employment of workers from India. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group, as provided for under the MoU, was held

from 28-29 June in Mauritius. The MoU was operationalized with effect from 01 October.

A MoU was signed between Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation (MBC) and Prasar Bharati on 12 May, inter alia, for the broadcast of DD India, DD Urdu, and DD Sports 2.0 in Mauritius. The MoU offers opportunities for collaboration between the two institutions, including through exchange of programmes and content, co-production of programmes and exchange of personnel and training.

Defence Cooperation

On 12 February 2023, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) handed over the Advanced Light Helicopter Mark-3 (ALH-Mk3), procured by the Government of Mauritius under an Indian Line of Credit. The helicopter was commissioned in a ceremony held in Mauritius on 14 March.

Three ships of the Indian Navy's First Training Squadron - INS Tir, INS Sujata and ICGS Sarathi – arrived in Mauritius to mark the 55th anniversary of the Independence of Mauritius on 12 March. More than 1000 Mauritian nationals visited the ships during the 'Open Day' on 12 March. A deck reception was hosted onboard the ships on 13 March.

A delegation led by Additional Secretary (C&WA), visited Mauritius from 13-14 July, to review the implementation of the eVBAB project. During the visit, the delegation called on Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology, Leela Devi Dookun-Luchoomun.

Despite a ban imposed by Government of India on export of Non-Basmati White Rice effective 20 July, DGFT issued a notification dated 30 August 2023 exceptionally permitted export of 14,000 tonnes of Non-Basmati White Rice to Mauritius.

Seychelles

India and Seychelles share a comprehensive and cordial bilateral relationship. India sees Seychelles as a key strategic partner in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), governed by its vision of SAGAR and Neighbourhood First policy. Seychelles looks towards India as a dependable friend for development aid and capacity building. It also supports India in the international fora. The major areas of bilateral cooperation include development partnership, defence cooperation, capacity building and diaspora engagement, among others.

Bilateral Engagements

Bilaterally, 2023 proved to be a fruitful year for India's relations with Seychelles. There were substantial engagements at the ministerial level. Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Seychelles Sylvestre Radegonde undertook his first official visit

to India as Foreign Minister from 22-24 November and had discussions with EAM. During the visit, MoU on cooperation in the field of Youth and Sports and MoU on Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Phase II of HICDPs were signed.



EAM met Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Seychelles Sylvestre Radegonde in New Delhi, November 2023

The Designated Minister and Minister for Fisheries and Blue Economy of Seychelles, Jean-Francois Ferrari visited India from 06-08 February to attend the India Energy Week (IEW) in Bengaluru. On 31 October, Minister of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment of Seychelles, Flavien Joubert attended the 6th session of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly in India and called on the Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy. He also represented Seychelles at the 1st and 2nd editions of the VOGSS on 12 January and 17 November respectively, participating virtually at the Environment Ministers' segments.

Minister for Internal Affairs of Seychelles Errol Fonseka attended the Indian Ocean Conference organised by Indian Foundation in Dhaka from 12 and 13 May. On 26 September, a MoU on Electoral Cooperation and Management was signed between the Election Commission of India and Electoral Commission of Seychelles, during the visit of the Chief Election Commissioner of India to Seychelles.

Development Cooperation

Support for socio-economic development of Seychelles is one of the foremost objectives of the bilateral relationship. In line with this, procurement of 60 Ashok Leyland buses for the Seychelles

Public Transport Corporation (SPTC) as part of USD 10 million Line of Credit assistance to Seychelles was implemented successfully. MoU for Phase II of the High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) was also signed in November 2023 with an increased outlay of USD 3 million. Four Matador Vans worth USD 194,000 were handed over to the Government of Seychelles to assist in drug usage mitigation efforts.

In 2023-24, 16 Seychelles civilians and officials trained in India under ITEC civil and 22 under ITEC defence programmes. One diplomat participated in the 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats from 13-31 March and another participated in the 1st Global South Young Diplomats Forum from 20 November-01 December, both at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), New Delhi.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Bilateral trade and commerce witnessed further recovery from the effects of the pandemic. India approved export of 800 tons of non-basmati rice to Seychelles on special request to ensure food security of the country. As per the Department of Commerce of India statistics, in 2023-24 (till September) India exported goods worth USD 37.85 million to Seychelles and imported goods worth USD 4.18 million from Seychelles. Outreach events for the encouragement of consumption of Indian millets and Indian pharma exports were organised in March and December 2023, respectively.

Defence Cooperation

Carrying forward defence cooperation, Chief of Seychelles Defence Forces Brigadier Michael Rosette (CDF) visited India

from 26-31 October and met the Chief of Defense Staff of India, as well as participated in the Goa Maritime Conclave (GMC) organised from 29-31 October.

The Chief of Defence Staff participated in initiatives including the Mahasagar Virtual Conference (November 2023) and 6th NSA-level meeting under Colombo Security Conclave (December 2023). 2023 had five port calls by Indian Navy Ships. INS Trishul visited Seychelles, along with a marching contingent and band, to participate in the National Day Parade of Seychelles on 29 June. A 10-member delegation from Seychelles participated at the 2nd edition of India-Africa joint military exercise AFINDEX-23 (16-29 March) and the Seychelles Land Forces Commander Lt.Col.Michael Hollanda attended the 1st India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave on 28 March in Pune. Lt.Col.Didace Hoareau and Captain Anthony Barrat represented the Seychelles Defense Forces at Aero India-2023 organised from 13-17 February in Bengaluru.

Cultural Cooperation

A 10-member youth delegation from Seychelles visited India under the National Cadet Corps (NCC) Youth Exchange Programme in January 2023. A team of local Seychellois artisans and traders participated in the 36th Surajkund International Crafts Mela in February. Two ICCR troupes visited Seychelles to participate in the Indian Republic Day celebrations and the Festival Kreol in January 2023 and October respectively. The largest mass Yoga event in the country was organised at the famous Roche Caiman Stadium on the occasion of the 9th International Day of Yoga.

CHAPTER

3

South East Asia & Oceania

India's engagement with the South East Asia and Oceania regions continued to expand and deepen on various levels this year.

Australia

The Comprehensive Strategic Partnership was further strengthened and enhanced in 2023 through frequent and high-level exchanges and closer cooperation across wide ranging areas including defence and security, education and skills, trade and economy and people-to-people ties.

Prime Minister and Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese held the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit on 10 March 2023 in New Delhi, during the State Visit of Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese from 08-11 March. Prime Minister visited Australia from 22-24 May, becoming the only Indian Prime Minister to have visited Australia twice. During the meeting, the Prime Ministers called for taking the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership to greater heights in the next decade. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese visited India again on 09 and 10 September and participated in the G20 Summit in New Delhi. Prime Minister Albanese also participated at the G20 Virtual Summit held on 22 November.



Prime Minister of Australia Anthony Albanese and Prime Minister in Sydney, May 2023



Raksha Mantri and EAM with Australian Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Defence Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong for the 2nd India-Australia 2+2 Dialogue, November 2023

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong visited India from 19-20 November. Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles interacted with the Prime Minister during the India vs Australia Cricket World Cup Finals in Ahmedabad and also held bilateral meetings with Raksha Mantri and EAM in New Delhi.

Australian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Defence Richard Marles and Foreign Minister Penny Wong held meetings with Raksha Mantri and EAM for the 2nd India-Australia 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on 20 November, a mechanism India has with a select few countries. EAM and Foreign Minister Penny Wong held the 14th Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue (FMFD) on 21 November, taking stock of the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation.

Defence and security cooperation is a key pillar of bilateral relations. India participated for the second time in the 2023 edition of military exercise TALISMAN SABRE as Observers from 22 July-04 August. India also participated in Exercise MALABAR, hosted for the first time by Australia on 10-22 August. In its first deployment, INS VAGIR, India's Scorpene submarine visited Australia from 21-28 August, the farthest that an Indian submarine has ever travelled to any part of the world. India and Australia held regular defence exercises, including AUSINDEX from 22-25 August, AUSTRAHIND 2023 from 22 November-07 December.

Vice Admiral Hark Hammond, Chief of Navy of Royal Australian Navy (RAN) paid an official visit to India from 09-11 March. First iteration of General Rawat India-Australia Young Defence Officers' Exchange Programme was held in India in March 2023. Chief of Army Staff General visited Australia from 03-07 April. The 15th Naval Staff Talks were held on 01-03 May in Australia.

The 8th Defence Policy Talks were held in Canberra on 24 July. The 3rd India-Australia JWG meeting on Research, Industry and Materiel Cooperation was held in New Delhi on 18 August. Lt General Simon Stuart, Chief of Australian Army visited India from 24-27 September 2023 and attended Indo-Pacific Army Chief's Conference (IPACC) held in New Delhi. The 10th Army-to-Army Staff Talks were held in Perth from 04-06 October. India participated at Sea Power Conference 2023 and Army Chief Symposium.

Australian Parliamentary delegation led by Senate President Sue Lines and Speaker of the House of Representatives Milton Dick visited India to attend the P20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit from 12-14 October. The delegation called on the Vice President, and Chairman of Rajya Sabha and held a bilateral meeting with the Speaker of Lok Sabha.

Commerce and Industry Minister and Australian Minister for Trade and Tourism Don Farrell co-chaired the 18th India-Australia Joint Ministerial Commission (JMC) on 11 March in New Delhi. Both Ministers also co-chaired the India-Australia CEO Forum on 09 March in Mumbai.

The 1st Australia India Education and Skill Council (AIESC) meeting was held in Gandhinagar on 06 November which was co-chaired by Minister for Education and Skill Development and Australian Education Minister Jason Clare. Australian Skills and Training Minister Brendan O'Connor joined virtually.

People-to-people linkages form the bedrock of India-Australia ties. The Indian community in Australia continues to grow in size and importance. As per census 2021 of Australia, the Indian population of about 9,76,000 form the second largest migrant

group in Australia. There is a constant flow of students and tourists from India. Indian students form the second highest number of foreign-born students in Australia. India has become the 4th largest tourism market for Australia.

Some of the important agreements/MoUs agreed to between two sides during the year include Audio-Visual Co-production Agreement, Mechanism for Mutual Recognition of Educational Qualifications, Migration and Mobility Partnership Arrangement (MMPA), Terms of Reference for India-Australia Solar Taskforce, Terms of Reference of Taskforce on Green Hydrogen, Renewal of MOU on Cooperation in Sports and MOU for cooperation in Customs Capacity Building.

Brunei

India-Brunei ties founded on strong civilizational ties and cultural linkages have traditionally been close. Brunei is home to a 15,000-strong Indian community which has been contributing to the country's socio-economic development.

India-Brunei ties gained momentum during the year. EAM held discussions with Foreign Minister-II Dato Erywan Pehin Yusof on 13 July 2023 on the sidelines of ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers meeting in Jakarta. Earlier, MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Brunei on 30 and 31 May. Secretary (East) led the Indian delegation to the 8th Round of the Foreign Office Consultations in Brunei on 25 July, where the two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. A two-member Ministry of Defence delegation participated in the Experts' Working Group on Military Medicine in Brunei on 04 and 05 September. Minister of Education of Brunei Dr. Hajah Romaizah binti Haji Md Salleh delivered a recorded message at the Education Ministers' segment of the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November. The Minister also attended the 8th Asian Summit on Education and Skills 2023

in Bengaluru from 15-17 October. The year saw enthusiastic participation of Bruneian delegations in various trade-related events in India.

India and Brunei are working on further diversification and expansion of their existing bilateral partnership and are exploring new areas of cooperation in areas of defence, trade and investment, infrastructure, health, space, ICT, agriculture, and capacity building.

Brunei is a partner in India's space programme by hosting ISRO's TTC station in Telesai. India continues to support Brunei's long-term development vision through capacity building programmes.

Cambodia

2023 marked strengthening of India-Cambodia relations with multifaceted engagements. High-level interactions and visits from Cambodia provided a boost to bilateral ties. Defence cooperation was enhanced significantly. Visits by trade and business delegations took place on a regular basis. Cooperation on capacity-building and developmental projects continued. Government of India's assistance to Cambodia for ongoing projects on heritage conservation progressed and new projects were envisaged and initiated. The Government of India continued with its assistance for humanitarian demining and to assist victims of landmines. Concerned agencies from both sides discussed reintroduction of tigers in Cambodia.

The year witnessed the maiden State Visit by King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni to India from 29-31 May. The visit marked the culmination of year-long celebrations of the 70th Anniversary of India-Cambodia Diplomatic Relations. This visit by the King of Cambodia took place after almost six decades, with the last one by his father in 1963.



Hon'ble President with King of Cambodia Norodom Sihamoni, during his first State visit to India, May 2023

On 12 January 2023, the then Prime Minister Hun Sen attended the inaugural Leaders' Session of 1st VOGSS in January 2023. In September, Prime Minister Hun Manet had a brief interaction with the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the India-ASEAN Summit in Jakarta. EAM called on Prime Minister Hun Manet on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York.

The visit of then Deputy Commander in Chief of the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces and Commander of the Royal Cambodian Army Lt Gen Hun Manet to India, in February, provided renewed impetus to India-Cambodia defence engagement. During the visit, Terms of Reference for Staff Talks between the Indian Army and the Royal Cambodian Army were signed, customised training courses in India for the personnel of the Royal Cambodian Army were offered and gifting of an arms simulator was announced. Furthering maritime and naval cooperation, Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) Samudra Paharedar visited Sihanoukville Port, Cambodia from 06-11 March and two Indian Navy ships, INS Delhi and INS Satpura made port calls at Sihanoukville, Cambodia from 11-14 May 2023.

In March 2023, the National Bank of Cambodia (NBC) and the NPCI International Payment Limited (NIPL) signed a MoU to establish a strategic alliance and studying the feasibility and prospects of cooperation and collaboration for enabling cross border payment and remittance between India and Cambodia through the Unified Payment Interface (UPI).

India's support to Cambodia in heritage conservation continued with ongoing works at Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear Temples. Work also commenced on a new project for restoration of the Ramayana murals at Wat Raja Bo Pagoda in Siem Reap.

An Artificial Limb (Jaipur Foot) Fitment Camp was held from 01-30 March 2023 in Banteay Meanchey Province, Cambodia. The camp was sponsored by the Ministry under its 'India for Humanity' programme and was implemented by Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS), Jaipur, along with Cambodia Mine Action and Victims Assistance Authority (CMAA). More than 650 Cambodian nationals benefited from the camp.

Indonesia

2023 was marked by a series of high-level visits and interactions, owing to India's presidency of G20 and Indonesia's chairmanship of ASEAN. Indonesia participated in all G20 engagements hosted by India at Ministerial and Senior Official levels. President Joko Widodo attended the G20 Leaders' Summit. Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs Airlangga Hartarto attended the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit held on 22 November 2023.

The Prime Minister attended the 20th ASEAN-India Summit and 18th East Asia Summit on 07 September at Jakarta. The Prime Minister also met President Widodo on the sidelines of the

G7 Summit in Hiroshima, Japan on 20 May. President Widodo participated, through a video message, in the Leaders' Session of the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November.

During EAM's visit to Jakarta in July for the ASEAN-related meetings, he met Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno Marsudi and Foreign Minister of Australia Penny Wong in a trilateral format. On 06 September, EAM again met Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi in Jakarta and discussed outcomes of the East Asia and G20 Summits. Raksha Mantri visited Indonesia for ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) on 16 and 17 November. He held a bilateral meeting with his counterpart from Indonesia.



EAM with Foreign Minister of Indonesia Retno Marsudi and Foreign Minister of Australia Penny Wong in Jakarta, July 2023.

The 9th Parliament-20 Summit was held on 13 and 14 October at New Delhi. Speaker of the People's Representative Council of Indonesia Puan Maharani participated along with a high-level delegation.

Indonesia continues to be a key economic partner of India in Southeast Asia. It is the largest trading partner of India in the ASEAN region with bilateral trade reaching USD 38.84 billion in 2022-23. In July 2023, India and Indonesia announced institutionalisation of a High Level Ministerial Economic and Financial Dialogue.

Cooperation in defence and security was further enhanced by the first ever port call made by an Indian submarine, INS Sindhukesari in Indonesian waters. The 6th Joint Working Group meeting between the Narcotics Control Bureau of India and Indonesian National Anti-Narcotics Agency took place on 07 December in virtual mode.

Lao PDR

India's ties with Lao PDR continued to strengthen during the year. On the sidelines of ASEAN-related meetings in Jakarta, EAM held a bilateral meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Lao PDR Saleumxay Kommasith on 12 July. During the 2nd VOGSS, DPM and FM participated in Foreign Ministers' Session, and Minister of Education and Sports Associate Professor Phout Simmalavong participated in Education Ministers' Session on 17 November.

On 27 July, Secretary (East) and Deputy Foreign Minister of Lao PDR Phoxay Khaykhamphithoune held the 3rd round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Lao PDR in Vientiane.

IT equipment worth more than USD 14,000 was gifted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lao PDR to support its preparation for ASEAN Chairmanship in 2024.

Malaysia

India-Malaysia relations witnessed several positive developments during the year, which also saw the conclusion of celebrations of 65 years of establishment of diplomatic ties between both countries. During the year, there were eight Ministerial visits from Malaysia to India and three from India to Malaysia.

At the request of Malaysia, a special quota of 170,000 MT was allocated for export of non-basmati white rice.

In November 2023, the 6th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) held in New Delhi and co-chaired by EAM and Foreign Minister of Malaysia reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. As an outcome of the JCM, many bilateral cooperation documents were signed and exchanged, including MoU on Cooperation in Broadcasting between Prasar Bharti, India, and Radio Televisyen Malaysia and Notes between Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service and Institute of Diplomacy and Foreign Affairs on Cooperation in Field of Training of Diplomats and Other Personnel.

MoS (VM) visited Malaysia in June and jointly inaugurated the first-ever Persons of Indian Origin Day in Malaysia. The first-ever Indian Diaspora-led International Business Summit and Expo was inaugurated by MoS (RRS) in Kuala Lumpur in December. MoS (RRS) also inaugurated the Indian Workers Resource Centre

(IWRC) at the HCI, Kuala Lumpur. The Regent of Pahang State Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah visited India from 07-12 April for a commemorative event marking 50 years of Project Tiger in India.

On 01 April, an announcement was made about trade settlement between India and Malaysia in INR in addition to the current modes of settlement in other currencies. India International Bank of Malaysia (IIBM) is the first Bank in Malaysia that has operationalised this mechanism by opening a Special Rupee Vostro Account through its corresponding bank in India i.e. Union Bank of India. During India Energy Week (IEW) held in February at Bengaluru, India's Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) signed an MoU with Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT) Joint Business Council (JBC) in the area of LED lighting, energy efficiency and green energy projects in Malaysia under Malaysia's Green City Action Plan (GCAP).

The Raksha Mantri's visit to Malaysia in July galvanised bilateral defence cooperation and saw the opening of the office of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited in Kuala Lumpur. During the visit, Raksha Mantri unveiled the bust of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose in presence of distinguished Indian National Army (INA) veterans, at the Chancery building in Kuala Lumpur. Chief of Royal Malaysian Air Force Gen. Mohd Asghar Khan bin Goriman Khan visited India to represent the Malaysian Armed Force at Aero India 2023. Chief of the Air Staff paid an official visit to Malaysia from 03-06 July 2023. The Chief of Malaysian Army visited India to attend the 13th Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference at New Delhi from 25-27 September. Indian Coast Guard Ship ICGS Samudra Paheredar made a port call at Pulau Indah Naval Base (Port Klang) from 14-17 March. INS Kavaratti made a port call at Langkawi from 22-28 May 2023 participated in LIMA Exercise. INS Delhi made a Port Call at Port Klang from 29-31 May 2023. Indian Navy 'First Training Squadron' 1TS comprising INS Tir, INS Sujata and IGS Ship Sarathi, made a port call at Port Klang, Malaysia on a 3-day visit starting 30 September with 82 Officer trainees on board three ships.

New Zealand

India and New Zealand enjoy warm and friendly relations that draw strength from shared values in democracy and rule of law. It is a growing relationship characterised by close bilateral cooperation, cultural exchanges and people to people ties. The bilateral relations experienced an upward trajectory, marked by several important developments which added momentum to the relations.

The Prime Minister met New Zealand Prime Minister Chris Hipkins on the sidelines of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands

Cooperation III (FIPIC-III) Summit in Port Moresby on 22 May 2023. Both leaders discussed various bilateral issues including trade, direct air connectivity, cooperation in education and parliamentary exchanges.

New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister for Disarmament and Arms Control Nanaia Mahuta visited India from 07-10 February and held bilateral meetings with EAM. The two Ministers took stock of the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation.

New Zealand Minister for Trade and Export Growth and Agriculture Minister Damien O'Connor paid a three-day visit to New Delhi from 27-29 August 2023. Minister O'Connor met the Commerce and Industry Minister. He met the Minister of Civil Aviation and both sides witnessed the upgrading of the India-New Zealand Air Services Agreement. He also met the Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying and Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.

MoS (RRS) paid an official visit to New Zealand from 24-29 September 2023. During the visit, MoS (RRS) and New Zealand's Prime Minister Chris Hipkins participated in the 1st India Business Summit 2023. MoS (RRS) held bilateral meetings with Minister of Ethnic Community and Voluntary sector Priyanca Radhakrishnan, and Minister of Education Jan Tinetti.

The 5th India-New Zealand Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) was held in Wellington on 19 August. Secretary (East) and Deputy Secretary - Americas and Asia Group Deborah Geels co-chaired the meeting. Secretary (East) also held bilateral meetings with

Chief Executive and Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade Chris Seed, and Secretary of Defence Andrew Bridgman.

A 14-member National Defence College (NDC) delegation visited New Zealand from 29 May-02 June 2023. They made a study tour of Royal New Zealand Navy Base RNZN Marae, Waiouru Military Station in Rotorua and Te Papa museum in Wellington. The delegation was addressed by New Zealand's Chief of Defence Force Air Marshal Kevin Short, among others. Two Indian Naval Ships viz. INS Sahyadri and INS Kolkata visited New Zealand from 31 August-03 September. Vice Chief of Defence Force of New Zealand Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies visited India from 20-24 November. He met Secretary (East) on 22 November. Air Vice-Marshal Tony Davies also paid homage at the Delhi War Cemetery.

Pacific Island Countries

(Fiji, Tonga, Tuvalu, Kiribati, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Palau, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Samoa, Niue, Vanuatu, Cook Islands and Nauru)

India has strong historical engagement with the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) under the Act East Policy and proximity given to engagements with the Indo-Pacific region. The Government of India stepped up its efforts to engage with countries in this region



EAM welcomed Foreign Minister of New Zealand Nanaia Mahuta during her visit to India, February 2023

through a number of high-level visits and under the landmark initiative, the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC). India hosted the 2nd VOGSS on 17 November 2023, in virtual format under the overarching theme – ‘Together, For Everyone’s Growth, With Everyone’s Trust’ which witnessed participation at Leadership/Ministerial level from most of the PICs.

FIPIC

The Prime Minister also jointly co-hosted the FIPIC-III Summit with Papua New Guinea’s Prime Minister James Marape in May 2023 during which the Prime Minister announced a 12-step action plan. Initiatives included setting up Jaipur foot camps, a specialised cardiology hospital in Fiji, providing dialysis units, sea ambulances, promoting yoga centres, supporting IT, solar projects, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and offering scholarships. A Tamil classic translated into Tok Pisin was launched, and an agreement was reached to establish a Regional IT and Cybersecurity hub at the University of Papua New Guinea. FIPIC-III was attended by Heads of States/Governments of all PICs who also held bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister. Governor-General of Papua New Guinea Bob Dadae conferred the Prime Minister with the Grand Companion of the Order of Logohu (GCL) which is the highest civilian award of Papua New Guinea. The Palau President awarded the Prime Minister with an Ebakl, a symbol of leadership and wisdom in Palau. Fijian Prime Minister Rabuka conferred the Prime Minister with the highest civilian honour of Fiji- Companion of the Order of Fiji.

Development Assistance

A major engagement of India with PICs is through development assistance under South-South Cooperation in the form of capacity building (civil and defence training under ITEC), ICCR scholarships, grant-in-aid, and loan assistance. Assistance provided through these mechanisms included community development, human resource development, renewable energy, infrastructure building, establishment of 4G network, purchase of agricultural equipment, computers and LED bulbs for schools, sewing machines, dialysis machines, portable saw mills, boats and pick-up trucks, construction of sea wall, and coral farms, export strategy, disaster relief, water and sanitation, solarisation of Government residence, donation of school books, soil testing laboratories in the PICs. Diplomats from Nauru and Federated States of Micronesia participated in the 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) course, organised by Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in March 2023 and in the 3rd Special Course for Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries at SSIFS during 20 February-03 March.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)

Being vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, PICs have been a prime focus for India’s Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster relief (HADR) activities from time to time.

Under the initiative of ‘Vaccine Maitri’, India has assisted some of the Pacific Island countries with supply of Covid-19 vaccines including Fiji, Papua New Guinea, and Solomon Islands. India’s gift of 10,000 doses of Covid vaccines helped Nauru to vaccinate all its adult population. India also gifted 8,000 doses of Covid vaccines to Nauru in April 2023 as well. Medicines were donated to Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, and Marshall Islands through bilateral grants. To strengthen efforts in combating Tuberculosis (TB) in Tuvalu, a consignment of TB medicines was handed over to Tuvalu on 27 July.

A consignment of medical supplies containing Antiretroviral drugs for HIV patients and Tuberculosis medicines were provided by India to Fiji on 10 August. In the wake of the volcanic eruption in Papua New Guinea, India had provided 17 tons of relief material on 22 December which included water storage tanks, tents and sleeping bags, ready to eat meals, basic sanitary utilities along with essential medicines and medical items.

India-UN Development Partnership Fund

Under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund support was provided to Solomon Islands, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Palau, for procurement of medical equipment and supplies, and strengthening health systems in response to Covid-19.

On 27 October 2023, the field launch of the Climate and Disaster Risk Framework and Parametric Insurance project under the Solar Head of State funded by India-UN Fund was done by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics Prof. Biman Prasad in Tavua (Fiji).

Bilateral Engagements

Incoming Visits

Nauru’s then Minister for Climate Change, Agriculture and Infrastructure Rennier Gadabu visited India and met with MoS (RRS) on 24 January.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic Planning, National Development and Statistics of Fiji Dr. Biman Chand Prasad paid an official visit to India from 05-10 February to attend India Energy week in Bangalore. During his visit to India, he met EAM, MoS (RRS), and Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Housing and Urban Affairs.

On 17 March, Deputy Secretary of Solomon Islands Cornelius Walegereia, along with Second Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade Jones Soreh visited Delhi and opened the Solomon Islands Mission in Delhi.

On 24 April, Health Minister of Solomon Islands Dr Culwick Togamana and Director of Vector Borne Disease Control Program of Solomon Islands Albino Bobogare, and Fijian Minister for Health and Medical Services Dr. Atonio Lalabalavu participated in Asia Pacific Leaders Conclave on Malaria Elimination in Delhi. The Minister of Health of Solomon Islands also expressed gratitude for India's hospitality during the pandemic and proposed health cooperation MoU.

Fijian Assistant Minister of Rural, Maritime Development and Disaster Management Jovesa Vocea visited India on 04 April, met with the Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in India, and discussed matters of mutual interest around climate challenges. He also met with the Director General of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in New Delhi.

On 27 June 2023, HCI Port Moresby and Vice-Chancellor of Solomon Islands National University (SINU) Prof Transform Aqorau signed an MOU for ICCR Chair on Economics. Fijian Minister for Health and Medical Services Dr. Atonio Lalabalavu again visited India to attend the First WHO Traditional Medicine Global Summit on 17 and 18 August in Gandhinagar. The 1st India-Samoa Foreign Ministry Consultations were held in Apia on 21 August. Both sides discussed development partnership in areas of ICT, health, SME and capacity building and followed up on FIPIC III Summit announcements.

Fijian Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management Sakiasi Raisevu Ditoka visited India from 16-22 September to attend the Asia-Pacific Regional Meeting in Hyderabad.

Fijian Minister for Public Works, Transport and Meteorological Services Ro Filipe Tuisawau, Minister for Infrastructure and Sustainable Energy of Republic of Kiribati Willie Tokataake, and Minister for Trade and Fisheries, Government of Tuvalu Kitiona Tausi, visited India from 28 October-03 November for Sixth General Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) in New Delhi.

On 27 and 28 November, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Justice and Legal Affairs, Dr. Paul Mae and Public Solicitor George Gray from Samoa attended the 1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid in New Delhi.

Outgoing visits

EAM visited Fiji for the first time in February 2023 and called on the President of Fiji Ratu Williams Katonivere. They launched the Government of India funded project for the Solarization of the Pacific Heads of State Residence at the State House in Suva. A

visa waiver agreement was also signed between India and Fiji for holders of diplomatic and official passports.



EAM and President of Fiji Ratu Williams Katonivere jointly inaugurated the solarisation of the State House in Suva, February 2023.

Fijian Minister for Sugar Charan J. Singh visited Sugarcane Farms, Mills in India from 19-23 February 2023 to attend the three-day International Society of Sugar Cane Technologist (ISSCT) Congress.

On 07 March 2023, MoS (RRS) and Solomon Islands Foreign Minister Jeremiah Manele and Minister for Planning and Development Rexon Ramofafia, met on the sidelines of 5th UN LDC conference in Doha. Discussions were held on India's development assistance in education, health, capacity building, medical and humanitarian support, defence, establishment of Centre for Excellence in IT (CEIT) in Solomon Islands National University, facilitation of Indian warship visits, requests pertaining to Government of India's support for funding 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara (19 November-02 December 2023), and establishment of Solomon Islands High Commission in India.

Fijian Deputy Prime Minister met with the Finance Minister of India on 05 May 2023, during the Asian Development Bank Annual Meeting in South Korea.

MoS (RRS) visited Fiji from 14-16 May 2023 to attend the Girit Day Celebration as the Guest of Honor along with MP. The Prime Minister visited Port Moresby and jointly co-hosted the FIPIC summit with the Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea James Marape on 22 May.

MoS (RRS) visited the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) on 19 and 20 October. This was the first Ministerial level visit from India to the Marshall Islands in the last five years.

12th World Hindi Conference (WHC)

The 12th WHC attended by more than 1,000 participants from 31 countries around the world was jointly hosted with the Government of Fiji in Nadi, Fiji from 15-17 February. EAM led the Indian delegation comprising MoS (VM), MoS (Home Affairs), Members of Parliament, Hindi Scholars and senior officials. Fijian President Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and EAM jointly inaugurated the Conference on 15 February 2023. A special commemorative postal stamp and first day covers (FDC Stamps) during 12th WHC were also released during the event by the Government of Fiji.

Philippines

Bilateral relations with the Philippines continued to expand, with wide ranging engagements, especially in priority sectors identified by leaders of both the countries. Prime Minister and President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. held a brief pull aside meeting on the sidelines of 20th ASEAN-India Summit on 07 September in Jakarta. On 17 November, President Marcos addressed the inaugural Leaders' Session of 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held virtually. In January, Secretary of Foreign Affairs (SFA) Enrique A. Manalo addressed the Foreign Ministers' Session of 1st Voice of Global South Summit held. A 4-member delegation led by the Comptroller and Auditor General visited the Philippines on 15 and 16 September 2023.

Bilateral ties received considerable impetus with the 5th meeting of Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation held on 29 June in New Delhi which was co-chaired by EAM and SFA Manalo.

Trade and investment partnerships made considerable progress during the year. Bilateral trade crossed USD 3 billion mark in 2022-23. Initiatives to expand trade and investment continued with several India business roadshows held across many cities of the Philippines. Development Partnership and Financial Technology (fintech) have emerged as focus areas for bilateral cooperation. An Agreement on Financing of QIPs was signed on 07 February. A MoU for the constitution of a JWG on Cooperation in Financial Technology was also signed on 19 June and is expected to facilitate partnerships in the fields of digital payments, financial inclusion, fintech and related areas. Agriculture, identified as a key area of bilateral engagements, also witnessed positive momentum. At the request of the Philippines, a special quota of 295,000 MT was allocated for export of non-basmati white rice.

The ratification of an Air Service Agreement by the Philippines in June to facilitate direct air connectivity is expected to

expand tourism, business and people to people ties. Bilateral cooperation in the space sector progressed with the first round of bilateral dialogue held virtually on 8 June between ISRO and Philippine Space Agency.

Defence cooperation continued to strengthen with senior level visits, meetings of bilateral mechanisms and other engagements. A 5-member delegation led by Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) Commandant CG Admiral Artemio Abu visited India from 21-23 August. This was the first ever visit by a PCG Commandant to India. During the visit, an MoU on Enhanced Maritime Cooperation, and Standard Operating Procedure to operationalise the MoU on Exchange of White Shipping Information (2019) were signed. Commanding General of Philippine Army Lt. Gen. Roy Mabagos Galido visited India to attend 13th Indo-Pacific Army Chief's Conference from 25-27 September at New Delhi.

INS Kadmat visited Manila for port calls on 12 and 13 December. During the Operational Turnaround (OTR), the ship undertook various engagements with the Philippines Navy including Subject Matter Expert Exchanges and Maritime Partnership Exercise.

The inaugural India-Philippines Maritime Track 2 Dialogue, co-chaired by National Maritime Foundation and Stratbase ADR Institute of the Philippines was held on 12 September in Manila.

Singapore

The year 2023 saw intense engagement between India and Singapore with several visits taking place from both sides. On India's invitation, Singapore actively participated in G-20 meetings in India with several Ministerial delegations from Singapore visiting India throughout the year. Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong visited India from 08-10 September for the G20 Leaders' Summit. He also participated in the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit on 22 November. EAM visited Singapore on an official visit from 18-21 October 2023. The two countries also engaged in various bilateral and multilateral defence exercises. Trade and investment flow between the two sides continued to grow, with Singapore continuing to top the list of biggest sources of FDI to India since 2018.

On 21 February, the link between India's UPI and Singapore's PayNow was virtually launched, in the presence of Prime Minister and Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong. The PayNow-UPI linkage is India's first cross-border real-time payment systems linkage. It is also the world's first such linkage to feature cloud-based infrastructure and participation by non-bank financial institutions.



Prime Minister launched the real time payment linkage between UPI & PayNow Singapore with the Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Hsien Loong, February 2023. This was the 1st launch of a cross border person-to-person payment facility for India.

MoS (VM) visited Singapore on 20 and 21 February. He held a bilateral meeting with the Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Education and Foreign Affairs of Singapore Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman. MoS (RRS) visited Singapore from 18-20 May and met Dr. Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman. State level delegations led by Chief Ministers of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu also visited Singapore during the year.

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) paid an official visit to Singapore from 07-10 September for the inauguration of the Singapore-India Judicial Roundtable. CJI and Chief Justice of Singapore Sundaresh Menon witnessed the signing of two MoUs between the Supreme Court of India and Supreme Court of Singapore to promote bilateral judicial cooperation.

The 17th Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Singapore was held in New Delhi on 18 September. The FOC was co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Law and concurrently Second Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore Luke Goh.

Singapore joined the International Solar Alliance in June 2023 and the Global Biofuel Alliance at the G20 Leaders' Summit in September 2023 as an Observer state.

During the annual bilateral maritime military exercise SIMBEX in September 2023, India and Singapore signed the Submarine Rescue Joint Standard Operating Procedures (JSOP) in the presence of the High Commissioner of India and Singapore Navy Fleet Commander.

Cooperation in Space continued in the year 2023. On 22 April,

ISRO successfully launched the PSLV-C55 mission carrying two Singapore satellites weighing 757kg. The primary payload was an earth observation satellite. The launch was carried out at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. It was a dedicated commercial PSLV mission of NewSpace India Limited for the international satellite customer from Singapore. On 30 July, ISRO launched 07 Singaporean satellites via C56 (PSLV-C56) from Sriharikota. This was a Dedicated Commercial Mission of New Space India Ltd (NSIL) for ST Engineering, Singapore. DS-SAR, a Radar Imaging Earth Observation satellite, was the primary satellite for the mission. In addition to this there were 6 co-passenger customer satellites also belonging to Singapore.

Thailand

The warm and friendly bilateral relations between India and Thailand were further strengthened in 2023. The Prime Minister extended his congratulations and best wishes to the new Prime Minister of Thailand Srettha Thavisin following his election on 22 August.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand Parnpree Bahiddha-Nukara addressed the second Foreign Minister's Session of 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November. On the sidelines of MGC FMM (Mekong-Ganga Cooperation Foreign Ministers' Meeting) and BIMSTEC FMs Retreat in July, EAM held a bilateral meeting with the then Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand Don Pramudwinai. EAM also interacted with him on the sidelines of 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting and related meetings in

Jakarta on 13 July, as well as on the sidelines of BRICS Summit on 24 August in South Africa. Earlier, on 30 January, the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand visited India for a meeting with EAM.

MoS for Social Justice and Empowerment visited Thailand from 31 May-03 June to attend the 18th United Nations Day of Vesak Celebrations 2023 and Conference on Buddhist Wisdom coping with Global crisis.

Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs of Thailand Vijavat Isarabhakdi attended the BIMSTEC Business Conclave 2023 organised by Indian Chamber of Commerce in Kolkata from 12-15 June.

The 7th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Thailand, co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs of Thailand Sarun Charoensuwan was held on 07 August in Bangkok.

Bilateral trade between India and Thailand touched USD 18 billion in 2022. The 13th Meeting of India-Thailand Joint Trade Committee was held on 20 April in New Delhi. During the meeting, issues related to bilateral trade and market access were discussed. A number of events were organised in various parts of Thailand for promotion of trade and tourism.

During the year 2023, India-Thailand Annual Defence Dialogue (ADD) and Staff Talks between the three-armed forces on both sides were held. Assistant Commander in Chief, Royal Thai Army General Suksan Nongbualang represented Thailand at the 13th Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference (IPACC), 47th Indo-Pacific Armies Management Seminar (IPAMS) and Senior Enlisted Leader Forum (SELF) 2023 in New Delhi on 25-27 September. Chief of Staff of Royal Thai Air Force, Air Chief Marshal Narong visited India in August as well as September 2023.

After a successful conduct of 35th Indo-Thai Coordinated Patrol, INS Kesari made a port call at Phuket in May, INS Sumitra undertook Operational Turn Around at Phuket in June and September, the Indian Coast Guard pollution control ship Samudra Praharis conducted Puneet Sagar Abhiyaan and Pollution Control Demonstration in Bangkok and INS Tir, INS Sujata, Sail Training Ship Sudarshini and CGS Sarathi of 1st Training Squadron of Indian Navy visited Phuket and conducted training activities, interactions and maritime partnership exercise with Royal Thai Navy from 25-28 September.

CNS paid an official visit to Thailand during 18-22 December to participate in the 8th Indian Ocean Naval Symposium. INS Kulish and LCU 56 were deployed for the maiden Indian Navy and Royal Thai Navy exercise. The successful completion of the first bilateral naval exercise from 22-25 December further strengthened cooperation between the two countries.

The 13th India Corner was established at Prince of Songkhla University in Surat Thani. During this period, more than 700

schools in 9 provinces of Thailand were gifted with Buddhist Jataka tales in comic form in Thai language.

On 16 October 2023, a registered nurse from India received the 2023 Princess Srinagarindra Award from HRH Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn for his outstanding visions, commitment and dedication to nursing and the missions of the Indian Nursing Council for the past 49 years.

Timor Leste

Over the years, India and Timor Leste have nurtured a close relationship based on common values and mutual trust.

On 7 September 2023, Prime Minister announced that India would open a Resident Mission in Dili. This announcement made at the ASEAN-India Summit in Jakarta, underscores India's commitment to strengthening its cooperation with Timor-Leste and with the wider ASEAN region. On the sidelines of ADMM Plus, Raksha Mantri, on 17 November, held a bilateral meeting with Minister of Defence of Timor-Leste Rear Admiral Prof. Dr. Donaciano Do Rosario Da Costa Gomes in Jakarta. Lt. Gen. Domingos Raul Falur Rate Laek, Chief of Defence Force of Timor-Leste led a delegation to India for the Aero India Show in February.

Vice Minister of Commerce and Industry of Timor-Leste Domingos Lopes Antunes virtually participated in the Commerce and Trade Ministers' Session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit on 13 January. Foreign Minister of Timor-Leste Bendito dos Santos Freitas participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November.

MoS (RRS) paid an official visit to Timor-Leste from 30 September-02 October. This was the first ministerial-level visit from India to Timor-Leste since 2018. During the visit, MoS (RRS) called on President Jose Ramos-Horta and Prime Minister Kay Rala Xanana Gusmao. MoS (RRS) also had a meeting with Foreign Minister Bendito dos Santos Freitas and Minister of Trade and Industry, Filipus Nino Pereira. He also interacted with members of the Indian community and Indian professionals working in international organisations in Timor-Leste.

Minister of Health of Timor-Leste Dr. Elias Antonio de Araujo dos Reis Amaral along with a 5-member delegation, visited India to participate in the 76th meeting of WHO Regional Committee held from 30 October-02 November in New Delhi.

Twelve diplomats from Timor-Leste attended the 1st Special Course for Diplomats organised by Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) from 20-29 September.

A Goan Folk Group, under ICCR programme, visited Dili during 17 and 18 February. The performance by this group was the first event of its kind in Timor-Leste in the recent past.

Vietnam

India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership advanced well in 2023, in pursuance of the Plan of Action for the implementation of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership: 2021-23 and the "Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People" adopted by the two Prime Ministers on 21 December 2020. Bilateral engagement and cooperation activities extended to various domains, including political exchanges, defence and security, trade and business relations, energy, development cooperation, science and technology, cultural and people level exchanges. These exchanges strengthened mutual trust and deepened bilateral understanding at various levels.

The Prime Minister and Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh held bilateral talks in Hiroshima on 20 May, on the sidelines of the expanded G7 Summit and interacted informally during the Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC in Dubai on 01 December. Vietnam's then President Nguyen Xuan Phuc attended the inaugural Leaders Session of Voice of the Global South Summit hosted by the Prime Minister on 12 January 2023.

EAM visited Vietnam from 15-18 October and co-chaired with Vietnamese Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son the 18th India-Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) on Economic, Trade, Scientific and Technological Cooperation in Hanoi on 16 October. Agreed Minutes of the JCM were signed. The two Ministers released the joint postage stamp on the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Vietnam.

EAM also called on Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, held talks with the Chairman of Communist Party of Vietnam's External Relation Commission Le Hoai Trung, during the trip, EAM delivered an address at the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam on "India in the Indo-Pacific". He also unveiled busts of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, visited INS Sudharshini, and interacted with the Indian diaspora in Ho Chi Minh City. EAM also met with Politburo Member and Secretary of the Party Committee of Ho Chi Minh City Nguyen Van Nen. Earlier, on 12 July, EAM and Foreign Minister of Vietnam met on the margins of the 56th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Jakarta.

Politburo Member, Deputy Secretary of the Party's Central Military Commission, Minister of National Defence General Phan Van Giang (PVG) was hosted by Raksha Mantri in India on 18 and 19 June. The two Ministers reviewed bilateral defence cooperation and emphasised future cooperation in defence industry, maritime security, and multinational cooperation.

Among other Minister level exchanges, Politburo member and Minister of Public Security of Vietnam General To Lam visited India on 9 and 10 April and held talks with NSA and MoS (Home Affairs). Vietnam's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Le Minh Hoan participated as a special invitee at the G20 Agricultural Ministers' Meeting held in Hyderabad from 15-17 June. Vietnam's Minister of Justice Nguyen Thanh Long visited India from 30 June-03 July.

MoS (RRS) visited Vietnam from 27-29 October to attend the 3rd Northeast India Festival in Ho Chi Minh City. During the visit, he also interacted with the local leadership and Indian community.



EAM and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam Bui Thanh Son jointly unveiled commemorative stamps celebrating 50 years of establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Vietnam in Hanoi, October 2023.

Other institutional bilateral mechanisms also witnessed active engagements. The 5th meeting of the India-Vietnam Joint Sub-Commission on Trade at Deputy Minister level was held in New Delhi on 08 August; the 3rd Policy Planning Dialogue between the two Foreign Ministries was held on 08 June 2023 in Hanoi; the 3rd India-Vietnam Maritime Security Dialogue was held on 31 May in New Delhi; and the 3rd India-Vietnam Joint Committee meeting on Atomic Energy Cooperation was held in Hanoi on 25 and 26 May.

Secretary (East) and Deputy Foreign Minister Do Hung Viet discussed bilateral cooperation in Dhaka on 13 May on the margins of the 6th Indian Ocean Conference.

The President of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) visited Vietnam on 04 and 05 August. He discussed academic and cultural exchanges with Deputy Minister of Culture, Sports, and Tourism of Vietnam Ta Quang Dong, and Vice President of the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics Prof. Le Van Loi.

Buddhism-related interactions between the two countries continued in 2023. A 40-member Buddhist delegation led by Supreme Patriarch of Vietnam Buddhist Sangha His Holiness Thich Tri Quang (TTQ) attended the inaugural ceremony of the Global Buddhist Summit organised by the International Buddhist Confederation in New Delhi on 20 April.

Bilateral defence cooperation continued. In 2023, INS Sudarshini – Sail training ship of the Indian Navy docked at Ho Chi Minh City International port on 18 October 2023; INS Airavat made a port call at Cam Ranh from 21-25 July 2023; and two Indian Navy ships viz, INS Delhi and INS Satpura paid a port call at Da Nang on 19 and 22 May.

During 2023, India continued to support Vietnam in capacity building and human resource development. More than 180 Vietnamese officials were trained in India under the Indian Training and Education Cooperation (ITEC) scheme. 48 scholarships were also availed of by Vietnamese students for Undergraduate and Postgraduate studies in India under the ICCR scholarship scheme.

The second instalment of INR 18.8 crores for the Government of India-supported initiative to set up the 'Army Software Park' at the Telecommunication University at Nha Trang was released in the year 2023.

Exchanges at provincial level, academic and think-tank institutions, cultural troupes and youth of the two countries continued increasing people level exchanges.

CHAPTER

4

East Asia

China

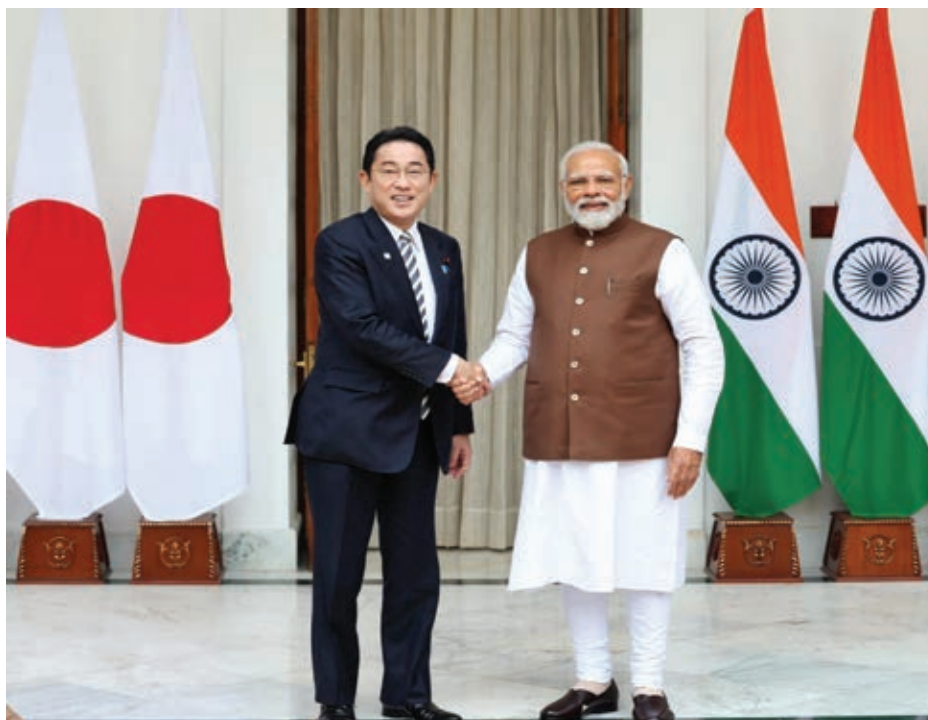
India and China had agreed that maintenance of peace and tranquillity in the border areas was an essential basis for the overall development of the bilateral relationship, pending the final settlement of the boundary question. However, China's attempts to unilaterally change the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector in April-May 2020, in violation of the existing bilateral agreements and protocols, had seriously disturbed the peace and tranquillity along the border and negatively impacted the development of the relationship. These attempts were invariably met with an appropriate response from Indian Armed Forces.

Major Developments in India-China bilateral relations

India and China have agreed to resolve the issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh through peaceful dialogue. India and China have held 14 meetings of Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) and 20 rounds of meetings at the Senior Military Commanders level since June 2020. As a result of the dialogue, both sides had disengaged in Pangong Tso (February 2021), Gogra area (August 2021), and Gogra-Hot Springs (PP-15) in Eastern Ladakh (September 2022). Discussions continued

with the Chinese side, through both diplomatic and military channels, to achieve early disengagement in the remaining areas of friction and full restoration of peace and tranquillity. In 2023, two rounds of meetings of WMCC were held in-person in Beijing in February, and in New Delhi in May, followed by a virtual meeting in November. Three rounds of Senior military commanders-level meetings were held. During these diplomatic and military level meetings, the two sides had candid and in-depth exchange of views on the situation along the LAC in the India-China border areas. There was an agreement to continue discussions through diplomatic and military channels to resolve the remaining issues along the LAC at the earliest.

EAM held a meeting with the then Foreign Minister of China, Qin Gang, in New Delhi in March, on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting and on the sidelines of the SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting in May. EAM also met the Director of Office of Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, Wang Yi on 14 July on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Jakarta. An interaction between EAM and Executive Vice Foreign Minister of China happened on the sidelines of BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting in June. In these meetings, EAM conveyed that restoration of normalcy in the relationship will require a restoration of peace and tranquillity in the border areas and called for an early resolution of all the outstanding issues along the LAC in the Western Sector. EAM also highlighted that India-



Prime Minister of Japan Kishida Fumio was welcomed by the Prime Minister in New Delhi, March 2023

China relationship is best served by observing the three mutuals - mutual respect, mutual sensitivity, and mutual interest.

India continues to engage with China on multilateral platforms including BRICS, SCO, G-20, and the UN.

DPRK

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in December 1973, relations between India and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea have been cordial. India has been consistently supportive of efforts to bring about peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula through dialogue and diplomacy.

Japan

In 2023, the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership strengthened further, and there is growing convergence of economic and strategic interests between the two countries. The momentum of the bilateral relations which is multifaceted and multidimensional has increased further with multiple high-level visits. The year witnessed three meetings between the Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Japan, ministerial visits from India to Japan for the G7 meetings, the visit of an Indian naval ship to Japan, high-level defence exchanges, and meetings

of various bilateral mechanisms and working groups. The year was also designated as the "Japan-India tourism exchange year" with the theme "Connecting Himalayas with Mount Fuji".

Prime ministerial engagements

Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Japan, Kishida Fumio, met thrice in 2023. This included a two-day visit of Prime Minister Kishida to India from 19-21 March, during which Prime Minister Kishida delivered a policy speech titled "The Future of the Indo-Pacific—Japan's New Plan for a Free and Open Indo-Pacific- Together with India, as an Indispensable Partner" at the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). Additionally, the Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Japanese language education in India was renewed, and the Exchange of Notes for the 4th tranche of the JICA ODA loan for the Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project was concluded.

Prime Minister travelled to Japan from 19-21 May to be part of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. During the visit, the Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with a number of leaders, including with Prime Minister Kishida. A solemn ceremony was conducted to unveil a statue of Mahatma Gandhi near the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park. Further, the Prime Minister also participated in the 5th QUAD leaders' summit held in Hiroshima on 20 May.



Prime Minister attended the G7 Leaders' Summit in Japan, May 2023

Prime Minister Kishida made an official visit to New Delhi from 09 and 10 September 2023, during the G20 Summit and met the Prime Minister. The two leaders discussed the constructive work done throughout the year focusing on the objectives of their respective G7 and G20 presidencies, particularly in bringing the aspirations of the Global South to the fore.

Foreign Ministerial Engagements

During the course of the year 2023, the EAM also held several interactions with the Foreign Minister of Japan. The then Foreign Minister of Japan, Yoshimasa Hayashi, visited India twice. His first visit was from 02-04 March, to attend the QUAD Foreign Ministers' meeting. Minister Yoshimasa visited India again during 27-28 July to participate in the 15th Japan-India Strategic Dialogue, and held bilateral meetings with EAM in New Delhi. During the July visit, FM Hayashi also spoke at the 2nd India-Japan Forum held in New Delhi. On the sidelines of the UNGA in New York, India and Japan held Foreign Ministers' meeting where EAM congratulated the newly appointed Foreign Minister of Japan, Kamikawa Yoko. The two ministers discussed ways to further develop the "Japan-India Special Strategic and Global Partnership". In November 2023, EAM and Foreign Minister of Japan, Kamikawa Yoko addressed the 6th Japan-India Indo-Pacific Forum.

Other High-Level Engagements

The year was marked by multiple high-level visits, between India and to Japan for bilateral engagements as well as for G20 and G7 meetings in India and Japan, respectively.

Several official Indian delegations visited Japan for G7 ministerial meetings: the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change addressed the Plenary Session of G7 Ministers' meeting in Sapporo in April. He also met the Environment Minister of Japan on the sidelines. The Minister for Electronics and IT participated in the G7 Digital and Tech Ministers' meeting in Takasaki in April. The minister also met his Japanese counterpart on the sidelines of the meeting. The Finance Minister attended the G7 Finance Ministers' meeting in Niigata in May. She delivered an address on investment opportunities in India. The Health Minister attended the G7 Health Ministers' meeting in Nagasaki in May. He met his counterparts from Japan, Indonesia, Italy, and the EU on the sidelines in Nagasaki. The Minister of Commerce and Industry visited Osaka-Sakai for the G7 Trade Ministers' meeting in October. The Minister spoke at the Outreach Session for Enhancing Supply Chain Resilience at the G7 Trade Ministers' meeting.

The then State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Takei Shunsuke, visited India to attend the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in June. The then Agriculture Minister of Japan, Nomura Testsuro, attended the G20 Agriculture Ministers' meeting in Hyderabad in June. Finance Minister of Japan, Suzuki Shunichi, and the Governor of Bank of Japan, Ueda Kazuo, attended the G20 Finance Minister and Central Bank Governors' meeting in Gandhinagar in July. The then Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Nishimura Yasutoshi, visited India to attend the G20 Energy Transition Ministerial meeting in Goa in July. During the visit, he also held bilateral meetings with the Minister of Steel, Minister of Electronics and Information Technology, and Minister of Commerce and

Industry. India and Japan signed a MoU for joint development of the semiconductor supply chain.

Former Prime Minister of Japan and chairman of the Japan-India Association, Suga Yoshihide, along with the 'Ganesh group' of MPs and a business delegation visited India from 05-08 July. He met the Prime Minister and discussed investment and economic cooperation, as well as ways to deepen the bilateral partnership.

MoS (VM) visited Japan in November and met the then State Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Horii Iwao, and Parliamentary Vice-Minister of Economy, Trade, and Industry of Japan, Ishii Taku.

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) visited Japan from 11-15 December and met General Yoshihide Yoshida, Chief of Staff of Japan Self Defence Force (JSDF). CDS also visited the National Institute of Defence Studies, Japan.

The Principal Scientific Advisor to the PM visited Japan in August and met the President of Japan's Institute of Physical and Chemical Research (RIKEN), Dr Makoto Gonokami, and explored the potential for research collaboration between the two countries.

The then LDP Policy Research Council Chief Hagiuda Koichi and the then State Minister for Health, Labour and Welfare Tsuchiya Shinako visited India separately in the month of January. Other recent visits from Japan include- Mori Masako, Special Advisor to Prime Minister (19-22 July), Wada Yoshiaki and other parliamentarians from Japan-India Parliamentary Friendship League (18-22 July), and Kihara Minoru, Chairman Standing Committee on Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism (23-25 July). FICCI Forum of Parliamentarians Delegation,

chaired by a Member of Lok Sabha, visited Japan from 09-13 October. A delegation of Members of Parliament from North East India visited Japan in December. The Confederation of Indian Industry and Sasakawa Peace Foundation supported the visit. The Delegation met the then Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan Nishimura Yasutoshi and the then State Minister for Foreign Affairs Horii Iwao. Discussions focused on promoting education, tourism and P2P exchanges.

A delegation led by the Chief Minister of Odisha visited Japan in April. He addressed officials and business representatives on investment, trade and industrial development opportunities in Odisha. The Chief Minister of Gujarat visited Japan in November. He addressed an event in Tokyo on the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024. The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu visited Japan in May for an interaction with business leaders and for investment promotion. Other important state level visits include Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra (August); Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar (October); and Industry Minister of Bihar (November).

Defence Cooperation

Japan and India held the inaugural Veer Guardian-23 exercise at Hyakuri Air Base in January. This was the first-ever joint fighter jet drill between India and Japan. Exercise Shinnyu Maitri was also conducted between the transport wings of IAF and Japan Air Self-Defence Force (JASDF) in March. The 4th edition of Exercise Dharma Guardian between the Indian army and JSDF was held from 17 February-02 March at Camp Imazu. Japan. INS Kadmat, visited Japan and exercised with JS Towada off Okinawa in November. The exercises included Replenishment at Sea, and communications procedures that would enhance interoperability between the two forces. The First joint service staff talks were held in Tokyo on 11-12 September.



Prime Minister met with the Japanese delegation including members of 'Ganesh group' of Parliamentarians and Industry leaders headed by the Former Prime Minister of Japan Yoshihide Suga, July 2023

Economic and Commerce

MoS for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship addressed the 1st India-Japan Skill Connect Conference virtually in August, in Tokyo. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Industrial Capital Goods was held virtually on 02 December. The 2nd meeting of the JWG on Food Processing was held in Tokyo on 07 March. In addition, the 5th meeting of the India-Japan Industrial Competitiveness Partnership was held in Tokyo on 28 February. The first meeting of India- Japan JWG on Automotive Sector was held virtually on 21 June. Various other bilateral dialogues including the 5th Japan-India Cyber Dialogue and 4th India-Japan JWG on Specified Skill Workers were held in September and October, respectively. The total number of the Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing (JIM) and Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) projects have also increased to 35 and 11, respectively. In 2023, India-Japan bilateral trade stood at USD 21.956, the largest-ever. In the current FY 2023-24, in the April to October period bilateral trade stands at USD 13.35 billion with exports to India at USD 10.424 billion and exports from India to Japan at USD 2.926 billion. Japanese FDI into India for the April to September period stands at approximately USD 2.098 billion. In the Japanese Bank for International Cooperation's annual survey, India ranked as the topmost promising country for business.

Mongolia

India and Mongolia share civilisational, historical, cultural and spiritual ties. Mongolia, being a landlocked country bordering China and Russia, considered India as an important 'third' and 'spiritual neighbour'. Both countries established a Strategic Partnership during the visit of the Prime Minister to Mongolia in 2015. Since then, the trajectory of our bilateral relations and cooperation witnessed continuous growth. The momentum of high-level exchanges, especially parliamentary and defence, continued this year as well. Some of the key development projects in Mongolia, being built with India's assistance, witnessed significant progress throughout the year.

Major Developments in India-Mongolia bilateral relations

Both sides maintained frequent interactions at high-level through mutual visits to each other's countries, including parliamentary and defence exchanges. A 15-member Indian Parliamentary delegation, led by Lok Sabha Speaker, paid a visit to Mongolia from 06-08 July. During the visit, the delegation met the Speaker of Mongolian Parliament and called on the President of Mongolia, U. Khurelsukh, and the Prime Minister of Mongolia, Oyun-Erdene. Both sides also signed a "Joint Intent on Cooperation between Lok Sabha and the State Great Khural of Mongolia" and a "Protocol between Lok Sabha Secretariat and Secretariat of the State Great Khural of Mongolia on Parliamentary Cooperation" during the visit. Subsequently, a Mongolian Member of Parliament and a Member of the

Parliamentary Standing Committee on Education, Culture, Science and Sport, Gompildoo Munkhsetseg led a delegation to India from 14-17 December and held talks with the Secretary in the Ministry of Culture and called on the Chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture. The discussions focused on further expanding parliamentary and cultural cooperation between the two sides.

During 12-15 September, Secretary (East) visited Mongolia to hold bilateral consultations with his counterpart in Mongolia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and relevant stakeholders in Mongolia, and reviewed the progress of bilateral relationship and ongoing developmental projects, including Oil Refinery Project, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre of Excellence in IT, CT and Outsourcing and India-Mongolia Friendship Secondary School. The then President of Mongolia and leader of Mongolian Peoples' Party (MPP), N. Enkhbayar, paid a visit to India from 04-14 August under 'Distinguished Visitors Programme' of the ICCR.

There was continued momentum in defence cooperation between the two sides. The 11th JWG on Defence Cooperation was held between India and Mongolia on 10 and 11 February. India and Mongolia held an annual bilateral military training exercise, called "Nomadic Elephant" in Mongolia from 17-30 July 2023, which was participated by a 45-member Indian Army delegation from Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry unit. India also gifted two Ambulances and 200 High Altitude Area (HAA) special winter clothing to Mongolian Armed Forces during the bilateral exercise. India continued to send a large contingent via a 40-member Indian Army team from Garhwal Regiment to participate in the annual multilateral UN Peacekeeping Exercise called 'Khaan Quest-2023' in Ulaanbaatar from 19 June-02 July.

Mongolia has been traditionally supporting India in the United Nations and various multilateral fora. Mongolia continued to support several Indians candidature at various election / re-election to international bodies in 2023 as well. The Prime Minister of Mongolia, Oyun-Erdene, participated and delivered remarks virtually at the inaugural session of Voice of Global South Summit (VoGSS) on 12 January, and the Foreign Minister of Mongolia attended a session of the 2nd VoGSS on 22 November, virtually.

Republic of Korea

The Special Strategic Partnership between India and the Republic of Korea (RoK) got an impetus owing to several high-level exchanges and meetings of bilateral dialogue mechanisms. The year also marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and RoK.

Prime Minister and President of Republic of Korea Yoon Suk Yeol met in Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in May. President Yoon visited India for the G20 Summit in September 2023 and held bilateral meetings with the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the summit.



Hon'ble President and Prime Minister welcomed the President and the First Lady of the Republic of Korea at the G20 dinner, September 2023.

The EAM and the Foreign Minister of RoK, Park Jin, met twice in New Delhi and in Jakarta, in April and July, respectively. Finance Minister visited RoK in May to attend Asian Development Bank (ADB) related meetings, and also held bilateral talks with the

Finance minister of RoK, Choo Kyung-ho. The National Assembly Speaker of RoK, Kim Jin-pyo, visited New Delhi in October to attend the P20 Summit. Several RoK Ministers, officials and representatives visited India for G20 meetings.

CHAPTER

5

Eurasia & the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation

Armenia

India-Armenia ties progressed in a positive trajectory during the year 2023-24. Armenia became the 117th signatory of the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement on 16 November 2023. The Vice President of the National Assembly of Armenia and Head of Armenia-India Friendship Group Hakob Arshakyan visited New Delhi for the Raisina Dialogue in March and called on the Speaker of the Lok Sabha during the visit.

Armenian Foreign Minister Ararat Mirzoyan and EAM met during the former's visit to New Delhi in March to attend the Raisina Dialogue. The two Foreign Ministers met again on the sidelines of UNGA in September. Armenia also participated in both editions of the Voice of Global South Summits (VOGSS) held virtually in January and November.

The 10th round of India-Armenia Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on 18 November. The first India-Armenia Policy Planning Dialogue was conducted in Yerevan on 03 July and the first India-Armenia-Iran trilateral consultations were held in Yerevan on 20 April.

Armenia also participated in other Indian global initiatives during the year. The Deputy Minister for Hi-Tech Gevorg Mantashyan took part in the "Global Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Summit" on the sidelines of the G20 Digital Economy Working Group meeting from 12-14 June in Pune and signed a bilateral MoU with MeitY on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.

Armenian Minister of Health Anahit Avanesyan attended the Advantage Healthcare Summit in Delhi from 26-27 April. The Deputy Minister of Environment Aram Meymaryan participated in the launch of the International Big Cat Alliance in Mysuru from 09-10 April. The Minister of Territorial Administration Gnel Sanosyan and Deputy Foreign Minister Mnatsakan Safaryan participated in the Global India Maritime Summit from 17-19 October.

Armenia supported India's candidatures at Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property (ICPRCP), International Maritime Organization (IMO), Executive Board of Transport International Routier (TIR) Convention, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and World Health Organization (WHO) External Auditor.

Azerbaijan

The India-Azerbaijan relations progressed steadily during the year. Azerbaijan participated in both editions of the Voice of the Global South Summits held in January and November.

Deputy Foreign Minister Elnur Mammadov visited India on 03-05 March to participate in the Raisina Dialogue. He also held bilateral meetings with MoS (ML) and Secretary (West) in the Ministry on the sidelines.

Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Azerbaijan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev co-chaired the 6th meeting of the India-Azerbaijan Inter-Governmental Commission, held in Baku on 25 October, where wide-ranging discussions on economic and commercial relations between the two countries took place. During the visit, the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry had bilateral meetings with Azerbaijani Minister of Economy Mikayil Jabbarov and the Minister of Digital Development and Transport Rashad Nabiyeu. The Minister of State for Commerce & Industry was also received by the Prime Minister Ali Asadov.

As part of the celebration of 'International Year of Millet-2023', a focused 'one-week millet campaign' was organised in Baku from 22-28 January.

Belarus

India-Belarus relations were marked by increased bilateral interactions. President Aleksandr Lukashenko participated virtually in the SCO Summit hosted by India, on 04 July. Earlier on 12 January, Minister for Energy Viktor Karankevich represented Belarus at the first Voice of Global South Summit. On 17 November, Minister of Industry Alexander Rogozhnik participated in the second Voice of Global South Summit. On 28 April, Defence Minister Lt. Gen. Viktor Khrenin met Raksha Mantri on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers Meeting in New Delhi.

On 21-23 May, a seven-member delegation from India led by Secretary & Director General of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research visited Minsk. They held meetings at the Belarusian National Academy of Sciences and the State Committee for Science and Technology and visited several scientific and research institutions in Belarus. On 04 August, the 2nd meeting of the Joint Working Group on Pharma was held in virtual format and the 2nd meeting of the JWG on Textiles was also held through video conference on 18 September.

On 17 March, the Deputy Industry Minister Dmitry Kharitonchik visited India with a business delegation. An India-Belarus Industrial Forum was held in New Delhi during the visit. FICCI mounted a business delegation to Belarus on 11-12 December. On 11 August, for the first time in the history of the bilateral relationship, direct scheduled flight connectivity commenced between Minsk and Delhi.

Georgia

India-Georgia bilateral ties continued to strengthen during the year. Georgia participated in both the Voice of the Global South Summits held in January and November 2023. The Foreign Minister Ilia Darchiashvili participated in the 1st Voice of Global South Summit on 12 January and the Minister of Education and Science Giorgi Amilakhvari participated in the Education Ministerial Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Virtual Summit on 17 November.

The 7th round of India-Georgia Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on 06 November. During the consultations, discussions were held covering all aspects of bilateral relations, including political, trade & economic, consular, cultural, people to people ties, with emphasis on energy, agriculture, connectivity and capacity building.

Kazakhstan

India-Kazakhstan bilateral cooperation saw further consolidation in all spheres during the year. President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev participated in the virtual SCO Council of Heads of State Summit on 04 July hosted virtually by the Prime Minister. He also participated in the 'Concluding Leaders Session' of the 1st Voice of the Global South Summit chaired by the Prime Minister on 13 January. Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs Murat Nurtleu participated in the Foreign Ministers' session of the 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit chaired by EAM on 17 November. Deputy Prime Minister & Minister of Foreign Affairs Murat Nurtleu visited Goa for the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers' Meeting in May and also held a bilateral meeting with EAM.



EAM with the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Murat Nurtleu at Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Goa, May 2023.



EAM met President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Zhaparov and expressed support for the Kyrgyz Republic's successful chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Heads of Government in Bishkek, October 2023

NSA visited Astana to attend the 2nd India-Central Asia Meeting of NSAs/Secretaries of Security Council on 17 October. Deputy NSA visited Astana on 03 August to participate in the 4th India-Kazakhstan Security Dialogue.

Secretary of the Security Council of Kazakhstan Gizat Nurdauletov visited India on 29 March to attend the SCO Meeting of NSAs/Secretaries of Security Council and also held a bilateral meeting with NSA where an entire gamut of security issues was discussed. Defence Minister Ruslan Zhaksylykov visited India on 27-28 April to attend the SCO Defence Ministers Meeting. He held a productive bilateral meeting with Raksha Mantri. Vice-Minister of Culture and Sports Malikovich Yerkinbayev visited New Delhi on 15 March for the meeting of SCO Ministers of Physical Culture and Sports. He also visited Kashi for the meeting of SCO Heads of Tourism Administrations on 17-18 March. Emergency Situations Minister Yuri Ilyin visited India on 20 April for the 11th meeting of the SCO Heads of the Emergency Situations agencies. Deputy NSA led India's delegation at SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Astana from 07-09 September.

The 8th round of Foreign Office Consultations was held in New Delhi on 13 February. A three-member Delegation headed by the Election Commissioner of India visited Kazakhstan as International Observers from 17-20 March for the Elections of the Mazhilis of the Parliament and Maslikhats.

Annual Anti-Terrorism Exercise KAZIND-2023 between India and Kazakhstan was held in Matybulak Ranges, South Kazakhstan from 30 October to 11 November. The Exercise was upgraded to a bi-service Exercise by including the Air Force component. Vice-Minister of Industry and Construction Azamat Beispekov visited India on 22-23 November to attend the 6th Meeting of India-Kazakhstan Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation. The

Indian Air Force Musical Orchestra participated in the musical festival during the Capital Day celebrations in Astana city on 06 July.

Kyrgyzstan

India-Kyrgyz relations continued to strengthen during the year 2023. President Sadyr Zhaparov participated in the SCO Heads of State Council Meeting hosted virtually by the Prime Minister on 04 July. He also attended the 2nd Virtual Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November and Deputy Minister of Finance of the Kyrgyz Republic Ruslan Satylganovich Tatikov participated in the Finance Ministers' Session. The First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, Ecology and Technical Supervision Kanatbek Sadykov participated in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit in virtual format on 12-13 January.

Minister of Foreign Affairs Zheenbek Kulubaev participated in the 23rd meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of SCO in Goa on 04-05 May. On the sidelines, he met EAM. A virtual meeting was held between the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Economy and Commerce of the Kyrgyz Republic Daniyar Joldoshevich Amangeldiev on 30 May.

EAM visited Bishkek on 25-26 October leading the Indian delegation to the 22nd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG). During the visit he called on President Sadyr Zhaparov and met the Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Zheenbek Kulubaev.

Minister of Defence of the Kyrgyz Republic Lieutenant General Bekbolotov Asankalievich participated in the SCO Defence Ministers meeting on 28 April in New Delhi. He also held a bilateral meeting with Raksha Mantri on the sidelines. India-Kyrgyz Joint Exercise Khanjar-X was held from 07-18 March

in the Kyrgyz Republic. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation was held at Bishkek on 06-07 March.

Deputy Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers of Kyrgyz Republic and co-Chairperson of the India-Kyrgyz Inter-Governmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technological Cooperation Edil Baisalov accompanied by an official delegation including Deputy Minister of Economy and Commerce Kanat Abdrahmanov and Deputy Minister of Finance Ruslan Tatikov visited India to participate in the 9th edition of Iphex-2023 held from 05-07 July in Hyderabad. During the transit through New Delhi, he had separate meetings with the Minister of Commerce and Industry and MoS (ML).

Energy Minister Taalaibek Ibraev participated in the Ministerial Dialogue of the 1st edition of "India Energy Week 2023" held on 06-08 February in Bengaluru. Minister of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy Maksutov Altynbek Askarovich participated in the first virtual meeting of the India-Central Asia Culture Ministers on 3 April.

Deputy Minister of Education and Science of the Kyrgyz Republic Abazbek Uulu Rasul participated in the Meeting of Ministers of Science and Technologies of the SCO member-states, held on 15-16 May in New Delhi. A delegation from the Kyrgyz Ministry of Health participated in the "One Earth One Health" event during the G20 4th Health Working Group & Ministerial meetings held at Gandhinagar on 17-19 August.

Minister of Culture, Information, Sports and Youth Policy Maksutov Altynbek Askarovich participated in the 20th SCO Culture Ministers' Meeting held virtually on 03 April. Minister of Transport and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic Tekebaev Tilek Kydyrmaevich, along with a three-member delegation participated in the 10th Session of the SCO Transport Ministers held on 28 April in New Delhi, India.

Deputy NSA visited Bishkek on 17-18 July to co-Chair the 2nd India-

Kyrgyz Security Dialogue with Secretary of the Security Council Marat Mukanovich Imankulov. During the visit, the Deputy NSA also called on Minister of Foreign Affairs Zheenbek Kulubaev.

A delegation led by Chairman of the Supreme Court of the Kyrgyz Republic Zamirbek Kuramaevich Bazarbekov participated in the 18th Meeting of the Chief Justice/ Chairmen of the Supreme Courts of the SCO Member States from 10-12 March in New Delhi. He held a bilateral meeting with the Chief Justice of India on the sidelines.

Russia

India-Russia bilateral ties continued to strengthen, despite the complicated and challenging geopolitical scenario due to the Ukraine conflict. The Prime Minister had two telephonic conversations with the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin on 30 June and 28 August. President Putin participated in the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit Chaired by the Prime Minister on 22 November.

Earlier in the year on 17-18 April Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Minister of Industry & Trade Denis Manturov visited India for the 24th meeting of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), which he co-chaired with EAM. DPM Manturov also held bilateral meetings with the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of Finance and NSA.

EAM visited Moscow and Saint Petersburg on 25-29 December where he called on President Vladimir Putin and held discussions with DPM and the Minister of Industry & Trade Denis Manturov, as well as the Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov. EAM had a comprehensive exchange of views on bilateral cooperation in trade and economic, energy, defence, connectivity, cultural and people to people exchanges, and cooperation between regions of the two countries. He also shared perspectives on global and regional developments including multilateral cooperation.



EAM met Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during his official visit to Russia, December 2023

Foreign Minister Lavrov visited India three times: in March for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting and Raisina Dialogue, in May for the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting and in September for the G20 Summit, representing the President of the Russian Federation during this year. He held bilateral meetings with EAM during his visits in March and May. The two Ministers also met on the sidelines of the BRICS, ASEAN and East Asia Summit. On 28 April in New Delhi, Defence Minister Shoigu and Raksha Mantri held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers' Meeting.

Speaker of the Federation Council of the Russian Federal Assembly Valentina Matvienko visited New Delhi on 13-14 October for the G20 Parliamentary Speakers' Summit and held bilateral meetings with the Speaker of the Lok Sabha and Vice-President.

NSA visited Moscow from 07-09 February. During his visit, apart from participating in the 5th Multilateral Meeting of Secretaries of Security Councils/National Security Advisers on Afghanistan on 08 February, NSA met his counterpart, Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev and Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov on 09 February. NSA was also received by President Putin.

Secretary of the Russian Security Council Nikolai Patrushev visited New Delhi on 29 March for the SCO NSAs meeting. Minister for Civil Defence, Emergencies and Elimination of Consequences of Natural Disasters Alexander Kurenkov participated in the meeting of Head of Departments of Member-States of SCO, dealing with Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations held in New Delhi on 20 April.

The Working Group meeting on Military-Technical Cooperation and Defence Industry under the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) was held in New Delhi on 23-27 October, co-chaired by the Defence Secretary and First Deputy Director of the Federal Service for Military-Technical Cooperation of the Russian Federation Andrey Boytsov. An Indian Army contingent participated in the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus (ADMM+) Counter Terrorism Field Training Exercise in Primorsky Krai, Russia from 25-30 September with 12 other participating countries. The exercise was hosted by Russia as a co-Chair with Myanmar of the Expert Working Group on Counter Terrorism. In November, Russian and Indian Navies held PASSEX drills in the Bay of Bengal.

Other high-level visits from India in 2023 included the visit of Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways & AYUSH to Vladivostok on 11-14 September for the Eastern Economic Forum and of Minister of State for Steel & Rural Development to Saint Petersburg on 13-18 June for the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum 2023.

Secretary (West) visited Moscow on 03-04 May for the 12th round of the India-Russia Joint Working Group on Counter

Terrorism and bilateral consultations on UN and multilateral issues. Foreign Secretary co-chaired bilateral Foreign Office Consultations with Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia Andrey Rudenko in New Delhi on 13 November. Director General & Secretary of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research visited Russia on 22-26 May for meetings with leading Russian scientific and research institutes to discuss cooperation in science and technology.

Due to increased exports of Russian hydrocarbons, the bilateral trade in 2022-23 increased by more than three times to USD 49.4 billion, with Russia becoming India's 5th largest trading partner (from 25th in 2021-22). For April-September 2023, the bilateral trade amounted to USD 32.4 billion, with Indian exports amounting to USD 2.01 billion, while imports from Russia amounted to USD 30.4 billion.

The experts/scholars from the Indian and Russian think tanks continued regular interactions at various events and conferences in both countries. Flagship Russian conferences like the Valdai Discussion Club's plenary session and Primakov Readings attracted prominent experts from India. On 02 February, the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), in collaboration with the Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC), organised a dialogue on "India-Russia Strategic Partnership: New Challenges and Opportunities in a Changing World Order" in a hybrid format in New Delhi.

The strong cultural relations between India and Russia received further impetus with greater interest in Indian and Hindi studies in Russian educational institutes. A Festival of India in Russia was held in September across nine cities of Russia with visiting troupes from India showcasing the diverse facets of Indian culture. Both sides also took forward the discussions on holding "Cross Years of Exchanges" in 2024-25 with the outlook of a more contemporary understanding of both countries during the visit of Russian President's Special Envoy for International Cultural Cooperation Mikhail Shvydkoy to New Delhi on 26-27 June.

Tajikistan

The year saw continuing political engagement between India and Tajikistan. Tajik President Emomali Rahmon, participated in the Virtual SCO Summit hosted by the Prime Minister on 04 July.

On 05 May, Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin attended the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Goa and also met EAM on the sidelines. On 28 April, Tajik Defence Minister Colonel Sherali Mirzo participated in the meeting of SCO Defence Ministers in New Delhi, where he also held a bilateral meeting with Raksha Mantri. On 28 April Tajik Transport Minister Azim Ibrohim took part at the 10th meeting of the SCO Transport Ministers in New Delhi. On 17 November, Minister of Energy and Water Resources Juma Daler participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, held virtually. Tajik Deputy Minister of Energy and Water Resources Sorboni

Kholmuhamadzoda participated in the India Energy Week 2023 in Bengaluru on 06-08 February. A Tajik delegation took part in the First meeting of the JWG on Afghanistan held in New Delhi within the framework of the India-Central Asia Dialogue.

On 04-05 November, Tajik Deputy Minister of Agriculture participated in the World Food India Exhibition in Delhi and met several enterprises producing food products, machinery and industrial equipment. Tajik Deputy Minister of Justice Karimzoda Sharaf took part in the First Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid "Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South" in New Delhi on 27-28 November.

Chairman of Tajik Chamber of Accounts Karakhon Chillazoda participated in the 6th meeting of the SCO Council of Supreme Audit Institutions from 05-09 February where he also signed a Memorandum of Cooperation with Comptroller and Auditor General of India. Chairman of Tajik Supreme Court Shermuhammad Shohiyon took part in the 18th meeting of the Chief Justices of the SCO Supreme Courts held in New Delhi from 10-12 March. On 20 April, Deputy Chairman of the Committee for Emergency Situations and Civil Defence Isozoda Sulaiman took part in the meeting of SCO Heads of Departments on prevention and elimination of emergency situations, which was held in New Delhi on 20 April.

A milestone event for the year was the completion and handing over of the Dushanbe-Chortut Highway Project (Phase-I) in April implemented under the USD 20 million grant-in-aid announced in 2018. India continued to play a significant role in capacity building of Tajikistan. During the year, 278 ITEC slots and 26 ICCR scholarships were availed by Tajikistan. Nine Tajik students joined the Hindi Language course at the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra. 17 Tajik Military Cadets, trained at IMTT (Army), have been commissioned in Tajik Armed Forces and 26 more Tajik cadets are presently under training at NDA and IMA in India.

Total bilateral trade between India and Tajikistan from January to September, amounted to USD 40.09 million out of which Indian exports amounted to USD 40.04 million. Indian exports to Tajikistan mainly consist of pharmaceuticals, medical preparations, cane or beet sugar, tea, rice, and machinery.

Turkmenistan

President Serdar Berdimuhamedov participated as an honoured guest in the 23rd meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of State chaired by the Prime Minister on 04 July in a virtual format. Turkmen Minister for Science, Education, Health, Sports, Youth & Public Affairs Nurmuhammet Amanepesov participated in the first Voice of Global South Summit held virtually on 13 January. Deputy Chairman of State Concern Turkmengaz Hangeldiyev Shageldi participated in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held virtually on 17 November.

Minister of Culture of Turkmenistan Atageldy Shamyradov participated in the 1st India-Central Asia Culture Ministers meeting held virtually on 03 April. Turkmenistan supported India's candidature to the Executive Council for World Meteorological organisation and the Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its Countries of Origin or its Restitution in Case of Illicit Appropriation (ICPRCP) of UNESCO.

Deputy Chairman of Turkmen Maritime and River Line Agency Rowsen Jepbarov led a high-level delegation to India for the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 held in Mumbai from 17-19 October. He also participated in the special session on Chabahar port organised during the Summit. Ombudsman of Turkmenistan Yazdurusn Gurbannazarova visited New Delhi to participate in the 28th annual conference of Asia-Pacific Forum of National Human Rights organisations held on 20-21 September.

An 11-member Turkmen dance group led by Begench Geldimammedow "Nyazli" participated in the 9th International Dance and Music Festival held in New Delhi from 18-20 October.

Ukraine

India-Ukraine bilateral engagement continued to develop despite the situation in Ukraine. The Prime Minister met Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy on 20 May 2023 in Hiroshima on the sidelines of the G7 Summit.



Prime Minister met the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima, May 2023

The First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Emine Dzhaparova visited India on 09-12 April. She had wide-ranging discussions with Secretary (West), and was received by MoS (ML). She also interacted with Indian experts and scholars at an interactive session hosted by the Indian Council of World Affairs during her visit.

India participated in the meetings of the National Security Advisors and Political Directors on the implementation of President Zelenskyy's Peace Formula in Copenhagen on 24 June, in Jeddah on 05 August, in Malta on 28 October, and in Riyadh on 16 December. India also participated in the Ambassadorial Group meetings on the issue in Kyiv. NSA and Andriy Yermak met on the sidelines of the Jeddah Consultation meeting besides having telephonic conversations on 13 June, 01 August, 06 October and 01 November during the year.

Secretary (West) in the Ministry visited Kyiv on 13 July to hold the 9th round of Foreign Office Consultations. Secretary (West) also met Chairman of Verkhovna Rada Ruslan Stefanchuk and Head of the Office of the President Andriy Yermak during the visit.

India continued to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance to Ukraine. Two consignments consisting of 17 tons of humanitarian aid were delivered to Ukraine in September. India also provided financial assistance of Rs. 11.76 lakhs for completion of the reconstruction, remodelling and refurbishment of Kyiv Gymnasium of Oriental Language No. 1, during the year.

Uzbekistan

India-Uzbekistan bilateral ties continued to strengthen during the year. On 01 December, on the sidelines of the COP-28 Summit in Dubai, Prime Minister and Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev held a bilateral meeting and discussed bilateral issues on expanding cooperation in health, education, pharmaceuticals and traditional medicine. The Prime Minister assured support to expand India's development partnership with Uzbekistan. President Shavkat Mirziyoyev participated in the virtual SCO Council of Heads of State Summit hosted by the Prime Minister on 04 July. He also participated in the Leaders' Session at the 1st virtual Voice of Global South Summit on 12 January. Foreign Minister Bakhtiyor Saidov visited Goa on 04-05 May to participate in the SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting and met EAM on the sidelines. He also participated in the 2nd virtual Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November.

Minister of Emergency Situations Abdulla Kuldoshev visited New Delhi on 24 April to participate in the SCO Meeting of Heads of Department of Emergency Situations and he met Home Minister on the margins and signed an MoU between the National Disaster Management Authority, Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Uzbekistan.

Minister of Sports and Youth Policy of Uzbekistan Adhkam Ikramov visited New Delhi on 27-30 January during which he

met with the Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports and discussed various issues of mutual interest and showed special interest in India's various initiatives in sports for youth including the Fit India movement. Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting visited Uzbekistan on 29 November-02 October during which he participated in the Tashkent International Film Festival (TIFF) and met Culture & Tourism Minister Ozodbek Nazarbekov.

On the invitation of the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Uzbekistan, the Election Commissioner visited Tashkent on 06-10 July as an observer in the presidential election held on 09 July under Uzbekistan's new Constitution adopted in April. During his visit, the Election Commissioner had a bilateral meeting with Zayniddin Nizamkhodjaev, Chairman, CEC of Uzbekistan.

Secretary (West), visited Tashkent on 07-08 August, to hold the 16th round of India-Uzbekistan Foreign Office Consultations. He also called on Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Saidov. During the visit, Secretary (West) and Director of Uzbekistan Post Alisher Faizullayev jointly released a commemorative postal stamp on India's "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav" brought out by Uzbek Post.

India-Uzbekistan defence cooperation continued to gain momentum during the year. The Joint Working Group Meeting on Defence Cooperation was held on 25 April in New Delhi. The 4th edition of the annual joint military exercise Dustilik was held in Pithoragarh on 20 February - 05 March. More than 30 Uzbek officers/cadets attended various courses in Indian Armed Forces training institutions. Establishment of an Information Technology Laboratory at the Uzbekistan Armed Forces Academy was successfully completed in December under a grant provided by the Government of India. The Constitution of India translated in Uzbek language was released on the occasion of the 132nd birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on 14 April at a ceremony held at the Tashkent State University of Law (TSUL).

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

Over the past two decades, SCO has emerged as a key regional grouping in the Central Asian region that has provided a common platform to strengthen cooperation between member states in security, trade, science and technology and people to people contact. Since its inclusion as a member of SCO in 2017, India has contributed positively to enhance the role of SCO in the global arena. India continues to maintain extensive engagement towards strengthening SCO's potential.

The year 2023 began with events under India's first ever Chairmanship of SCO Council of Heads of State (SCO CHS). Meetings and events were focused on actualising the theme of its chairmanship "Towards a 'SECURE' SCO". During the course of the year regular institutional and ministerial meetings of



Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council of Foreign Ministers Meeting in Goa, May 2023

SCO and heads of relevant agencies were held. All the member states actively took part in the initiatives introduced by the Indian Chair.

Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS)

India, under the first-ever presidency of SCO hosted the 23rd meeting of SCO Council of Heads of State virtually, on 04 July. The meeting was chaired by the Prime Minister. At the Summit, the Prime Minister highlighted the active work carried out by India in the field of startups and innovation, traditional medicine, youth empowerment, science and technology and shared Buddhist heritage of SCO Members. Strongly condemning terrorism, the Prime Minister also spoke about the need to work together to eliminate this menace in the region and globally. At the Summit, the Council of Heads of State adopted the New Delhi Declaration and two Joint Statements related to Cooperation in Countering Radicalization Leading to Separatism, Terrorism and Extremism and Cooperation in Digital Transformation. The leaders also adopted a Decision to approve the Concept of Cooperation of the SCO Member States on Decarbonization of Transport, Promotion of Digital Transformation and Innovative Technologies to Achieve Higher Efficiency and Sustainability.

Iran was inducted as a full-fledged member of SCO at the summit and a decision to commence the process of inducting Belarus as a member state was adopted by the member states. Regulations of two new mechanisms of cooperation namely a Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation and an

Expert Working Group on Traditional Medicine were finalised during the chairmanship. At the conclusion of the Summit, the Prime Minister handed over the Chairmanship of SCO CHS to President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

Meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)

The SCO Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting was held in Panaji, Goa on 04 and 05 May. This was chaired by the EAM and discussed the agenda for the SCO Summit of Heads of State and the initiatives and documents to be adopted at the Summit. EAM also held bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the SCO Foreign Ministers Meeting.

Meeting of Council of Heads of Government (CHG)

The Meeting of SCO Council of Heads of Government (CHG) was held on 26 October under the Kyrgyz Chairmanship in Bishkek. EAM represented India at the meeting. The SCO CHG meeting was attended by Prime Ministers of SCO Member States, Observer States, and Secretary General of SCO, Executive Director of SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), Turkmenistan and other invited guests. In his address, EAM underlined India's strong cultural and historical connection with the SCO region and reiterated India's firm commitment towards deepening multilateral cooperation in the areas of trade, connectivity, food and energy security, climate change

and culture. A Joint Communique of SCO Heads of Government and other decisions were adopted at the conclusion of the meeting.

SCO Meetings at the Level of Ministers

Comptroller & Auditor General of India hosted the meeting of the Heads of the Supreme Audit Institutions of the SCO Member States from 06 to 07 February in Lucknow. Secretary (Economic Affairs) hosted the Meeting of Finance Ministers and the chairmen of Central (National) Banks of the SCO Member States in a video conference format on 03 March. The Chief Justice of India hosted the Meeting of the Chief Justices/Chairmen of the Supreme Courts of the SCO Member States on 11 March in New Delhi. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs hosted the Session of Energy Ministers of the SCO Member States in a video conference format on 14 March. The Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports hosted the Session of Heads of Ministries and Agencies Responsible for the Development of Physical Education and Sports of the SCO Member States on 15 March in New Delhi. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of the North-East Region hosted the Meeting of Heads of Tourism Administrations of the SCO Member States in Varanasi on 17 March.

NSA hosted the Meeting of Secretaries of the Security Council of SCO Member States on 29 March in New Delhi. The Minister of Tourism, Culture and Development of the North-East Region hosted the Session of Culture Ministers of the SCO Member States in New Delhi in a video conference format on 03 April. The Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau hosted the meeting of Heads of Anti-Drug Departments of the SCO Member States in New Delhi in a hybrid format on 13 April. The Minister of Home Affairs hosted the Meeting of Ministers responsible for Prevention and Elimination of Emergency Situations on 20 April in New Delhi. Managing Director of India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) hosted the Council Meeting of the SCO Interbank Consortium (IBC) on 25-28 April in Goa.

Raksha Mantri chaired the SCO Defence Ministers Meeting on 28 April 2023 in New Delhi. The Minister of Transport and Highway hosted the Meeting of SCO Transport Ministers on 29 April in New Delhi. Member (Operations & Business

Development), Railway Board, Ministry of Railways hosted the Meeting of Heads of Railways Administration of SCO Member States held on 8-10 May in New Delhi. The Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare chaired the Session of the Health Ministers of SCO member States via video conference on 12 May. The Minister for Railways, Communications, Electronics and IT chaired the Meeting of Heads of Ministries and Agencies of the SCO member states responsible for the development of Information and Communication technology (ICT) via video conference on 13 May.

Other Events hosted by India as the Chair of SCO CHS

Following the theme of the Summit "Towards a 'SECURE' SCO", India hosted a myriad of events under its Chairmanship. These events were aimed at promoting multifaceted cooperation among SCO Member States in security, culture, science and technology, healthcare, finance, startups, among other areas. Some of the events include SCO Film Festival (27-31 January), SCO Cultural Showcase at Surajkund Mela (03-19 February), SCO Young Scientists' Conclave (06 February), Conference of Experts & Practitioners of Traditional Medicine of SCO Member States (03 February), Seminar on Capacity Building on Developing SCO Marquee Infrastructure (08-09 February), SCO Tourism Mart (09 February), Conference of Drug Regulators and Manufacturers in SCO Member States (17 February), Seminar on Building Capacities and New Generation of Entrepreneurs in SCO Partner Nations Through Skill Training – Towards Usage And Setup of Digital IT Platforms (21 February), Structured Workshop on Knowledge Sharing on Earthquake and Floods (23-24 February), B2B Conference & Expo on Traditional Medicine (02-05 March), SCO Youth Council (13 March), SCO Workshop on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), as well as Risk Mitigation and Disaster Resilience (14 March), Conference on Shared Buddhist Heritage (14 March), Think-tank Conference on the theme "Reconnect-Rejuvenate" (23-25 March), SCO Startup Forum 3.0 (11 April), SCO Young Authors' Conference (12-13 April), SCO Millets Food Festival (13 April), Roundtable With Stakeholders of Medical Tourism in SCO Member States (09 May), Release of Commemorative Postage Stamp (15 June), Inauguration of New Delhi Hall in SCO Secretariat (27 June).

CHAPTER

6

GCC, West Asia & North Africa

Gulf Countries

India's relations with the Gulf countries continued to deepen in 2023 with exchange of high-level visits, increase in trade and investment and strengthening of relations in other areas including energy, security, defence, culture, education and health and food security.

The member countries continued to be among the top trading partners of India. At more than USD 184 billion, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) was the top regional grouping for trade with India in 2022-23. Investment flows also continued to be robust. The cumulative FDI from GCC countries currently stands at about USD 20 billion. India's energy imports from the region also remain substantial.

The Prime Minister visited UAE on 15 July 2023 and met the President of the UAE and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. During the visit three important agreements and MoUs were signed including on integration of the UPI payment system with UAE payment system. On 30 November-01 December, Prime Minister visited Dubai to attend COP 28 Summit and met the UAE President on the sidelines of the Summit.

In 2023, EAM visited UAE thrice. On 07 November, he went on a bilateral visit where he met UAE's Foreign Minister.

EAM accompanied the Prime Minister from 30 November-01 December for COP 28. EAM visited the UAE on 08 and 09 December to attend the Sir Bani Yas Forum.

MoS (VM) visited UAE from 19-21 January, Saudi Arabia from 01-03 May, Bahrain on 04 and 05 May, Kuwait on 23 and 24 August, and Oman on 18-19 October.

Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud visited India for the G-20 Summit on 09 and 10 September and was on a State visit on 11 September. During the visit, the Prime Minister and Crown Prince co-chaired the first Leaders Meeting of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council. The Sultan of Oman Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik paid a State visit to India from 15-17 December. This was the first State visit from Oman to India in 26 years.

President of UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs of Oman Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik Al Said attended the G20 Leaders Summit held in New Delhi on 09 and 10 September. UAE and Oman were invited countries at the Summit.

The 8.7 million strong Indian community continued to remain a strong bridge between India and the Gulf countries.

Bahrain

In 2023, the bilateral relations between India and Kingdom of Bahrain were marked by high level interactions and visits in bilateral and multilateral arenas. Bahraini Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Khalid bin Abdulla Al Khalifa participated in the Concluding Leaders' Session of 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held on 17 November. Earlier on 13 January, Bahraini Minister of Oil and Environment Dr. Mohamed bin Mubarak bin Daina virtually represented Bahrain in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 1st Global South Summit. Bahraini Foreign Minister Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani met Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg on 23 August. On the sidelines of the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York, Foreign Minister Zayani met EAM. The Speaker of Lok Sabha led a parliamentary delegation comprising nine MPs, Secretary General of Lok Sabha and senior officials from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha to attend the 146th IPU Assembly held in Bahrain from 09-15 March. MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Bahrain on 04 and 05 May and met, among others, Ministers of Finance and National Economy, Labour, and Social Development.

A delegation led by Bahraini Minister of Industry and Commerce Abdullah bin Adel Fakhro visited India from 14-18 March, and met Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. The Bahraini Minister of Transportation and Telecommunication Mohammed bin Thamer Al Kaabi visited India from 12-14 March and met Minister of Civil Aviation, the Minister of Railways and MoS (VM).

India and Bahrain achieved record levels of bilateral trade and investments this year. In 2022-23, bilateral trade registered growth of about 20% and stood at highest ever level of USD 1.98 billion. Two-way investments for the period from FY 2000 reached USD 1.5 billion.

During the year defence and security engagements continued between both countries. INS Visakhapatnam and Fleet Tanker INS Deepak made a port call on 14-17 August. Bahrain participated in Aero India 2023 held at Bengaluru from 13-17 February. INS Trikand represented the Indian Navy in the Sea Phase-I of International Maritime Exercise/Cutlass Express 2023 IMX23 held in the Gulf from 05-09 March. There was official level participation from the Government of India in the 19th edition of Manama Dialogue held from 17-19 November. India joined Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) as a full member in 2023, which was announced in the Joint Statement of 5th Annual India – US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue on 10 November. This year, Bahrain joined SCO as Dialogue Partner with support from India.

Iran

India and Iran relations have close civilizational links and shared history which provide a strong foundation to the relationship, and strong people-to-people ties.

Bilateral cooperation between India and Iran maintained its robust momentum in 2023. Prime Minister and Iranian President Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi met on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa on 24 August. Iran thanked India for our strong support to its membership of the BRICS. Both the leaders also held telephone conversations on 18 August and on 06 November.



President of Iran Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi met Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in South Africa, August 2023

Earlier, in June, EAM had met with Iran's Foreign Minister Dr. Hossein Amir-Abdollahian on the sidelines of the Friends of BRICS Summit in Johannesburg. On 27 April, Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Ashtiani met Raksha Mantri on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Defence Ministers' Meeting in India. The National Security Advisor visited Iran on 01 May for the 4th India-Iran Security Consultations. He met Secretary of the Supreme National Security Council Ali Shamkhani and called on President Dr. Seyyed Ebrahim Raisi. Foreign Minister Dr. Amir-Abdollahian and Education Minister Rezamorad Sahrai participated in the first and second Voice of Global South Summit held in virtual mode in January and November, respectively. 18th India-Iran Foreign Office Consultations held in Tehran on 26 November 2023 were co-chaired by Foreign Secretary and Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Dr. Ali Bagheri Kani. During

the visit to Tehran, Foreign Secretary also called-on Foreign Minister Amir-Abdollahian. On 17 August, an Indian Navy Ship, INS Trikanth, paid a friendly call on Iran's Bandar Abbas Port.

Cooperation in connectivity projects was further strengthened during the year. Iran was a special guest at the first meeting of India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Chabahar port, which was held in Mumbai on 13 April 2023. Iran participated in a special Roundtable on Chabahar Port organised during the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 in Mumbai. Deputy NSA represented India at the Iran-Russia-India trilateral meeting on 'Facilitating Transit in the North-South Corridor' hosted by Iran on 04 July 2023. The 13th India-Iran Joint Consular Committee Meeting was held in New Delhi on 20 December 2023.

Iraq

India has been a traditional partner of Iraq with strong historical and civilizational linkages. During the year, a number of bilateral interactions took place at different levels. Iraqi NSA visited India from 22-24 March for the 2nd NSA-level India-Iraq Security Dialogue. The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Oil of Iraq visited New Delhi on 19 and 20 June to participate in the 18th session of the India-Iraq Joint Commission Meeting with the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas of India. Iraq participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit held virtually in January and its Minister of Environment took part in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit held virtually in November.

Iraq is now the 7th largest trading partner of India and one of the largest suppliers of crude oil to India. The bilateral trade between the two countries stood at USD 15.01 billion with oil constituting bulk of Indian imports.

Forty-eight Indian companies under the banner of ASSOCHAM, participated in the International Agro Pack Exhibition on 19 September 2023 in Erbil, showcasing a wide variety of Indian agro products.

India continued to assist Iraq in capacity building. For the year 2023-24, a total of 200 slots were offered under the ITEC programme. The Jaipur Foot Camp, the third such artificial limbs fitment programme, was organised from 02 October-10 November under ITEC programme in Baghdad by offering 1032 artificial limbs to Iraqi patients. More than 50 Iraqi scholars have pursued higher studies under ICCR's Atal Bihari Vajpayee General Scholarship Scheme in premiere institutions in India.

A larger number of Iraqis visited India for medical treatment, tourism, higher education and business. Large number of Indians visited Iraq for the purpose of religious tourism in 2023 taking advantage of relaxed visa norms.

A special postage stamp of the value of IQD 1000 was brought out on the occasion to commemorate the 70th anniversary of

establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Iraq. A bust of Gandhiji was unveiled at the 'American University of Iraq – Baghdad' premises. This was the third bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Iraq. On the occasion of celebrations of the 74th Republic Day of India on 26 January, a 7-member Indian cultural troupe sponsored by ICCR visited Iraq under Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM). Another cultural group, sponsored by ICCR, visited Iraq in October to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's 154th birth anniversary celebrations.

Kuwait

India and Kuwait historically enjoy close and friendly relations, anchored in people to people contacts and trade. The 6th meeting of JWG on Hydrocarbons was held virtually on 31 July for diversifying bilateral cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector. MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Kuwait on 23 and 24 August. During the visit, MoS (VM) called on the First Deputy PM and Interior Minister and Foreign Minister of Kuwait and also met the Deputy Foreign Minister of Kuwait. He also interacted with a wide-cross section of members of the Indian community in Kuwait.

The 1st India-Kuwait Defence Industry Seminar was organised virtually on 15 May. Leading Defence Sector companies of India including Reliance, TATA, and others participated in the seminar. INS Visakhapatnam visited Al-Shuwaikh Port for an Operational Turn Around (OTR) from 19-22 August. During the visit, the Western fleet commander of India met the Under Secretary of the Ministry of Defence and Chief of Naval Staff of Kuwait Naval Forces.

The first round of discussions on the Bilateral Investment Treaty took place in New Delhi on 14 June. A Kuwaiti delegation including representatives from the Ministry of Commerce and Public Authority of Food and Nutrition (PAFN) participated in World Food India (WFI) 2023.

Oman

India and the Sultanate of Oman share a special relationship, rooted in unbroken contact between our peoples for over many centuries. In modern times, this historical connection has transformed into a strategic partnership marked by robust cooperation across various domains. As partners in maritime security in the Western Indian Ocean, India and Oman engage in comprehensive defence collaboration, including bilateral exercises involving all three of our Services. Oman holds strategic importance for India and serves as a key interlocutor at forums such as the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League, and the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).

In the context of India-Oman relations, the most significant development in 2023 was the visit of Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik to India on 16-17 December. This marked the Sultan's



Hon'ble President and Prime Minister extended a warm reception to Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tarik during his State Visit to India at Rashtrapati Bhavan, December 2023

first visit since assuming office and the first State Visit from Oman to India in 26 years. The 'India-Oman Joint Vision' for future cooperation was adopted during the visit. Both sides agreed for early conclusion of a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) negotiations. The 3rd Oman-India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF) worth 300 million dollars was announced. A Joint Commemorative Postage Stamp was launched.

The highlight of the year 2023 was the special invitation extended by India to the Sultanate of Oman, to participate as a Guest country for the G-20 during India's G20 Presidency. Deputy Prime Minister for International Relations and Cooperation Affairs of Oman Sayyid Asaad bin Tarik Al Said attended the G-20 Summit as a personal representative of the Sultan of Oman.

MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Oman on 18 and 19 October. During his visit, MoS (VM) held bilateral meetings with Minister of Economy of Oman Said Al Saqri, and Minister of Labour of Oman Mahad bin Said Baowain.

India and Oman have cultivated strong collaboration in the Space sector. During the visit of the Department of Space and ISRO Chairman to Oman on 14 and 15 June, a geographical information system (GIS) based space portal developed by ISRO specifically for Oman was inaugurated.

There were various high-level defence and security exchanges between the two countries. The National Security Adviser (NSA) of India paid an official visit to Oman on 25-27 June. During his visit, he called on Sultan Haitham bin Tarik. The Chief of the Naval Staff visited Oman on 30 July-03 August.

The 1st Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting between India and Oman on Cooperation in the field of Health was held on 24 February in New Delhi.

India is among Oman's top trading partners and is the second largest market for Oman's crude oil exports for the year 2022. The bilateral trade with Oman in FY 2021-2022 stood at USD 9.9 billion and in 2022-23, it increased to USD 12.4 billion with India exporting goods worth USD 4.5 billion and importing goods worth USD 7.9 billion. There were steady bilateral Investment flows with over 6000 India-Oman joint ventures in Oman aggregating on estimated investment of over USD 7.5 billion. Indian companies have emerged as leading investors in Oman, particularly at Sohar, Salalah Free Zones and Duqm Special Economic zone. Substantial progress has also been made in negotiations on an India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).

Several cultural and other events were organised by the Embassy in the year 2023 including inauguration of Indian painting exhibition, 'India on Canvas : Masterpieces of Modern Indian Painting' at the National Museum of Oman (NMO) in October, comprising of 20 masterpieces of modern Indian painting received by National Museum of Oman on six months loan from the National Gallery of Modern Indian Art (NGMA) as well as the starting of monthly lecture series 'From Mandvi to Muscat : Indian Community and the shared history of India and Oman' by MoS (VM) during his visit to Oman in October 2023.

Qatar

India shares deep-rooted historical and cultural ties with the State of Qatar. Both countries observed the 50 years of establishment of diplomatic relations in 2023. The Indian community is estimated to be around 8.20 lakhs and is the single largest expatriate community in Qatar.

On the sidelines of COP28 in Dubai, the Prime Minister met with the Amir of Qatar and discussed enhancing the potential of the bilateral partnership and the well-being of the Indian community in Qatar. MoS (RRS) attended the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5), in Doha from 04-08 March.

Minister of Transport of Qatar Jassim Seif Ahmed Al-Sulaiti visited New Delhi from 05-08 February and held meetings with the Minister of Civil Aviation, the Minister of Road Transport and Highways, and the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways. They agreed on expanding the scope of the network of navigation lines that connect Qatar's Hamad Port with six seaports in India.

A four-member delegation headed by Chairman of Qatar Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sheikh Khalifa Bin Jassim Al-Thani, participated in the B20 Summit in New Delhi from 24-28 August.

Head of Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) Advisory (Asia Pacific) Abdulla Al Kuwari visited Mumbai from 29-31 January, and New Delhi from 01-03 February and held several meetings, including with the CEO of Invest India.

The Chairperson of National Human Rights Commission visited Doha from 20-22 February and addressed the International Conference on Climate Change and Human Rights. On the sidelines, he met with Qatar NHRC Chairperson Maryam Al Attiyah. An NHRC-Qatar delegation visited India from 08-10 February.

A strong contingent of over 280 members of the Indian community from Qatar attended the 17th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas 2023 at Indore on 08 January.

A delegation headed by Deputy Commander of Qatari Emiri Air Force Major General Ghanim Al Shahwani participated in "Aero India 2023" from 12-17 February. On the sidelines, Al Shahwani called on Chief of Air Staff IAF Air Chief Marshal VR Chaudhari and discussed ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in the defence sector.

Bilateral trade between India and Qatar stood at USD 11.9 billion for the period January to October, with exports to Qatar at USD 1.4 billion and imports of USD 10.5 billion. While Qatar's cumulative FDI in India from April 2000 to December 2022 stood at USD 0.49 billion, Qatar's sovereign fund QIA has announced an investment of about USD 1.5 billion in the year 2023 alone.

Saudi Arabia

India and Saudi Arabia continued to cement ties under the framework of the Strategic Partnership Council, institutionalised in 2019. Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud visited India from 09-11 September for the G20 Leaders' Summit and was on State Visit on 11 September when he co-chaired the 1st Leaders' Meeting of the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council along with Prime Minister. He was accompanied by a high-level delegation including several Ministers and representatives from the Royal Court. During the visit, 8 agreements were signed by the two sides across several fields including energy, banking, investment, manufacturing, archival cooperation, anti-corruption and water desalination. India and Saudi Arabia, along with US, France, Germany, Italy, EU and UAE, signed a MoU on India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor on the sidelines of the G20 Leaders' Summit to enhance connectivity between Asia, Arabian Gulf and Europe.



Crown Prince of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud with Prime Minister in New Delhi, September 2023

The first India-Saudi Arabia Investment Forum 2023 was organised in Delhi on 11 September on the sidelines of the State Visit. It was co-chaired by the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, and Textiles, and the Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia Khalid A. Al Falih. A number of B2B Agreements were signed during the Forum.

During India's Presidency of the G20, there were visits by several Saudi ministers and dignitaries to India for sectoral meetings. In addition to this, the Saudi Minister of Hajj and Umrah Dr. Tawfiq bin Fawzan Al Rabiha visited India on 05 December.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry visited Saudi Arabia on 24 and 25 October to participate in the 7th edition of Future Investment Initiative Forum 2023. He met with the Saudi Minister of Energy, Minister of Investment, Minister of Industry and Mineral Resources, and Minister of Commerce; Governor, Public Investment Fund, among other senior business leaders.

MoS (VM) visited Jeddah from 25-28 April to oversee Operation Kaveri. He also visited Riyadh and Dammam from 01-03 May. The Minister of State for Tourism and Ports, Shipping and Waterways, visited Saudi Arabia from 27-29 September to attend the World Tourism Day 2023. He met with the Saudi Minister of Tourism during his visit. The Minister of Power and New and Renewable Energy visited Saudi Arabia on 08 and 09 October to participate in the Middle East North Africa Climate Week 2023. During the visit, an MoU in the field of Electrical Interconnection, Green/Clean Hydrogen and Supply Chains was signed by the two sides. He also met with the Saudi Minister of Energy and the Minister of Investment.

Bilateral trade and investment ties between India and Saudi Arabia have deepened in recent years. India is the 2nd largest trade partner for Saudi Arabia whereas Saudi Arabia is 4th largest trading partner of India. During the Financial Year 2022-23, bilateral trade was valued at USD 52.76 billion. During this period, India's imports from Saudi Arabia were USD 42.03 billion and exports to Saudi Arabia were USD 10.72. Total trade with Saudi Arabia accounted for 4.53% of India's total trade in the Financial Year 2022-23. Saudi Arabia was India's 3rd largest Crude and Petroleum products sourcing destination for the Financial Year 2022-23. Indian investments in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia reached approximately USD 3 Billion (August 2023). Direct investments from Saudi Arabia to India is around USD 3.22 billion (June 2023) apart from the indirect Saudi investments in the country.

There was deepening defence co-operation between India and Saudi Arabia during the year reflected in exchange of delegations, training and military exercises. The 2nd edition of bilateral naval exercise 'Al-Mohed Al-Hindi' between India and Saudi Arabia was conducted on 21-25 May with the participation of INS Tarkash, INS Subhadra and one Maritime Patrol Aircraft. There were staging halts of IAF aircrafts, and port calls of naval ships

from India including INS Sumedha, INS Tarkash, INS Chennai, ICG ship SAJAG in Saudi Arabia. A 19-member delegation from the Saudi Armed Forces participated in the Aero India 2023 held in Bengaluru from 13-17 February.

Saudi Arabia hosts approximately 2.46 million Indians who are respected for their contributions in the development of Saudi Arabia. From 31 October-07 December, the Embassy of India organised the first ever 'Pravasi Parichay Week' which showcased musical performances, show troupes, and cuisine from different parts of India.

UAE

India and the UAE enjoy traditionally close and friendly relations that are centuries old. Since the formation of the UAE, there has been steady progress in the bilateral ties and 2014 onward, this relationship has received special attention under the leadership of the Prime Minister. It received further impetus during the year with frequent exchanges of high-level visits, unique projects like establishment of IIT Delhi Campus in Abu Dhabi and transformative agreements like the Local Currency Settlement.

In 2023, Prime Minister visited the UAE twice. On 15 July, Prime Minister visited Abu Dhabi on a bilateral visit and met with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. Three key agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit in the fields of trade in local currencies, integration of UPI Payment system with the UAE payment system and establishment of IIT Delhi campus in Abu Dhabi. Subsequently, two large trade settlements of gold and oil were done in 2023.

On 30 November, Prime Minister visited Dubai to attend COP28 - World Climate Action Summit, marking his sixth visit to the UAE. At COP28, Prime Minister was accorded a special honour to address the opening ceremony of the Plenary. UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited India on 08 and 09 September to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit. On the margins of the Summit, the Prime Minister and President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan had their bilateral meeting. President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan attended the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit on 22 November and applauded India's tremendous work in G20 to promote the interest of the Global South.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan visited India twice – on 01 and 02 March to attend G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting and in September, he accompanied President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan in the G20 Leaders' Summit. EAM and Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan had a phone call with their French counterpart in February, when they formally launched the UAE-India-France (UFI) trilateral cooperation.

There were other exchanges at Ministerial level throughout the year. From India, the Commerce and Industry Minister visited



Prime Minister receives the Guard of Honour at the Presidential Palace in Abu Dhabi, July 2023

Abu Dhabi in October to co-chair the 11th High Level Task Force for Investment (HLTFI) with Managing Director of ADIA Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan. The Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship visited the UAE in November on a bilateral visit. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas participated in Abu Dhabi International Petroleum Exhibition Conference (ADIPEC) 2023. The Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change led the Indian delegation to the COP-28 in Dubai. MoS (VM) visited the UAE twice – January and December. The Minister of State for defence led a large Indian delegation to the biennial Dubai Airshow in November 2023, in which LCA Tejas and ALH Sarang participated and joined the UAE forces in the Aerobatics show.

From the UAE side, several Ministers visited India to participate in t Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan he G20 meetings held under India's Presidency. UAE Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Minister of State Ahmed bin Ali Al Sayegh also participated in the Ministerial panels of the two Voice of the Global South Summits convened by India. There were high-level exchanges from States as well, with the Chief Ministers of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, West Bengal and Uttarakhand visiting the UAE. Similarly, UAE Ministers also participated in events organised by the State Governments in India.

UAE remained India's key trading partner in 2023. Following the entry into force of CEPA, bilateral trade witnessed a sharp increase of 16.4%, reaching USD 84.8 billion in March. Overall,

the UAE was India's third largest trading partner and second largest export destination. For the UAE, India was the second largest source for its imports and the largest market for its exports. India also continued to be a prominent destination for UAE investors, like Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Mubadala, among others.

UAE was invited as a Guest country to the G-20 Summit in 2023 under India's Presidency. UAE was also part of the two key initiatives launched on the margins of G20 Leaders' Summit in September- the India-Middle East-Europe Economic corridor and the Global Biofuel Alliance. A large Indian business delegation led by Secretary (ER) participated in the first I2U2 Business Forum hosted by UAE in February.

People to People ties are the strongest link between India and the UAE, which hosts more than 3.5 million Indian nationals. India is also a top source of tourism for the UAE. The people-to-people exchange will be further strengthened by the opening of IIT Delhi campus in Abu Dhabi in January 2024. The first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi, is being constructed with full support of the UAE government.

Yemen

India's relations with Yemen are centuries old with historical trade links and strong people-to-people connect. Both countries continue to maintain close ties despite the adverse security situation in Yemen. India remains committed to a peacefully

negotiated, Yemeni-led and Yemeni-owned political settlement of the conflict. India's views in support of the ceasefire between the parties to conflict in Yemen and for negotiations for restoration of peace were regularly articulated in the UN Security Council in 2022.

Thousands of Yemenis continued to visit India to receive medical treatment in Indian hospitals. In 2023, 58 Yemeni nationals availed ICCR scholarships for higher studies in India.

Due to the fragile political and security situation in Yemen, the Embassy of India to Yemen was relocated to Djibouti in April 2015 and has since been functioning from a Camp office in Djibouti. The Embassy continues to provide visa services to Yemeni nationals and consular services and assistance to the Indian community in Yemen.

West Asia North Africa Region

In 2023, the engagement between India and West Asia and North Africa region witnessed significant growth and cooperation. The year commenced with the State Visit of Egyptian President Al-Sisi in January resulting in an elevation of the India-Egypt relations to a 'Strategic Partnership' and the signing of MoUs. The India-Israel strategic partnership continued its upward trajectory, marked by high-level visits and meetings. India condemned the 07 October terror attacks on Israel and called for an early and peaceful resolution of the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy, emphasising the need for continued humanitarian aid for the affected population.

Operations Ajay in October and Kaveri in April/May successfully evacuated Indian nationals from Israel and Sudan, respectively. Initiatives during MoS (VM's) visit to Syria in July included offering scholarships and aid post-earthquake. The 6th India-Arab Partnership Conference in Delhi further strengthened collaborative efforts.

Algeria

India remained proactively engaged with Algeria during the year. On 13 January, Algerian Minister of Energy and Mines Mohamed Arkab attended the Energy Ministers' Session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit organised by India in virtual format.

India-Algeria bilateral trade rebounded by 24% in 2022 to reach USD 2.1 billion. Pharma relations between the two countries deepened in the year 2023. Around 60 Indian companies participated in the International Pharmaceutical Exhibition "Maghreb Pharma" from 05-07 February in Algiers.

Defence cooperation between the two countries continued apace. Indian Naval Ship Sumedha made a port call at Algiers from 26-29 March and undertook a PASSEX exercise with the Algerian Naval Ship El Mounjid. INS Sumedha again made a port call at Algiers from 20-23 September and conducted a PASSEX with the Algerian Naval Ship El Moussanid.

Djibouti

The Minister of Economy and Finance of Djibouti Ilyas Moussa Dawaleh participated virtually in the Finance Ministers' Session of 1st Voice of the Global South Summit on 12 January. The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Djibouti Mahmoud Ali Yousseuf participated in Foreign Ministers' Session of 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit chaired by EAM on 17 November.

The Minister of Energy of Djibouti Yonis Ali Guedi visited New Delhi and participated in the 6th Session of International Solar Alliance (ISA) Assembly held from 30 October-02 November.

Twelve Operational Turn Around (OTR) visits of Indian Naval Ships to Djibouti took place during the period. The Djiboutian Government continued to accord clearances for the Indian Ships and facilitated their OTR visits at short notice. Defence ITEC Slots (totalling 5), have been offered to Djibouti for the first time in 2023-24. Two Djiboutian Naval officers have already undergone training in India during the year.

The India-Djibouti Business Forum was formally launched at the Djibouti Chamber of Commerce on 17 October which was attended virtually by the Djibouti Ambassador to India and businessmen from India. A 3-member EXIM Bank Team visited Djibouti from 14-16 November. They visited the Cement Plant at Ali Sabieh and met the Minister of Economy and Finance on 15 November and discussed project financing related issues with the Government of Djibouti.

Egypt

The year 2023 was a momentous year for India-Egypt bilateral relations. President of Egypt Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi paid a State Visit to India from 24-27 January as the Chief Guest of India's 74th Republic Day celebrations. President Sisi had a meeting with the Prime Minister and Hon'ble President, and the Vice President and EAM called on him during the visit. A commemorative stamp was issued to mark the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Egypt besides signing of five MoUs in fields of Information technology, cyber security, media, youth affairs and culture. An Egyptian Armed Forces contingent of 144 soldiers participated in the Republic Day parade. The second visit of President Sisi was equally important as he visited New Delhi to participate in the G20 Summit from 09-10 September.



Hon'ble President and Prime Minister with President of Egypt Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, who attended as the Chief Guest of India's 74th Republic Day celebrations, January 2023.

The Prime Minister paid his first-ever visit to Egypt from 24 and 25 June, at the invitation of President Sisi. In January, both leaders decided to elevate bilateral partnership to the level of 'Strategic Partnership', and signed the 'Strategic Partnership Agreement' during the visit. Prime Minister was conferred with the "Order of the Nile", the highest civilian award of Egypt by President Sisi. The Prime Minister also held a Rossund-Table discussion with Egypt's Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly and Cabinet Ministers of "India Unit" in the Egyptian Cabinet established by President Sisi after his recent visit to India. A number of prominent thought leaders including the Grand Mufti of Egypt Dr. Shawky Allam called on the Prime Minister. The two sides also signed three MoUs in the fields of Competition laws, Agriculture and Antiquities.

The G20 platform served as a common ground for both countries to articulate issues faced by the Global South. A number of Egyptian Ministers, including Finance Minister Dr. Mohamed Maait (February and July), Foreign Minister Sameh Soukry (March), Planning and Economic Development Minister Dr. Hala el-Said (June), Labour Minister Hassan Snehata (July), Communications and Information Technology Minister Dr Amr Talaat (August), and Health Minister Mr Khaled Abdel Ghafar (August) visited India to participate in various G-20 track meetings.

In the G20 Leaders' Virtual Summit, held on 22 November, President Sisi sent a recorded message. PM Madbouly and FM Shoukry participated virtually in the 2nd Voice of the Global

South Summit organised by India on 17 November. Earlier, FM Shoukry participated in Foreign Ministers' Session on G-20 in 1st Voice of Global South Summit on 13 January.

On 23 September, EAM and FM Shoukry met on the side-lines of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York. Earlier, they had met on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi on 03 March.

On 27 September, as part of pre-conference study visit for 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Conference held in Ghana, Speaker of the Assam Legislative Assembly, Leader of Opposition of Assam Legislative Assembly and Speaker of Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly visited the Egyptian Senate and met Secretary General of the Senate of Egypt, Mohammad Ismail Itman, Deputy Speaker of the Senate Bahaa El-Din Abu Shukka, and other Members of the Senate. Grand Mufti of Egypt Dr. Shawki Allam Allam, who is also President of the General Secretariat for Fatwa Authorities Worldwide, visited India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme from 01-05 May.

India hosted the 3rd India-Egypt 'JWG on Counter Terrorism' in New Delhi on 16 February. India and Egypt held the 12th round of Secretary-level Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) in Cairo on 03 May. Deputy NSA paid an official visit to Egypt on 19 and 20 July to co-chair the Security Dialogue between National Security Council Secretariats with his counterpart, Secretary General of Egyptian NSCS Ambassador Alaa el-din Youssef.

Egypt has traditionally been one of India's most important trading partners in the African continent. During FY 2022-23, the bilateral trade was USD 6.06 billion, with USD 4.11 billions of exports from India and USD 1.95 billion worth imports by India. Chairman of Suez Canal Economic Zone (SCEZ) Waleid Gamal Eldin visited India in June, where he met MoS (VM), Minister of Commerce and Industry as well as Indian industries businesspeople and sought support for the Indian cluster in SCEZ.

Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army visited Egypt from 15-18 May and held meetings with his Egyptian counterpart, Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Lieutenant General Osama Askar and discussed ways of fostering military cooperation. India, along with 34 countries participated in the Exercise Bright Star-23 from 31 August-16 September. The Indian contingent, comprising 550 personnel, was among the largest ever Indian deployments for an overseas exercise. Egypt regularly provides transit facilities to IAF and IN aircraft ferrying to and from Russia, Europe and the USA. During 2023, some of the important Indian Naval ship visits/ transits included that of INS Sumitra, INS Sumedha and INS Sinddhuratna made port call at Safaga (from 31 December 2022-03 January 2023), at Port Said (twice from 16-18 March and 13-16 April) and at Port Said (from 13-16 April) respectively. An India Pavilion had been set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Defence (Department of Defence Production), during the 3rd edition of Egypt Defence Expo [EDEX-23] held from 04-07 December in Cairo. A total of 15 prominent Indian companies including Defence PSUs (BEL, VDL, HAL, DRDO) participated in EDEX-23.

State of Eritrea

A three-member health delegation from Eritrea, led by Head of Higher Education and Research Dr. Haile Mehtsun, visited India from 18-23 January. During the visit, the delegation had meetings with AIIMS officials as well as meetings in MEA.

A 13-member Eritrean Cultural Troupe participated in the 37th edition of the Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2023 during 03-19 February in Surajkund, Haryana.

India earmarked 40 ITEC scholarships to Eritrea for the year 2023-24 which are well utilized. Twelve scholarships under the Africa Scholarship Scheme were earmarked to Eritrea for undergraduate, post-graduate and M. Phil /PhD degree programmes at Indian Universities/ Institutes for the academic year 2023-24.

A Special Course for diplomats from Eritrea and Zambia was arranged by the Ministry of External Affairs at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), New Delhi from 17-28 April. Ten diplomats from Eritrea attended the Course.

Two journalists from Eritrea visited India during 09-16 December under the familiarisation visit of Senior Journalists/ Editors from African countries. Both the journalists were in senior positions in their respective fields in Eritrea.

Israel

On 11 January, Prime Minister spoke to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to congratulate him on his election as Israel's PM for the sixth time. The Prime Minister and PM Netanyahu also spoke on 08 February to discuss bilateral issues. On 24 August, PM Netanyahu called the Prime Minister to congratulate him on the successful landing of Chandrayaan 3 on the moon. On 10 October, PM Netanyahu called the Prime Minister to provide an update on the situation in Israel after the 07 October attacks. On 19 December, PM Netanyahu called the Prime Minister to update him on the ongoing situation in the region.

On 01 December, on the sidelines of COP 28 in Dubai, the Prime Minister met the President of the State of Israel, during which the two leaders exchanged views on the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict in the region.

On 09 May, then Foreign Minister of Israel Eli Cohen, accompanied by a high-level business delegation, visited India on his maiden official trip. During the visit, FM Eli Cohen met the Prime Minister, Raksha Mantri, and EAM. FM Cohen also co-chaired the India-Israel Business Forum with India's Minister of Jal Shakti.



EAM with the then Foreign Minister of Israel Eli Cohen in New Delhi, May 2023

Earlier, EAM and FM Cohen held a telephone conversation on 05 January, in which the EAM congratulated FM Cohen on the assumption of office. EAM and FM Cohen also spoke on 04 November and 12 December regarding the situation in Israel after the 07 October terror attacks.

On 03 March, Raksha Mantri spoke with Israel's Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant and discussed global strategic issues as well as common security challenges. On 12 December, the National Security Advisor of Israel Tzachi Hanegbi called NSA to brief him on the current situation in the region.

From 31 March -04 April, the Speaker of the Knesset Amir Ohana led a parliamentary delegation to India, during which he signed an MOU on Parliamentary Cooperation with the Lok Sabha Speaker. From 16-20 April, the Israeli Minister of Economy and Industry Nir Barkat visited India along with a 15-member business delegation.

On 11 October, the Government of India launched Operation Ajay to facilitate the return of those Indians who wished to go back from Israel to India. 1309 Indian nationals returned to India in six special flights operated under Operation Ajay between 12-22 October.

In FY 2022-23, bilateral trade reached a historic high of USD 10.7 billion (excluding defence), with Indian exports at USD 8.4 billion. India's overseas direct investment in Israel has been increasing.

India's Department of Science and Technology and the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA) opened the 10th Call for Proposals (April-August) for funding joint projects under the India-Israel Industrial Research and Development and Technological Innovation Fund (I4F). Under the renewed I4F programme, both sides have set aside about USD 40 million, for the period 2023-2027, for funding joint projects under 4 different tracks (feasibility studies; RandD projects; pilot projects; and strategic projects). Separately, the DST and the Israeli Ministry of Innovation, Science, and Technology concluded the India-Israel Joint Research Programme 2023 for proposals in the field of AI application in climate change and agriculture for food security.

In November, India and Israel signed the Framework Agreement for Temporary Employment of Indian Workers in Specific Labour Market Sector in Israel and associated implementation protocols, aimed at establishing an institutional framework for transparent recruitment and protecting the rights of Indian workers in Israel.

India and Israel have established bilateral consultation mechanisms in varied sectors of collaboration. One such mechanism is the India-Israel Policy Planning Dialogue, the 2nd edition of which was held on 29 May in Israel.

On 04 May, the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research under the Ministry of Science and Technology of India signed an MoU on Industrial Research and Development cooperation

with the Directorate of Defence Research and Development of the Ministry of Defence, Israel. India and Israel also exchanged two Letters of Intent for the setting up of Centres of Water Technology at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee, and IIT, Madras, and for the establishment of an upgraded Centre of Innovation in Agriculture at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Pusa, New Delhi.

In the year 2023, defence cooperation between the two countries strengthened further with multiple visits to and from Israel. From 19-23 April, a 20-member delegation of the Naval War College (NWC), visited Israel for a study tour. On August 07-11, a 4-member delegation of the Indian Navy and Air Force visited Israel for the 5th IN-IAI Apex Committee meeting. From 28-30 August, a 17-member delegation of the National Defence College (NDC), led by Joint Secretary (NDC), visited Israel for the Strategic Neighbourhood Study Tour. Further, from 10-12 September Joint Secretary (DIP), led a delegation to Israel.

From Israel, on 13-17 February, an Israeli delegation led by Brigadier General Yair Kulas, Director (International Defence Cooperation Directorate), accompanied by some CEOs of the Israeli defence industry, and participated in the Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru. From 08-11 May, Director of Security of the Defence Establishment Roy Bendelac led a delegation to India, and on 19 and 20 June, Director of International Defence Cooperation Directorate) Eytan Levy led a delegation to India.

Jordan

India's relations with Jordan gained further momentum in 2023 and continued to be warm and cordial. The Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with King Abdullah-II on 23 October on the recent developments in the West Asia region. The leaders shared concerns regarding terrorism, violence and loss of civilian lives and discussed efforts needed for early resolution of the security and humanitarian situation. The Prime Minister again briefly interacted with King Abdullah-II on the sidelines of COP-28 in Dubai on 01 December 2023.

In a telephonic conversation with EAM on 27 October, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi discussed international efforts to stop the Israel-Hamas conflict, ensure protection of civilians, and deliver humanitarian aid to the people of Palestine. Earlier, on 05 October, EAM had a telephonic discussion with Minister Safadi on further strengthening of bilateral ties.

In 2022-23, India-Jordan bilateral trade reached an all-time high at USD 4.42 billion, growth of 63% over last year. India's exports to Jordan stood at USD 2.14 billion, growth of 141% whereas Jordan's exports were USD 2.29 billion, growth of 25%. Jordan is one of the important suppliers of fertilisers to India. Earlier in January, the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd. (IFFCO) signed an agreement with the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company to increase IFFCO's imports of Jordanian phosphate

from 2.1 million tons to 3 million tons per year, aiding India's food security. First ever India-Jordan Joint Committee Meeting on Fertilisers was held virtually on 17 July, for further enhancing bilateral cooperation in the fields of fertilisers.

The 2nd Consultative Meeting on Defence Cooperation between India and Jordan was held in New Delhi on 21 March, discussing issues including military training and courses, cyber security, military exercises, military medicine and capacity building to enhance defence engagements.

Lebanon

India and Lebanon continue to maintain warm and friendly relations. Finance Minister of Lebanon Youssef Khalil virtually participated in the Finance Ministers' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit on 13 January. Industry Minister of Lebanon George Bouchikian travelled to India to attend the World Food India Exhibition from 03-05 November where he met our Minister of Food Process Industries.

To continue our developmental assistance, the Government of India organised an Artificial Limb Fitment Camp (Jaipur Foot) at Rafic Hariri Hospital, Beirut in January-February in which more than 300 handicapped persons were provided artificial limbs. In addition, the Government of India donated a 180 KVA generator set for the newly renovated building of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 23 November.

Bilateral trade was at USD 495 million (increased by 45%) in 2022-23, in favour of India. Indian Battalion at UNIFIL, deployed to perform peacekeeping duties in South Lebanon, completed 25 years in November.

Libya

India and Libya have traditionally enjoyed warm and friendly relations, which continued to grow during the year. On 13 January, the Libyan Minister of Oil and Gas Mohamed Oun participated in the virtual meeting of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit. On 17 November, the Minister of Environment Ibrahim Al Arabi Munir participated in a virtual meeting of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit.

An MEA delegation from India visited Tripoli and Benghazi from 06-09 August. The delegation met Libyan Officials in Tripoli and Benghazi and discussed issues related to bilateral relations with special focus on consular issues.

Morocco

The Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers, Health and Family Welfare visited Morocco from 20-22 January. He met Chairman and CEO of OCP Dr. Mostafa Terrab and Morocco's Minister of

Health and Social Protection Khalid Ait Taleb during the visit. Three MoUs were signed between OCP Group, Morocco, and Indian Fertiliser companies under which OCP will supply India with up to 1.7 million metric tons (MT) of phosphate fertilizers in one year. A delegation led by a Member of Parliament visited Morocco to attend the Parliamentary Conference on 'Interfaith Dialogue: Working together for our common future' held in Marrakesh from 13-15 June.

The Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs of India visited Morocco to participate in the IMF-World Bank meetings held in Marrakech from 09-16 October. She also co-chaired the 4th Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting under G20 India presidency, in Marrakech, and also met Minister of Economy and Finance of Morocco Nadia Fettah on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank meetings.

The Delegate Minister to the Head of Government for Investment, Convergence, and Evaluation of Public Policies of Morocco Mohcine Jazouli visited India from 04-10 March during which he met Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizer, Health and Family Welfare and Commerce and Industry Minister.

The Minister of Health and Social Protection of Morocco Prof. Khalid Ait Taleb, participated virtually in the Health Ministers' Session of Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November.

Defence cooperation continued to grow as INS Sumedha and Royal Moroccan Naval Ship L C Arrahmani (501) conducted a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) on 25 September, near Casablanca Port, Morocco.

Palestine

During the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, India maintained sustained contact with Palestine, including at the leadership level and reiterated its continued support for a negotiated Two-State solution to the Israel-Palestine issue leading to the establishment of a sovereign, independent, viable State of Palestine coexisting peacefully with Israel. On 19 October, the Prime Minister held a telephone conversation with Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas. On 09 December, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Palestinian Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh.

As part of its humanitarian assistance to the people of Palestine in Gaza, India sent, in two tranches, 70 tonnes of humanitarian aid consisting of disaster relief material and medical aid on 22 October and 19 November respectively. India also contributed USD 5 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) for the year 2023 for the welfare of Palestinian refugees. Secretary (CPV and OIA) paid an official visit to the State of Palestine from 05-07 July during which he inaugurated an artificial limb fitment camp which benefited 438 Palestinians with 473 limbs fitted during the camp.

Republic of South Sudan

An 18-member South Sudanese parliamentary delegation led by Speaker Jemma Nunu Kumba and including Parliamentary Affairs Minister Mary Nawai Martin visited India from 03-07 April.

The Minister for Investment of South Sudan Dr. Dhieu Mathok Diing virtually participated in the Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November.

India maintained focus on providing capacity building support to South Sudan in diverse disciplines through ITEC programme. Over 100 ITEC training slots were utilised by South Sudan in 2023-24. Also, 30 South Sudanese students received ICCR scholarships for higher studies in India during the year.

Republic of the Sudan

The Minister of Finance and Economic Planning, Republic of the Sudan participated virtually in the 1st Voice of the Global South Summit on 12 January.

In the background of the armed conflict that broke out in April 2023 between Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces (RSF), the Government of India launched "Operation Kaveri" on 24 April to evacuate Indians from Sudan. Indian nationals had been brought to Port Sudan from different parts of Sudan and then ferried to Jeddah, using Indian Air Force aircraft and Indian Naval ships. India evacuated 4097 Indian

nationals, operating 17 flights and 5 Indian Naval ships. The Indian Army was also moved from Khartoum to Port Sudan (850 Kms from Khartoum) on 29 April.

MoS (VM) along with senior MEA officers remained stationed in Jeddah to oversee Operation Kaveri. Also, the Government of India donated 25 tons of medical aid to the people of Sudan through a special Indian Air Force C-17 flight on 18 May.

Somalia

India contributed USD 2 million to the UN Trust Fund for ATMIS (African Union Transition Mission in Somalia) in 2023.

Minister of Energy of Somalia Jama Taqal sent a video message for the Energy Ministers' Session of 1st Voice of Global South Summit, chaired by the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs in January.

Minister of Health of Somalia Ali Haji Adam Abubakar visited India to attend the "One Earth One Health" (6th Edition of Advantage Healthcare India) from 26-28 April. During the visit, he held a meeting with India's Minister of Health. He also participated in the Health Ministers' session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit.

The Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare of Somalia Mohamed Hassan Bullale visited India to participate in "One Earth One Health-Advantage Healthcare India", a G 20 co-branded event during the G20 Ministerial meetings in August.



MoS (VM) received 278 Indians onboard INS Sumedha, evacuated from Sudan at the Jeddah Port, July 2023

Syria

MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Syria on 12 and 13 July, the first Ministerial-level visit from India to Syria since August 2016. During the visit, MoS (VM) called on President of Syria Dr. Bashar Al Assad, and Prime Minister of Syria Eng. Hussein Arnous. Syrian Minister of Oil and Mineral Resources Bassam Radwan Tohme participated in the 1st Voice of Global South Summit in Energy Ministers' Session in January, and the Syrian Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Dr. Fayssal Mekdad participated virtually in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit in the Foreign Ministers' Session in November.

India continued to extend technical assistance, grants, humanitarian aid, scholarships to Syria under various flagship programmes of the Government of India. During the year, 500 scholarships have been offered to Syrian students under Phase III and IV of MEA Scholarship Scheme. In the wake of the devastating earthquake in Syria in February, Government of India sent two special flights containing 30 tonnes of relief material. This included medical aid, emergency and critical care medicines, medical equipment and consumables.

Tunisia

On 23 August, FM Nabil Ammar met the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa. On 12 January, the former Minister of Foreign Affairs

Othman Jerandi participated in the virtual meeting of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit. On 17 November, the Minister of Education Mohamed Ali Boughdiri participated in the virtual meeting of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit.

The 5th Foreign Office Consultation (FOC) was held from 16-18 May in Tunis. The meeting was co-chaired by Secretary (CPV and OIA), and Secretary of State for International Cooperation in the MOFA Mounir Ben Rjiba. The two sides reviewed the bilateral relationship, covering political, trade and investment, development partnership, capacity building, culture, consular issues among others. On 17 May, Secretary (CPV and OIA) called on Minister of Cultural Affairs of Tunisia Hayet Ketat Kermazi and signed an MoU on bilateral 'Cultural Exchange Program' for the period 2023-26.

India-League of Arab States (LAS) Engagement

Under the aegis of the Arab-India Cooperation Forum, the 6th India-Arab Partnership Conference titled "New Horizons in Investment, Trade and Services" was organised on 11 and 12 July in New Delhi. Ministers, senior officials and businesspersons from Arab States and India participated in it. The Conference provides an institutional platform for a robust engagement between the business communities of India and the LAS countries.

CHAPTER

7

Africa

Central and West Africa

The region comprises 25 countries in the West, Northwest, Central and Southwest Africa, and is home to the continent's largest population and fastest growing economies. India's diplomatic presence in Africa expanded with the opening of a resident Mission in Cabo Verde in 2023. With this, Indian Missions are operational in 21 countries. India enjoys warm and cordial relations with all of the countries in the region. The Central and West African countries continued

to support India's candidature in various elections in the UN and related international bodies.

The 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership was held from 14-16 June, in New Delhi. It witnessed the presence of 25 Ministerial level delegations, including Vice-Presidents from The Gambia and Zimbabwe, and Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister of DR Congo. On the sidelines of the Conclave, many delegates held bilateral talks with their Indian counterparts.



EAM participated in the 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership in New Delhi, June 2023

Relations witnessed an upswing after Raksha Mantri's visit to Nigeria from 28-30 May to attend the swearing-in ceremony of the President of Nigeria Bola Ahmed Tinubu and the visit of MoS (VM) to Brazzaville, Republic of Congo (ROC) on 27 and 28 October to participate in the 2nd Three Basins Summit.

On the energy front, India sources about 18% of its crude oil requirements from Central and West Africa. The total bilateral trade during the year 2022-23 stood at USD 41.07 billion. India continued its development partnership association with Africa by implementing projects under various Lines of Credit (LoC). So far, India has extended over USD 5.3 billion worth of credit to the region, out of which approximately USD 2 billion has been utilised and over USD 2.45 billion is under implementation.

India's relations with the region in the defence sector and maritime security witnessed a paradigm shift. Currently, it has around 2000 troops deployed with MONUSCO, including Police Units, Experts and Contingent Troops in DR Congo. An Indian delegation attended the Annual Plenary Session organised by G7++FoGG (Friends of Gulf of Guinea) in collaboration with UNODC from 05-07 December in Dakar, Senegal.

India hosted the Defence Minister's Conclave on 14 February, on the margins of Aero India 2023 in Bengaluru, Karnataka with the broad theme 'Shared Prosperity through Enhanced Engagements in Defence (SPEED)' in which Ministers of Defence from the Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea Bissau participated. On the sidelines of the Conclave, Raksha Mantri and Minister of State (Defence) held bilateral talks with their counterparts.

India also offers a large number of training slots under the ITEC Programme both in civil and in the defence sector, as well as scholarships for higher education through ICCR. In addition, India is currently implementing a flagship online educational project called e-VidyaBharati & ArogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project, for African students to pursue online UG/PG/Diploma/Certificate programmes. A total of 15,000 scholarships were committed under the project, and in turn around 15,281 scholarships were awarded in five academic sessions- January 2020, July 2020, January 2021, July 2022 and July 2023, to fulfil the commitment.

Angola

Relations between India and Angola, one of the major oil producers in Africa, are underpinned by a vibrant energy partnership. It was further solidified in 2023, owing to the high-level ministerial visits, including that of Minister of State to the President of Angola and Head of the Presidential Military House Francisco P. Furtado to India, from 22-25 January followed by the visit of Health Minister of Angola Silvia Lutucuta, from 01-03 March.

India and Angola held the first Foreign Office Consultations on 11 August, in Angola. The Indian side was led by the Additional Secretary (Central & West Africa Division) in the Ministry and the Angolan side was led by Secretary of State for Foreign Relations Ambassador Emeralda Bravo Conde Da Silva Mendonca. Both sides carried out a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral relations, including strengthening of cooperation in trade and economic relations, defence, energy, agriculture, development partnership, health and pharmaceuticals, science and technology, culture, and people-to-people ties.

Angola hosted the 147th Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Assembly from 23-27 October, in Luanda. Indian Parliamentary Delegation comprising six Members of Parliament (three each from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) participated in the Assembly.

Working towards defence cooperation, INS Sumedha, an Indian Navy patrol vessel, made a three-day port call to Luanda, Angola, from 03-06 November. Following the port call, a Maritime Partnership Exercise (MPX) was held with the Angolan Navy on 07 November. The visit was aimed at enhancing naval cooperation and augmenting interoperability.

Bilateral trade with Angola was valued at USD 4.22 billion, with exports from India amounting to USD 622 million, and imports from Angola amounting to USD 3.60 billion. On 12 September, a MoU was signed between Rail India Technical and Economic Service (RITES) and CFM Angola Railways for cooperation for the development of railways and related infrastructure and services.

The Visa waiver Agreement for Diplomatic and Official Passport holders between India and Angola came into force with effect from 15 October.

Benin

India and Benin have friendly ties characterised by democracy and secularism. The bilateral relations saw renewed vigour in 2023 with numerous ministerial-level visits and interactions. On 15 October, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin, Olushegun Adjadi Bakari, held a telephonic conversation with the EAM. He paid an official visit to India from 16-18 December and met the EAM. He was accompanied by Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries Gaston Cossi Dossouhoui, and other senior officials.

On 13 January, Minister for Industry and Commerce, Shadiya Alimatou Assouman, virtually participated in the 1st Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS). On 06 February, MoS (VM) held a virtual meeting with the Ministers of Finance and Foreign Affairs of Benin. On 06 March, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin Aurélin Agbénonci, attended the luncheon meeting hosted by MoS (RRS) on the sidelines of the 5th United Nations Conference on LDC in Doha. Minister of Economy and



EAM met Minister of Foreign Affairs of Benin Olushegun Adjadi Bakari in New Delhi, December 2023

Finance Romuald Wadagni, MoS Minister of Energy Dona Jean-Claude Houssou, visited India from 01-05 February, to meet EXIM Bank officials.

The bilateral trade between India and Benin in 2022-23 amounted to USD 1.34 billion. Around 90 Indian or Indian-owned companies are currently operating in Benin in the Glo-Djigbe Industrial Zone, in the fields of automobile, textiles and food processing. India, Germany and Benin jointly undertook a EUR 135,000 worth tripartite Agriculture Mechanisation Project on Agricultural Mechanisation in Benin.

Enhancing defence cooperation, the Beninese defence forces were provided with various training programmes in India under ITEC as well as other platforms. Chief of the Air Staff, Benin Air Force along with his Senior Aide, attended Aero India.

Beninese officials continued to benefit from the Civil ITEC programme, ICCR Scholarships, CV Raman Fellowship, as well as scholarships under the e-VBAB Network project.

Burkina Faso

India and Burkina Faso share warm and cordial relations. India continues to provide support to Burkina Faso through development projects and capacity-building programmes. India contributed USD 1 million (48.7% of the total expenditure) for the UNDP supported Project PAMED (Program for Sustainable Livelihood Improvement) towards the construction of a dam and perimeter development in the rural commune of Poa in the

Niangdo Province of Burkina Faso. This project was launched on 03 August 2021 and completed on 20 July 2023.

Burkina Faso participated in the 6th session of the Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) held in New Delhi from 30 October-01 November.

The Minister of the Environment, Water and Sanitation, Burkina Faso Roger BARO participated virtually in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS on 17 November.

Cameroon

Minister of Public Health of Cameroon Dr Manaouda Malachie, participated in the Health Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS on 13 January. Minister of Higher Education, Jacques Fame Ndongo attended the Education Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November.

Minister Delegate Dr. Félix Mbayu, attended 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held in New Delhi from 14-16 June, and held bilateral talks with MoS (VM) on the sidelines of the Conclave.

Minister of Water and Energy of Cameroon, Elounjdou Essomba Gaston, attended the 6th Session of the International Solar Alliance Assembly held on 31 October and 01 November in New Delhi. Minister and Director General of ISA, signed a memorandum of intent to establish a Solar Technology Application Resource Centre (STAR-C) in Cameroon.

The third round of Foreign Office Consultations (FoC) between India and Cameroon was held on 07 August, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. It was co-chaired by AS (C&WA) from the Indian side, and Oumarou Chinmoun, Secretary General of Ministry of External Relations, from Cameroon side. During the meeting, both sides reviewed the wide-ranging bilateral relations covering political, economic and commercial, investment, defence and security, development partnership, capacity building, cultural and people to people linkage and ways to further strengthen the ties between India and Cameroon. On the sidelines of the FoC, AS (C&WA) paid a courtesy call on Mbella Mbella Lejeune, Minister of External Relations of Cameroon, and discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest.

The bilateral trade between India and Cameroon witnessed significant increase and was valued at USD 1.103 billion in 2022-23. To promote trade and tourism, the Mission participated in the Commonwealth Trade Fair on 09-10 March organised by the Ministry of External Relations.

From January to November, 79 Defence ITEC slots, 29 Civil ITEC slots and 3 ICCR Scholarships were utilised by Cameroon.

Cabo Verde

The relations with Cabo Verde continued to be warm and cordial. As a major milestone in implementation of commitments at India-Africa Forum Summit (IAFS-III), India opened a resident Mission in Cabo Verde on 26 June. The bilateral trade between India and Cabo Verde stood at USD 8.95 million in 2022-23.

Central African Republic

India and the Central African Republic (CAR) enjoy friendly relations. CAR supported India's candidature at various international fora. Minister of Trade and Industry of CAR, Mboua Née Lea Koyassum Doumta, participated virtually in the Commerce Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS on 13 January. The bilateral trade between India and CAR amounted to USD 23.50 million during 2022-23.

Chad

Minister of Finance and Budget Tahir Hamid Ngulin participated virtually in the Finance Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS on 12 January. Minister of Public Health and Prevention Dr. Abdel Madjid Abderahim Mahamat, attended the Health Ministers' Session of 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November.

Minister of Telecommunication & Digital Economy, Mahamat Allahou Taher, led a 7-member delegation to India from 20-24 May, and held a bilateral meeting with Minister of Railways, Communication & Electronics and Information Technology (MoC) for evaluating India's open-source public digital goods

and G4/G5 telecom technology stack. The delegation also undertook field visits to C-DoT, TRAI and BSNL, Chandigarh to understand India's telecom stack.

A ten-member Chadian delegation including Minister of State for Finances & Public Accounts, Ronel Baiong Malloum, and Minister of State for Production and Agriculture Transformation, Ramadane Abakar, participated in the 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership from June 14-16 in New Delhi. The bilateral trade stood at USD 58.22 million during the year 2022-23.

Chad has been India's ITEC partner country. It utilised 3 ICCR scholarships during 2023. Chadian students were also nominated for the annual one-year Hindi course at Central Institute of Hindi in Agra.

Côte d'Ivoire

India and Cote d'Ivoire continued to strengthen engagement with each other. India's trade with Cote d'Ivoire increased by 29.7% from USD 1.19 billion in 2021-22 to USD 1.55 billion in 2022-23. Mission held many one-on-one buyer-seller meetings to enhance Indian exports to Cote d'Ivoire.

Ivorian Minister of Commerce and Industry, Souleymane Diarrassouba virtually participated in the 1st VOGSS in January.

Ivorian Cession Court Senior Judge Zahiri Ziki Sebastion visited New Delhi in November, for the first ever regional Conference on "Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South."

As of November, 68 trainees from Côte d'Ivoire, including 31 teachers from schools and vocational institutes have trained in India under the ITEC Program. 10 Ivorian students have availed ICCR scholarships for pursuance of higher studies in India during 2023-24.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

Minister of Industry of DRC Julien Paluku virtually participated in the Trade and Commerce Minister's session of the 1st VOGSS, held virtually on 13 January.

In May, EAM approved a new LoC of USD 180 million and grant of USD 20 million, for completion of the Katende hydroelectric project.

DRC's Minister of Finance Nicolas Kazadi, accompanied by the Governor of Kasai Province, visited New Delhi from 29 January-04 February, and met MoS (VM), Minister of Agriculture, and officials from RITES.

Deputy PM and Minister of National Economy Vital Kamerhe Kahongya, Minister of Entrepreneurship & MSMEs Désiré M'Zinga Birihanze, attended 18th CII-Exim Bank Conclave held in New Delhi on 14-16 June. India-DRC bilateral trade stood USD 845 million during the year 2022-23.

Equatorial Guinea

India and Equatorial Guinea (EG) enjoyed warm and friendly relations. Minister of Mines and Hydrocarbons Antonio Oburu Ondo, participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS held virtually on 13 January. Secretary General of the Ministry of Mines and Hydrocarbons, Diosdado Nguema Nzang, participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS held virtually on 17 November.

Vice-Minister of National Defence, Cándido Ncogo Engono, accompanied by a 5-member delegation attended Aero India Show 2023 in Bengaluru in February.

The MoU between Constancia Mangué Nsue Okomo Foundation (FCMNO) and Jaipur Foots, resulted in the establishment of an Artificial Limb Fitment Center in Mongomo on 10 April. The bilateral trade between two countries stood USD 735 million during the year 2022-23.

India and EG signed an Agreement in New Delhi on 10 May, authorising the dependents of members of a Diplomatic Mission or Consular Post to engage in Gainful Employment. Mission organised the 9th IDY in Malabo on 18 June.

Gabon

Gabon witnessed a military coup on 30 August, immediately after the Presidential elections result. Head of the Republican Guard, General Brice Clotaire Oligui Nguema, is currently the Head of the State as President in transition of the Gabonese Republic. The transitional government presented a roadmap of two years, which would culminate in Presidential elections in August 2025.

Minister of Economy of Gabon, Mays Mouissi, participated in Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, held on 17 November. A delegation of 3 Ministers, including Ministers of Agriculture, and Investment Promotion visited India from 14-16 June to participate in the 18th CII-Exim Bank Conclave. The bilateral trade between India and Gabon was valued at USD 478 million during the year 2022-23.

Ghana

India-Ghana relations are friendly and stable. President Nana Addo Akufo-Addo addressed the 1st VOGSS, hosted by the Prime Minister, on 13 January. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration, Kwaku Ampratwum-Sarpomg

addressed the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

The Foreign Service Training Institute of Ghana, constructed with partial funding of USD 5 million Government of India LoC, was completed on 31 March, and was officially inaugurated on 03 August by President Nana Addo Dankwa Akufo-Addo.

Bilateral relations have been further strengthened by regular high-level visits. The First Lady, Rebecca Victoria Akufo Addo visited Mumbai from 17-20 October to attend the 10th edition of Merck Foundation Asia Africa Luminary Conference and Merck Foundation First Ladies Initiative (MFFLI) Summit. The Speaker of Parliament, Alban Sumana Kingsford Bagbin, participated at the 23rd International Conference of Chief Justices of the World held in Lucknow from 18-23 November.

The then Deputy Minister of Energy, William Owuraku Aidoo, attended the India Energy Week held in Bengaluru from 05-08 February. Deputy Minister of Energy, Herbert Krapa, participated in the panel discussion of the G20 Energy Transition Working Group in Goa on 22 July.

Minister of Information, Kojo Oppong Nkrumah, participated in the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi from 02-03 March. Deputy Minister of Health, Mahama Asei Seini, took part in the 6th edition of Advantage Healthcare in New Delhi from 26-28 April.

An Indian Parliamentary delegation participated at the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference from 30 September-06 October. The Indian delegation comprised five MPs from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and Speakers, Deputy Speakers, MLAs, Chairman, and Senior Officers from 21 State Legislative Assemblies.

A 5-member delegation from Ghana visited India from 01-08 May to study and explore the bamboo ecosystem in India under the framework of Trilateral Cooperation between Germany, India and Ghana. Deputy Minister of Energy, Andrew Kofi Mercer, participated at the 6th session of the Assembly of the ISA in New Delhi from 30 October-02 November.

On the defence front, India and the EU conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea in October. During the exercise, Indian Navy's INS Sumedha, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, was joined by three EU Member States' ships in the Gulf of Guinea: Italian Navy Ship ITS Foscari, French Navy Ship FS Ventôse, and Spanish Navy Ship Tornado. The four ships practised a series of tactical manoeuvres in international waters off the coast of Ghana, including a boarding exercise, a flying exercise using the helicopters embarked on French Ship Ventôse and INS Sumedha, and transfer of personnel between ships. From 28 May-09 June, a 16-member NDC delegation visited Accra for a study tour. The Minister of State (Defence) led an Indian delegation to the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting held in Accra on 05-06 December.

An Indian Parliamentary delegation participated at the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference from 30 September-06 October. The Indian delegation comprised five MPs from Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha and Speakers, Deputy Speakers, MLAs, Chairman, and Senior Officers from 21 State Legislative Assemblies.

The India Economic Trade Organisation (IETO) and India Africa Trade Council (IATC) delegation visited Ghana from 06-10 February to explore opportunities for trade and business.

Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India (PHARMEXCIL) led 42 Indian companies to Ghana and organised the India-Ghana Pharma Business Meet on 27 February. ASSOCHAM led 48 Indian companies to Accra and set up the India Pavilion at the Agri-Tech West Africa 2023 held in Accra from 15-17 March. An eight-member business delegation from PHDCCI visited Ghana from 02-05 April and held India-Ghana Business meet on 04 April. A business delegation comprising 60 Indian companies visited Ghana from 16-18 May and set up the India Pavilion at the West Asia Pharma Health Conference and Exhibition. A two-member team from Invest India organised an Accelerator Programme Workshop at GIPC Accra on 25 September, for the winners of SolarX Startup Challenge. Indian companies led by ASSOCHAM participated at the Power & Energy Ghana Expo 2023 from 11-13 October. A delegation from Serum Institute of India held talks with the Government of Ghana to fill-and-finish the Oxford University's R21 malaria vaccine in Ghana.

In 2023, Ghana utilised 34 slots under ICCR scholarships. 45 Defence ITEC slots and 60 civil ITEC slots. Under the e-VBAB scholarship scheme, 74 out of 90 slots allocated to Ghana have been utilised so far while 7 applications from Ghana for CV Raman International Fellowship for Researchers have been approved. The India Education Fair Ghana was held in Accra on 23 February and replicated in Kumasi on 24 February, while the Study in India (SII) Expo was held in Accra on 31 March.

A 14-member cultural troupe from Ghana performed at the 36th Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2023 in Faridabad from 03-19 February.

Guinea-Bissau

India's relations with Guinea-Bissau remained warm and friendly. Guinea-Bissau continued to support India at various multilateral fora. EAM held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities, Carlos Pinto Pereira, on the sidelines of the UNGA on 23 September, in New York.

Finance Minister of Guinea-Bissau, Ilídio Vieira Té, virtually participated in the Finance Ministers Session of the 1st VOGSS on 12 January. Minister of Energy and Industry, Issufo Baldé, virtually participated in the Energy Ministers' Session of the 2nd

VOGSS on 17 November. Minister of State for National Defence Eng. Marciano Silva Barbeiro, visited India and participated in the Aero India Exhibition held in February in Bengaluru.

Government of India donated indelible ink to Guinea-Bissau for the National Assembly elections held on 04 June.

Liberia

India and Liberia continued to enjoy warm and friendly bilateral relations. The First Lady of Liberia, Clar Marie Weah visited India and attended the 10th Edition of the Merck Foundation Africa Asia Luminary Conference and Merck Foundation First Ladies Initiative Summit, organised by the Merck Foundation in Mumbai on 18 and 19 October.

A high-level Liberian Defence Delegation led by the Deputy Minister of Defence for Operations, Prince Kollie Vincent, visited India to participate in the Aero India 2023 and SPEED-Defence Ministers' Conclave 2023 held in Bengaluru from 13-16 February.

Health Minister of Liberia, Dr. Wilhemina S. Jallah, participated virtually in the Health Ministers' Session of 1st VOGSS, on 13 January. Deputy Minister for Budget and Development Planning, Tanneh G. Brunson participated in the Finance Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, 17 November.

On the trade front, both countries saw a significant jump in bilateral trade during 2022-23 with notable increase in both export and import values. The total bilateral figure stood at USD 283.95 million.

Mali

The Government of India continued to be supportive of the people and Government of Mali. Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdoulaye Diop participated in the 1st VOGSS held in virtual mode on 12 and 13 January.

Despite constraints and unexpected delays, an ongoing USD 150 million (including USD 50 million through EBID) LoC for power transmission development partnership project connecting Bamako and Sikasso via Bougouni and Sanankoroba has progressed. The total bilateral trade was USD 152.51 million in 2022-23, as compared to USD 230.42 million in the previous year.

India continued to offer numerous educational, training and capacity building opportunities to Malian citizens through its ITEC programme and ICCR scholarships. As of November, Mali utilised 56 ITEC slots for the year 2023-24. All 15 ICCR scholarships offered to Malian students for higher studies in India were also utilised for the year.

Mauritania

India and Mauritania enjoy cordial and friendly relations with cooperation in various sectors including port development, oil exploration, mining, power, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, engineering and education.

The Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development participated virtually in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS, on 13 January. Minister of Health, Naha Mint Hamdi Ould Mouknass virtually participated in the 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

India's bilateral trade with Mauritania amounted to USD 378.24 million during the year 2022-23. India offered 7 ITEC slots and an ICCR scholarship to Mauritania.

Niger

India continued to strengthen engagement with Niger, with focus on trade and capacity building. India's trade with Niger rose by 88.95%, from USD 107.61 million in 2021-22 to USD 203.33 million in 2022-23.

Minister of Public Health, Population and Social Affairs, Dr. Idi Illiassou Mainassara, participated virtually in the 1st VOGSS, held from 12-13 January. Niger also participated in the Aero-India held from 13-17 February in Bengaluru. Chief of Army Staff of Government of Niger, Brig Gen Abo Tague Mahamadou, attended the India-Africa Army Chiefs' Conclave held from 27-30 March in Pune. The Minister of Oil, Mines and Energy, Mahaman Moustapha Barké Bako participated virtually in the Energy Ministers' session of the 2nd VOGSS on 17 November.

India continued to offer capacity building opportunities to Niger citizens in diverse disciplines through the ITEC programme and ICCR scholarships. 77 civilian and four defence training slots under ITEC were utilised by Niger in 2022-23. In 2023, 51 ITEC slots were used.

Nigeria

India and Nigeria enjoy warm, friendly, and deep-rooted bilateral relations. In view of India's strong relations with Nigeria, the Government of India invited Nigeria as a guest country to participate in all the G20 meetings during India's G20 Presidency in 2023. Nigeria successfully participated in various G20 Engagement Groups and Working Groups meetings. High-Level engagements continued to impart momentum to bilateral relations.

Nigerian President Bola Tinubu visited New Delhi from 05-10 September to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit. He was accompanied by five senior ministers of Foreign, Commerce, Finance, Budget & Economic Planning and Communication who held bilateral meetings with their counterparts on the sidelines of G20. On 10 September, he met the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Both leaders held productive talks on various areas of wide-ranging bilateral issues, including trade and investment, defence, agriculture, millets, financial technology and capacity building. On 06 September, President Tinubu attended the 2nd meeting of the Nigeria-India Business Council (NIBC), where Indian investors pledged nearly USD 14 billion worth of investments in Nigeria. The then President Muhammadu Buhari participated in the 1st VOGSS in January.



Prime Minister met President of Nigeria Bola Tinubu on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

The President of Nigeria announced an investment of USD 1 billion for the modernisation of the Nigerian Armed Forces in conjunction with the Indian Defense Industry. Raksha Mantri attended the swearing-in ceremony of President Tinubu on 29 May. Relations with Nigeria expanded to new avenues such as cooperation in space, defence research and development, cyber security, fintech, training and capacity building. During his visit, he interacted with the Indian community. The Indian community in Nigeria is estimated to be 50,000 people - about 45,000 Indian nationals and about 5,000 overseas citizens of India (OCI).

Speaker of Nigeria's 10th House of Representatives Abbas Tajudeen, Deputy President of the Senate Jibrin Barau, along with a Nigerian delegation visited New Delhi from 13-14 October to attend 9th P20 Summit and G20 Parliamentary Forum organised by the Parliament of India in collaboration with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). The bilateral political engagements were further strengthened through the visits of several Ministers from Nigeria including Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Health, Labour, and Environment, to India.

In 2023, three MoUs were signed. A MoU was signed between the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NiMET) and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) on 02 March in Geneva. Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) of India and National Drug Law Enforcement Agency (NDLEA) of Nigeria signed a MoU on Prevention of Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances & Precursor Chemicals and Related Matters, on 14 June in Abuja. A MoU between Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System Plc (NIBSS) and National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on UPI-like payment solution in Nigeria was signed on 01 August.

The 2nd round of India-Nigeria Consular Dialogue was held in Abuja on 20 February. The First JWG meeting between ISRO and National Space Research and Development Agency (NASRDA), Nigeria was held virtually on 16 February. Second JWG meeting between ISRO and NASRDA was held virtually on 14 November. On 07 Feb, the first virtual meeting between CERTng and CERTin was held.

Indian investment in Nigeria is estimated at over USD 26 billion with more than 150 Indian companies operating in Nigeria in diverse fields such as petrochemicals, pharmaceuticals, engineering goods, telecom, electrical machinery, and LNG. The bilateral trade between India -Nigeria amounted to USD 11.89 billion in the year. The Second Round of Joint Trade Committee was held in the month of November.

India's defence engagement with Nigeria continues to grow and diversify. The Nigerian Armed Forces were provided with various training programmes in India under the Defence ITEC programme, which saw allocation of 140 vacancies in various courses for the year, in India. India's partnership with Nigeria has expanded in all aspects and avenues, including proposed

cooperation in ship design and construction, defence research and development, and maritime training.

A delegation led by the DG DRDB (DRDO equivalent) visited the Aero India Exhibition in Bengaluru in February. A delegation led by a Major General also attended the AFINDEX exercises held in Pune in March as well as the Indo-Pacific Army Chiefs Conclave (IPACC) in September.

In October, Indian Naval Ship, INS Sumedha visited Lagos, Nigeria to conduct anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Guinea as well as to exercise with the Nigerian Navy. This was followed by the first ever India-European Union Joint Naval exercise, which was held in the Gulf of Guinea, from 24-26 October. The exercise was attended by Naval Ships from France, Spain and Italy. The 6th Joint Defence Cooperation Committee (JDCC) meeting was held in November in Abuja.

India continued to offer many slots to Nigerian officials under ITEC programme, as well as various scholarships programs to Nigerian students including ICCR, iLearn, Hindi Scholarship, Study in India (SII) scholarships, CV Raman Fellowship, and so on, to pursue various courses in India. In 2023, the Indian Council of Cultural relations (ICCR) offered 20 scholarships under the 'ICCR Africa Scholarship Scheme' for Nigerian students to pursue under-graduate, post-graduate, and PhD courses in India. A total of 250 civilian training slots were allotted to Nigeria under ITEC/e-ITEC. During the year, hundreds of Nigerian students were absorbed into various Indian universities under Study in India (SII) programme. In January, 30 officials of Nigerian law enforcement agencies participated in a two-week specialised training program under ITEC at Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gujarat.

Air Peace, which is a designated carrier from the Nigerian side, started its direct flight to India (Lagos-Mumbai) on 31 March.

In February, a 15-member cultural troupe from the Federal Ministry of Culture, Nigeria participated in 36th Surajkund International Crafts Mela at Faridabad.

Republic of Congo (ROC)

India and the Republic of Congo (ROC) enjoy cordial and warm relations. India is an important development partner of the Republic Congo.

Minister of International Cooperation and Promotion of Public-Private Partnership, Denis Christel Sassou N'Guesso, participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS held on 13 January. Minister of Energy and Hydraulics, Emile Ouosso, participated in the Energy Minister's Session of the 2nd VOGSS virtually held on 17 November.

Minister of National Defense, Charles Richard Mondjo, attended Defence Ministers' Conclave, held on the sidelines of Aero India

2023 in Bengaluru, from 12-16 February. On the sidelines of the Conclave, he held bilateral talks with Raksha Mantri.

MoS (VM) visited ROC on 27 and 28 October, and attended the 2nd Three Basins Summit hosted by the Republic of Congo.

Minister of Industrial Development and Promotion of the Private Sector, Thomas Nicephore Fylla Saint-Eudes, and Minister of State for Territory Planning, Infrastructure and Road Maintenance, Jean Jacques Bouya, participated in the 18th CII Africa Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership, held in New Delhi from 14-16 June.

The Second FOC between India and the ROC was held on 13 April in New Delhi. It was co-chaired by JS (C&WA) and Director of Cabinet, Ministry of Foreign Affairs Ambassador Gisele Bouanga-Kalou.

ROC joined the International Solar Alliance by signing the International Solar Alliance Framework Agreement in New Delhi in February.

India has offered support to three projects through LoC worth USD 214.90 million, for urban transport, rural electrification and construction of 600 TPD rotary kiln-based cement plant, and are currently under various stages of execution. The Phase-I of Greenfield 600 TPD rotary kiln-based cement plant was completed in August.

India offered 10 slots (both civilian and defence) to Congolese nationals under the ITEC programme for 2023-24. Two slots have been availed by defence personnel during the year.

Republic of Guinea

The bilateral relations between India and Guinea are warm, cordial and have progressed steadily during this year. Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Hadja Safiatour Diallo, participated virtually in the 1st VOGSS, on 12 January. Secretary General Ahmed Sekou Keita, represented Minister of Energy, Hydraulics and Hydrocarbons, Aly Seydouba Soumah, in the 2nd VOGSS, held on 17 November.

Minister of Commerce, Industry, Small and Medium Enterprises, Loupou Lamah, and Adviser to the Prime Minister of Guinea, Nabe Ismael Sidiki visited Delhi from 21-24 August. Lamah held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Commerce and Industry to discuss the issues relating to ban on rice exports. The Government of India permitted export of non-basmati white rice to Guinea which was widely welcomed.

Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Rose Pola Pricemou, met MoS (RRS) on the sidelines of the 5th United Nations Conference of the Least Developed Countries held in Doha on 06 and 07 March, in Doha.

Minister of Health and Public Hygiene Dr. Mamdou P. Diallo, visited Delhi and attended the event 'One Earth One Health-the 6th Edition of Advantage Healthcare India, organised in collaboration with FICCI from 26-28 April at New Delhi.

Secretary General in the Ministry of Energy, Hydraulic and Hydrocarbons, Ahmed Sekou Keita, along with the Adviser to the Prime Minister of Guinea, Nabe Ismael Sidiki, attended the 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India - Africa Growth Partnership held from 14 -16 June at New Delhi. He attended the 6th Session of International Solar Alliance Assembly from 30 October-01 November at New Delhi.

India continued to provide capacity building support to the country, notably ICCR scholarships and ITEC capacity building programmes. The ICCR allocated one slot in the 2023-24 to the Republic of Guinea under Africa Scholarship Scheme (ASS) which was utilised. Under ITEC, two defence slots were allocated by the Ministry for regular courses of Army, Air Force and Navy and special courses for Tri Services, and both the slots were utilised. Guinea is adequately utilising the 40 Civilian ITEC slots allocated to Guinea. The Ministry had allocated two slots for the July 2023 academic session to Guinea under the e-VBAB scholarship network project, and both slots were utilised.

The bilateral trade between the two countries saw a shift from USD 4178 million in 2021-22 to USD 2714.77 million in 2022-2023. However, exports from India increased from USD 561.53 million to USD 631.93 million during the same period, an increase of about 12.5 %.

Senegal

India and Senegal enjoy warm bilateral relations. President Macky Sall participated in the Inaugural Leaders' Session of the 1st VOGSS, on 12 January. He held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister on the sidelines of the BRICS Summit on 24 August, in Johannesburg, during which they discussed strengthening bilateral ties such as in defence and security, and infrastructure development.

Minister of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, Ismaïla Madior Fall took part in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

The implementation of the second phase of upgradation of the Centre for Entrepreneurship Training and Development (CEDT) in Dakar, which was announced during the visit of the Vice-President of India to Senegal in June 2022, was completed by HMT Ltd. The Centre, which has been built with grant assistance from the Government of India, has since 2002 trained around 6000 students and over 3000 have been employed in various sectors.

As part of defence cooperation, Chief of National Gendarmerie General Daouda Diop, led an Observer team to the Africa

India Exercises (AFINDEX) from 27-30 March. Indian Naval Ship INS Sumedha was on a goodwill operational visit to Dakar from 30 September and 03 October, during which apart from professional exchanges with the Senegalese Navy the crew undertook various community service activities such as orphanage food donation. An Indian delegation attended the Annual Plenary Session organised by G7++FoGG in collaboration with UNODC from 05-07 December in Dakar. Senegal Armed Forces also benefited from training with 22 slots under the ITEC Defence program.

Bilateral trade between India and Senegal touched a historic high of USD 2511 million during 2022-23, an over 50 percent increase compared to the previous year.

On the request of the Government of Senegal, the Government of India in March, agreed to extend a grant support of USD 771,931.54 from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund for the "National Mine Action Centre" project of Senegal. The funding assistance will be utilised to undertake technical surveys of locations, acquisition of advanced equipment and to accomplish de-mining activities in an area of 139,000 square metre in the Bignona and Oussouye districts of Senegal, which have unexploded mines laid during the internal armed conflict from 1980s to early 2000s.

Sierra Leone

Following establishment of the Resident Mission in Freetown in August 2020, India-Sierra Leone bilateral relations consolidated further during 2023.

Deputy Minister of Finance, Bockarie Kalokoh, participated virtually in the Finance Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS, held on 13 January. Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Frances Piagie Alghali, participated virtually in the Foreign Minister's Session of the 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

A three-member delegation led by Deputy Defense Minister Col (Retd) Muana Brima Massaquoi, along with Chief of Air Staff attended Air Show-cum-Exhibition Aero-India 2023 from 12-17 February, held in Bengaluru. On the sidelines, he held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of State (Defence).

A two-member delegation from Sierra Leone attended the Knowledge and Experience Exchange Programme for the Emerging Economies of the Global South at Hyderabad on 04-06 March on the sidelines of the 2nd G20-Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFI) meeting held in Hyderabad on 06-07 March.

A two-member delegation headed by Tamba E. Juana, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Information and Communications, Republic

of Sierra Leone attended 'Global Digital Public Infrastructure' Summit on the sidelines of G20 Digital Economy Working Group meeting, held on 12 and 13 June at Pune. A MoU between MeitY and Sierra Leone on 'Cooperation in the field of sharing successful digital solutions implemented at population scale for digital transformation' was signed during the visit.

Deputy Minister of Justice, Republic of Sierra Leone, Alpha Sesay, participated in the 1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South' held at New Delhi on 27 and 28 November.

In April 2023, India donated 40,000 units of Indelible Ink to Sierra Leone for Presidential Elections held on 24 June.

India continued to be a major trade partner of Sierra Leone and ranked 4th in terms of imports by Sierra Leone. India's exports to Sierra Leone in 2022-23 reached USD 237.38 million, recording an increase of about 32% compared to 2021-22.

Sierra Leone is one of the beneficiaries of ITEC scholarships and has been provided 50 seats every year in different programmes in various institutes in India. ICCR also provides 15 full scholarship slots to Sierra Leone for UG, PG and PhD courses in India. Under Defence ITEC Programme 2023-24, 2 Navy, 4 Army and 2 Coast Guard (Maritime Law) slots have been allotted to Sierra Leone. One Deputy Secretary-level officer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Sierra Leone attended the 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) held from 13-31 March, at Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS), New Delhi.

Sao Tome and Principe

India and Sao Tome and Principe (STP) enjoyed warm and friendly relations, particularly after 1975 (post-STP independence era).

Minister of Infrastructure, Natural Resources and Environment, Adelino Cardoso participated in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS, on 12 January. Minister of Youth Affairs and Sport, Euridice Semedo attended the Education Ministers' Session of 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

The Government donated 2,271 kgs of life saving essential medicines as humanitarian assistance to STP in June.

STP signed the Instrument of Ratification of the Framework Agreement on the Establishment of the ISA in April. Senior Officials from International Solar Alliance and National Thermal Power Corporation of India visited Sao Tome for a feasibility study of installation of Photovoltaic cells at the Prime Minister's Office and at a Hospital in Principe.

The Gambia

Relations between India and The Gambia have traditionally been warm and friendly. Vice-President of The Gambia, Muhammad B.S. Jallow led a high-level delegation comprising 5 Ministers (Trade & Industry, Petroleum & Energy, Communications & Digital Economy, Tourism & Culture, Transport works & Infrastructure) to participate in the 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Growth Partnership, held in New Delhi from 14-16 June.

Minister of Higher Education Pierre Gomez, participated virtually in the Education Session of the 1st VOGSS, held on 13 January. Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Gambia, Dr. Mamadou Tangara participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, held on 17 November.

MoS (RRS) met the Minister of Foreign Affairs of The Gambia Dr. Mamadou Tangara on the sidelines of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, on 06 March, at Doha.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture H.M. Jallow attended the 1st Global Conference of the IYM 2023 held on 18th March in New Delhi.

Five young political leaders, representing different political parties participated in the 10th batch of the Gen-Next Democracy Program organised by ICCR from 15-24 May.

Development partnership with The Gambia continued to strengthen through the year. The USD 22.50 million electrification expansion project for Greater Banjul Area, being implemented under a Government of India LoC, was completed in April 2023. A total of 77 communities under Phase-I and 13 communities under Phase-II have been provided electricity with around 10,000 connections serving an estimated more than 80,000 people.

Under capacity building, the third batch of 30 senior civil servants of The Gambia participated in a training program on public policy and governance at National Centre for Good Governance at Mussoorie and New Delhi from 18-23 September 2023. For training year 2023-24, The Gambia was offered 15 army slots and two navy slots by the coast guard under the ITEC Defence program. 60 slots were offered to The Gambia under the ITEC civilian program. Under the Africa Scholarship Scheme, 33 scholarships were availed by candidates from The Gambia for under-graduate/post-graduate degree courses in India.

The Joint Working Group, set up under the MoU on refurbishing personnel administration and governance reforms between Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Government of India and Public Service Commission, Office of the President of The Gambia, held its second and third meetings on 21 August and 9 November, respectively.

Togo

India and Togo have cordial bilateral relations. India recognized the Togolese Republic since it attained independence in 1960.

Environment Minister Katari Foli-Bazi, participated virtually in the Environment Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS, on 12 January. Minister of Commerce, Handicrafts and Local Consumption, Kayi Mivedor-Sambiani, participated virtually in the Commerce Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS, on 17 November.

Capacity building, development partnership, economic and commercial engagement, and educational linkages remain the mainstay of the relationship. A total of 46 scholarships have been offered to Togo under ITEC civilian and defence slots for officials, ICCR's Africa Scholarship scheme for students, and CV Raman Fellowship for researchers.

India-Togo economic linkages witnessed enhanced cooperation as five Indian companies set up new plants in Togo in agri-business, pharmaceutical, and recycling sectors. A total of 17 companies from Togo took part in trade events in India in ICT, electronics, pharma, SMEs, silk, plastics and carpet sectors. Six reputed doctors from Togo took part in Advantage Health-care India event held in Gandhinagar in August. In celebration of the International Year of Millets, the Embassy in association with Togolese Institute of Agronomic Research (ITRA) held an event to raise awareness about nutritional benefits of millet products.

Taking forward defence cooperation, a Togolese delegation led by Col. Yao Banla took part in Chiefs' Conclave held on 27 and 28 March on the margins of AFINDEX. A Maritime Partnership Exercise (PASSEX) was held between the Indian Navy Ship "INS Sumedha" and the Togolese Navy on 20 October.

As part of promoting educational and skill development linkages, the second India Education Fair with participation of 14 universities from India was held on 21 February in partnership with Lomé University. Komla Jervis Zogbema visited India from 03-11 October, under the Academic Visitors Programme of the ICCR and held interactions with various universities in India. In pursuance of the visit of Prof. Wateba, Togolese Minister of Higher Education and Research to India under ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme of ICCR, two MoUs were signed by the Government of Togo with Andhra University and IIIT Bengaluru.

The Mission, in collaboration with two Indian companies, members of Indian Importers Chamber of Commerce and Industry, held interactive sessions with medical fraternity and insurance companies in Togo during February, June, and July 2023, to explore opportunities in the medical tourism sector between India and Togo.

A three-member delegation from ISA, led by the Director General visited Lomé on 03-05 July to participate in the "Infrastructure for

Africa” Forum. The delegation called on the Togolese President and Ministry of Energy and possible collaborative projects.

East and Southern Africa

Marking several milestones in 2023, India’s historical and friendly relations with the 15 countries of East and Southern Africa (E&SA) continued to be vibrant and robust through high-level visits all through the year, official meetings under several bilateral dialogue mechanisms, growing cooperation in the defence and maritime sectors, robust development partnership, expanding bilateral trade and investment and increasing people-to-people contacts. The year witnessed two State visits by Presidents of Kenya and of Tanzania. Both visits culminated with notable outcomes, including a Joint Vision Statement on Maritime Cooperation between India and Kenya, and elevation of India’s bilateral relations with Tanzania to Strategic Partnership—making Tanzania India’s third strategic partner in the region after Rwanda and South Africa.

India marked a milestone in its ties with Ethiopia, Kenya and South Africa with the commemoration of the 75th, 60th and 30th Anniversary of establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations. Bilateral defence cooperation continued to strengthen with high-level exchanges, joint exercises, capacity-building and training under ITEC, gifting of defence equipment, building defence industry exchanges through DefExpos, and so on.

The 2nd edition of Africa-India Field Training Exercise 2023 (AFINDEX) was organised in Pune which gave a fillip to the defence cooperation among the armies of India and African countries by enabling understanding of each other’s organisation and methodology of conducting various operations.

The 18th edition of the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership with the theme of ‘Creating Shared Future’ was held in New Delhi from 14-16 June. The 3-day conclave was jointly organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and EXIM Bank of India, in association with the Ministry and the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India. The Conclave was inaugurated by EAM in the presence of Vice-President of Zimbabwe Gen (Retd) Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy Vital Kamerhe Lwa Kanyiginyi. 15 countries were represented at the ministerial-level.

Africa continued to be the 2nd largest beneficiary of India’s development partnership initiatives through capacity-building and training programmes, scholarships, lines of credit, grants, HADR operations among others.

Partner countries from Africa also joined several India-led global initiatives: Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria and Tanzania joined the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA); Kenya and the Republic of Congo became members of the International Solar Alliance

(ISA); Kenya, Mauritius, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda became members of the Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA).

Maritime Cooperation with the littoral States of the region intensified with the signing of a MoU on sharing of white shipping information with Tanzania, unveiling of a Joint Vision Statement on Maritime Cooperation with Kenya, humanitarian and disaster relief (HADR) operations, regular ship visits among others.

India’s development partnership continued to be a robust pillar in its relations with the region, notably through 1014 beneficiaries under the ITEC program in 2022-23. In addition, the inauguration of the first off-shore campuses of IIT-Madras in Zanzibar, Tanzania and the National Forensics Science University in Uganda was a watershed in India’s abiding commitment to capacity-building of the Global South.

To promote AYUSH and collaboration in traditional medicines, All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) under the Ministry of AYUSH hosted the first familiarisation session and a guided tour of AIIA for all 14 Resident Heads of Mission of E&SA countries in Delhi on 26 September.

On the multilateral front, the region extended its fulsome support to India’s initiatives during its G20 Presidency, including through active participation in both the editions of the VOGSS by several Heads of State and Government of E&SA countries. Several countries from the region also participated in the first training program of Global South Scholarships for Young Diplomats.

To review progress on bilateral relations, and brainstorm on stepping up existing cooperation as well as collaboration in new areas, 16 Indian Missions actively participated in the Regional Heads of Mission Conference in July, led by EAM.

Botswana

The 4th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Botswana, chaired by Additional Secretary (E&SA) and Acting Permanent Secretary of Ministry of International Affairs and Cooperation Clifford Maribe, was held on 14 December in Gaborone, where issues of bilateral, regional and global importance were discussed.

Botswana actively participated at the Ministerial level in both the editions of the VOGSS.

Minister of Youth, Gender, Sports and Culture Tumiso Macdonald Rakgare, along with the then Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry Bogolo Kenewendo, and Member of Parliament Simon Nkosana Moabi, attended the Gen Next Democracy Network Programme 2023 organised by the ICCR from 22 to 31 January.

Burundi

The 2nd Foreign Office Consultations between India and Burundi, chaired by Additional Secretary (E&SA) and Director General of Bilateral Relations Ambassador Ernest Niyokindi, was held on 12 December in Bujumbura where issues of bilateral, regional and global importance were discussed. Burundi actively participated at the Ministerial level in both the editions of the VOGSS.

Eswatini

At the invitation of the Chief Justice of India, Chief Justice of Eswatini Bheki Maphalala, visited India from 27-30 November to participate at the 1st Regional Conference on Access to Legal Aid: Strengthening Access to Justice in the Global South.

Minister of Economic Planning & Development, Dr. Tambo Gina, led a three-member Eswatini delegation for 18th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave held on 14-16 June in New Delhi. Dr. Tambo Gina met the Secretary (ER) and senior officials of EXIM Bank on the sidelines of the Conclave.

Major General Sisusa Monusukaphi Dlamini represented the Army Commander of the Umbutfo Eswatini Defence Force at the Army Chiefs' Conclave held at Pune from 27-31 March on the side lines of AFINDEX 2023. Maj Thokozani German Dlamini and Lt. Col. Sifiso Mel'Sizwe Mtsetfwa took part in AFINDEX as Observers from Eswatini.

Ethiopia

The year 2023 marked 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Ethiopia. Several initiatives were taken to commemorate this milestone, including the visit of a Parliamentary delegation of 50 members from Ethiopia from 20-24 February who attended a training program at PRIDE.

Ethiopia participated in both the editions of the VOGSS, including the address of Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed in the Inaugural Leaders' Session of the 2nd VOGSS on 17 November.

The Prime Minister met Prime Minister of Ethiopia Dr. Abiy Ahmed Ali in Johannesburg on 24 August, on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit. Both leaders held productive discussions on key areas including development partnership and capacity building, trade and investment, defence cooperation, ICT, agriculture, skilling of youth and people-to-people linkages. Prime Minister Ahmed thanked Prime Minister for India's support for Ethiopia to join the BRICS family and felicitated Prime Minister on the success of Chandrayaan mission, terming it as a moment of pride and inspiration for Ethiopia and the Global South.



Prime Minister of Ethiopia Abiy Ahmed Ali met Prime Minister on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, August 2023

EAM visited Addis Ababa on 13 April and met the Ethiopian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. They discussed bilateral relations, developments in the region and shared views on our strong multilateral cooperation including in the African Union and the United Nations. EAM also had a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister Ahmed on 14 April.

Pan African Parliament's Acting President Dr. Ashebir Gayo attended the G20 Speakers Summit in New Delhi on 13-14 October. Dr. Gayo held discussions with the Speaker on the sidelines of the Summit.

The 6th round of Joint Trade Committee meeting at the level of Joint Secretary was held in Addis Ababa on 06 and 07 November. The Ethiopian Minister of Trade and Regional Integration addressed the inaugural session. Both sides did a comprehensive review of their bilateral trade and acknowledged the huge potential for expansion and diversification of the trade basket. They agreed to cooperate in standardisation and quality assurance, financial, pharmaceutical, automobile, renewable energy, agriculture and food processing sectors.

Ethiopia supported some of India's global initiatives: President of Ethiopia Sahle-Work Zewde supported India's millet promotion initiative by sending a video message on the importance of Millets for the International Conference on Millets on 18 March. Ethiopia joined the initiative of 'International Big Cats Alliance' on 20 March.



President of Kenya William Samoei Ruto was accorded a ceremonial welcome by Hon'ble President and the Prime Minister at the Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi during his state visit, December 2023

Kenya

President of the Republic of Kenya, Dr. William Samoei Ruto paid a State visit to India from 04-06 December, and was accompanied by a high-level official delegation. It was President Ruto's first visit to India in his present capacity. During his stay in New Delhi, he met the President and was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan on 05 December. President Ruto held detailed discussions with the Prime Minister. A State Banquet was hosted by the President.

President Ruto also participated in a business and investment event in New Delhi. During the visit five MoUs were signed, LoC of USD 250 million was offered, a joint vision statement on maritime cooperation was adopted, and several announcements including Kenya's decision to join the ISA and GBA as well as a grant of LoC by India of USD 250 million. President Ruto also participated in the Inaugural Leaders' session of the 2nd edition of the VOGSS on 17 November.

MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Kenya from 22-23 November. A 30-member business delegation from India also accompanied the MoS for the visit. During the visit MoS (VM) called on the top leadership of the country and also co-chaired an India-Kenya Business Meet organised in association with the Government of Kenya during which India-Kenya Business Council was launched. He met several Ministers and other functionaries of the

Government of Kenya. MoS (VM) paid a visit to the University of Nairobi and interacted with the Kenyans who have studied in India. MoS (VM) also inaugurated an exhibition on the role of the Indian Soldiers in East Africa during World War I and also attended a community event organised in his honour.

The Speaker of Lok Sabha led a Parliamentary delegation to Kenya from 16-18 January. The delegation had interactions with the Kenyan Parliamentarians led by the Speakers of National Assembly and Senate of Kenya as well as with the top leadership of Kenya. Speaker also had interactions with the Indian diaspora and Kenyans who have studied in India.

Chief Justice of Kenya, Martha Koome visited India under the Distinguished Visitors' Programme of ICCR during March. During her visit she paid a courtesy call on the President of India and also met the MoS Ministry of Law & Justice of India. She joined the Constitution bench hearing on pleas related to the Maharashtra political crisis in the Supreme Court of India on invitation of the Chief Justice of India. The Chief Justice of India lauded Justice Koome's wealth of knowledge in constitutional law and singled out Koome's decision in March 2022, on the application of the basic structure doctrine in Kenya.

Cabinet Secretary (Minister) for Information, Communication and the Digital Economy Eliud Owalo, visited India from 12-14 June and attended the Global Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI)

Summit on the sidelines of the G20 Digital Economy Working Group (DEWG) in Pune. This has led to signing of a MoU on DPI during the visit of President Ruto to India in December.

Kenya's Defence Minister Aden Duale visited India from 28-31 August. A MoU between Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and Kenya Shipyard Ltd was signed during the visit. India announced the gifting of a CT Scan Machine and Parachutes to Kenya during the visit.

First shipment of Kenyan Avocado was flagged off for the Indian Market on 16 September.

India hosted a six-member delegation from Kenya in March under ICCR's 'Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme'.

Lesotho

India and Lesotho held the 5th round of Joint Bilateral Commission for Cooperation on 02 August in Maseru, Lesotho. The Indian side was led by JS (E&SA) and the Lesotho side was led by Deputy Principal Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Relations Thabang Polycarp Lekhela. The two sides carried out a comprehensive review of the existing bilateral relations, including enhancing cooperation in development partnership, trade and economic relations, energy, agriculture, health, art and culture and consular matters and reviewed the status of MoUs under negotiation.

Malawi

President of Malawi Dr. Lazarus McCarthy Chakwera participated virtually in the Concluding Leaders' Session of the 2nd edition of the VOGSS on 17 November.

A Parliamentary Delegation from Malawi, led by the Speaker of Malawi National Assembly Catherine Gotani Hara, visited India from 30 July-03 August. During the visit, the delegation called on the Hon'ble President and Vice-President, as well as met the Speaker, EAM and the Minister of AYUSH.

Minister of Trade and Industry Simplex Chithyola Banda, led a large delegation including four Ministers for 18th CII-Exim Bank Conclave held on 14-16 June. On the sidelines, the delegation met MoS (VM) on 16 June.

MoS (RRS) met Nancy Tembo, Malawian Minister of Foreign Affairs on the sidelines of 5th United Nations Conference of LDCs in Doha on 07 March.

The Minister of Finance met Malawi Finance Minister Sosten Gwengwe on 10 April in Washington DC on the sidelines of IMF and World Bank Spring meetings.

The 2nd round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Malawi was held in Lilongwe on 04 August. The Indian

side was led by JS (E&SA), and the Malawi side was led by Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bernard H. Sande. Both delegations reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relationship, including political exchanges, development partnership, defence cooperation, trade and economic matters, consular issues and cooperation in areas such as Agriculture, Education, Health, Mines and Minerals, Digital Technology, Renewable Energy, Art and Culture.

India donated immediate disaster relief items like blankets, tarpaulins, milk powder, and 177 tons of essential and anti-cancer medicines to Malawi in the aftermath of Cyclone Freddy in March which killed over 600 people and injured over 1700.

The High Commission of India in partnership with ICRISAT and the Ministry of Agriculture, Government of Malawi hosted a stakeholders' workshop on 27 July in Lilongwe in run-up to the India-Africa International Millets conference.

Under India-Germany-Malawi Triangular Cooperation, 55 Malawian women were trained on women empowerment and food security by National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management (MANAGE), Hyderabad from 13-15 March. First ever Agri-Business incubator for women in Malawi 'AmayiHub' was launched.

Mozambique

President of Mozambique, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi participated in the inaugural session and the concluding session of the 1st and 2nd editions of the virtual VOGSS on 12 January and 17 November respectively.

The Prime Minister met Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Mozambique on 24 August in Johannesburg, on the margins of the 15th BRICS Summit. Both the leaders held productive discussions on ways to further the bilateral ties, including in the areas of parliamentary contacts, defence, counter terrorism, energy, mining, health, trade and investment, capacity building, maritime cooperation and people to people relations. President Nyusi congratulated the Prime Minister on the success of the Chandrayaan mission and also appreciated India's initiative for G20 permanent membership of the African Union.

EAM paid a two-day official visit to Mozambique on 13-15 April. This was the first visit by an Indian EAM to Mozambique since 2010. EAM called on the President of Mozambique, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi and the President of the Assembly of Mozambique, and met the Minister of Transport and Communication and co-chaired the 5th Joint Commission Meeting with the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique during the visit. He virtually inaugurated a bridge over River Buzi constructed as part of a road project by M/s AFCONS under Government of India's concessional line of credit besides undertaking community interaction.



EAM called on President of Mozambique Filipe Jacinto Nyusi during his official visit in Maputo, April 2023

The Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas, Housing and Urban Affairs of India visited Mozambique from 28-30 October. He visited the under-construction LNG plant at the Afungi Basin in northern Mozambique to be operated by M/s Total Energies Ltd in which Indian PSUs—OVL, BPRL and OIL—have the largest stakes. This was the first visit of any foreign dignitary to the LNG project that has been stalled on account of ongoing terrorism in the region. The Minister also called on the President of Mozambique, and met the Minister of Economy and Finance and the Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy of Mozambique.

Namibia

EAM visited Namibia on 04-06 June. This was the first ever visit by an Indian EAM to Namibia. During his visit, EAM called on the President of Namibia, held discussions with his counterpart Dr. Netumbo Nandi Ndaitwah, DPM and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation and also co-chaired the inaugural session of the India-Namibia Joint Commission; formally inaugurated the India-Namibia Centre of Excellence in Information Technology held community interactions; met representatives from the Indian diamond cutting and polishing establishments in Namibia.

Rwanda

Dr. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda visited India on 07 and 08 December. During the visit, EAM, co-chaired delegation level talks with Minister Biruta on 07 December. Both leaders reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. They exchanged views on various international issues and appreciated the inclusion of the African Union in G20.

An Entrepreneurship Development Centre built by India was handed over to the Government of Rwanda on 14 November.

South Africa

The Prime Minister met the President of South Africa, Cyril Ramaphosa, on 23 August in Johannesburg on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit. Both leaders reviewed the progress made in bilateral relations between the two countries and expressed satisfaction at the progress achieved in various fields including defence, agriculture, trade and investment, health, conservation and people to people ties. President Ramaphosa expressed full support for India's G20 presidency and appreciated India's initiative for giving the African Union full membership of G20.



Prime Minister held talks with President of South Africa Cyril Ramaphosa on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, August 2023

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa undertook a working visit to New Delhi to participate in the G20 Leaders' Summit on 09 and 10 September. He was accompanied by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Dr. Naledi Pandor and G20 Sherpa Zane Dangor. The South African President welcomed membership of the African Union (AU) in the G20 and appreciated India's Presidency in hosting an inclusive summit and placing the interest of the Global South firmly on the agenda.

EAM visited South Africa from 31 May-04 June, to participate in the BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting and held a bilateral meeting with the South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Dr Naledi Pandor. He also called on South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in Cape Town. On 21 November, EAM attended the BRICS Extraordinary Virtual summit on the Middle East - Situation in Gaza hosted by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa. EAM again interacted with Minister Pandor as part of the IBSA Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 22 September on the sidelines of 78th UNGA in New York.

South African Minister of International Relations and Cooperation Dr. Naledi Pandor visited India from 01-04 March to attend the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting (01 and 02 March) and participate in the Raisina Dialogue on 03 and 04 March in New Delhi. Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of South Africa, Dr Naledi Pandor, represented South Africa at the virtual G20 Leaders' Summit on 22 November.

During South Africa's BRICS Presidency, Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha led a Parliamentary delegation comprising MPs Sumitra Balmik and Indra Hung Subba to South Africa and participated in the 9th BRICS Parliamentary Forum in Johannesburg, from 27-29 September. He chaired a session on 'Climate Change and Legislative Mobilisation in BRICS Countries'. The National Security Advisor visited South Africa from 23-25 July, to attend the BRICS NSA Meeting in Johannesburg.

MoS (RRS) visited South Africa from 11-14 July, to attend the 10th Meeting of BRICS Education Ministers. MoS (ML) visited South Africa from 19-22 July, to participate in the BRICS Ministers of Culture Meeting. Minister of State for Labour and Employment and Petroleum and Natural Gas, visited Durban from 25 September-01 October to attend BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting and bilaterally met his South African counterpart. Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, and Home Affairs visited Durban from 21-23 June, to attend BRICS Sports Ministerial Meeting.

During India's G20 Presidency, Minister of Finance of South Africa, Enoch Godongwana participated in the 1st Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) Meetings on 24 and 25 February in Bengaluru and 2nd FMCBG in Washington DC on 12 and 13 April. Minister of Tourism of South Africa Patricia

de Lille, participated in the G20 Tourism Ministers Meeting on 21 and 22 June in Goa. Minister of Basic Education of South Africa, Matsie Angelina Motshekga participated in the G20 Education Ministers Meeting on 22 June in Pune. Minister of Labour and Employment of South Africa TW Nxesi, participated in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting on 21 July in Indore. Minister of Mineral Resources and Energy, Gwede Mantashe participated in the Energy Ministers Meeting on 22 July in Goa. Minister of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment of South Africa Barbara Creecy participated in the G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministers Meeting on 28 July in Chennai. Minister of Health of South Africa Dr Joe Phaahla participated in the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting on 18 and 19 August in Gandhinagar. Minister of Communications and Digital Technologies of South Africa Mondli Gungubele participated in the Digital Economy Ministers Meeting on 19 August in Bengaluru.

Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Land Reform and Rural Development Mcebisi Skwatsha, attended the G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting on 17 June in Hyderabad; Deputy Minister of Public Service and Administration Dr. Chana Pilane Majeke, participated in the G20 Anti-Corruption Ministerial Meeting on 12 August in Kolkata; and Deputy Minister of Trade, Industry and Competition Ms Nomalungelo Gina, attended the Trade & Investment Ministers Meeting on 24 and 25 August in Jaipur.

The 13th Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) on Science, Technology and Innovation Cooperation between India and South Africa was held on 12 July in New Delhi.

A Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the Reintroduction of Cheetah in India was signed between the Republic of India and South Africa on 17 January. In terms of the agreement, an initial batch of 12 cheetahs were flown from South Africa to Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh, India, in February.

Tanzania

Tanzania-India relations scaled new heights with bilateral relations being elevated to a Strategic Partnership; bilateral trade crossing USD 6 billion mark at USD 6.4 billion in 2022-2023, successful 10th JCM, State Visit of President of Tanzania to India, visits of Speaker, Lok Sabha, EAM, MoS (VM) to Tanzania, remarkable achievements in defence cooperation and setting up of IIT Madras Zanzibar campus.

President of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan, visited India from 08-10 October accompanied by Ministers and a large business delegation. President Samia Suluhu Hassan was accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourt of Rashtrapati Bhawan and the Hon'ble President hosted a state banquet in her honour. President Samia Suluhu Hassan had a detailed bilateral dialogue



President of Tanzania Samia Suluhu Hassan met the Prime Minister during her state visit in New Delhi, October 2023

with the Prime Minister and also participated in a business and investment forum in New Delhi on 10 October. A Presidential visit from Tanzania took place after a span of over eight years. The visit further invigorated and strengthened the historic and friendly relations between India and Tanzania. The President also participated in the Inaugural Leaders' session of the 2nd VOGSS on 17 November.

EAM paid an official visit to Tanzania from 05-08 July. He called on the President of Tanzania Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan and met other Ministers of Tanzania. He co-chaired the 10th Joint Commission Meeting with Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr. Stergomena Tax to review various aspects of bilateral cooperation. During the visit, among other things, he witnessed the signing of a MoU for setting up the IIT Madras campus in Zanzibar—the first IIT campus abroad and attended a deck reception onboard INS Trishul with the President of Zanzibar Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi.

MoS (RRS) met Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and EAC Amb Mbarouk Nassoro Mbarouk on the sidelines of the 5th United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) in Doha on 07 March. They reviewed bilateral & multilateral development cooperation with Tanzania.

MoS (VM) paid an official visit to Tanzania and Kenya from 20-21 November. A 30-member business delegation from India also accompanied MoS for the visit. MoS first visited Zanzibar and called on the President Hussein Ali Mwinyi and held discussions with other Ministers. He also visited the Campus of IIT Madras that has been set up in Zanzibar. He travelled to Dar-es-Salaam

for bilateral discussions with the leadership of Tanzania. He chaired a business meeting along with his Tanzanian counterpart that brought together the Indian business delegation with their Tanzanian counterparts with the objective of increasing bilateral trade and investment flows between the two countries. MoS also interacted with the Indian community in Dar-es-Salaam.

Other outgoing visits to Tanzania saw the Speaker, Lok Sabha, leading a 12-member delegation to Tanzania from 18-21 January at the invitation of the Speaker of National Assembly of Tanzania. During the visit, the delegation held meetings with Speaker of National Assembly Dr. Tulia Ackson; Speaker House of Representatives of Zanzibar Zubeir Ali Maulid; Prime Minister of Tanzania Kassim Majaliwa Majaliwa; and Foreign Minister Dr. Stergomena Tax. The Speaker also paid respects to fallen Indian soldiers at Commonwealth War Graves in Dar-es-Salaam; interacted with Tanzanian alumni of Indian institutes and Indian diaspora in separate events; attended a business event hosted by Tanzania-India Business Forum; and also visited Serengeti National Park.

Minister of State in the President's Office for Public Service Management and Good Governance Jenista Mhagama visited India from 03-07 January. During the visit, she met MoS DoPT on 04 January; MoS MeitY on 06 January; and MoS (VM) 07 January. She also visited the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances and Indian Institute of Public Administration. The Deputy Foreign Minister of Tanzania read out Foreign Minister's speech at Foreign Ministers' session, of the 1st VOGSS presided by EAM, on 13 January.

Vice-President of Tanzania Dr. Philip Mpango, inaugurated the Extension of the Lake Victoria Pipeline Water Supply Project to the town and villages of Tinde on 19 January. President Hassan inaugurated the Extension of the Lake Victoria Pipeline Water Supply Project to the town and villages of Tinde and Shelui on 17 October. The project funded by Government of India LoC is expected to benefit 136,000 residents of Tinde and Shelui towns and the adjacent villages.

On 06 November, the first offshore IIT campus, IIT Madras Zanzibar Campus, was inaugurated in the presence of President Hussein Ali Mwinyi of Zanzibar. The event was attended by notable figures, including the Speaker and Chief Justice of Zanzibar, JS (E&SA) representing the Government of India, the High Commissioner of India to Tanzania, the Director-in-charge of IITM Zanzibar Campus, and both current and former directors of IIT Madras. President Mwinyi, during the ceremony, announced the groundbreaking for a 250-acre permanent campus, assuring its completion by October 2025. Currently, the institute offers BS and MTech programs in Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, with plans to introduce more academic programs in the coming year. The inaugural class of IITM Zanzibar commenced on 24 October, comprising 45 students—24 Indians, 20 Tanzanians, and 1 Nepalese, with 40% of the batch being female students.

Defence and maritime cooperation between India and Tanzania grew with the 2nd Defexpo held in Dar-es-Salaam on 02 October, with participation of 19 Indian defence companies. The 2nd

Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting was organised in Arusha on 28 and 29 June. The 1st joint Tanzanian EEZ surveillance by the Indian and Tanzanian Navy was held on 09 July. Defence cooperation was further strengthened by the visit of COAS and NDC delegation to Tanzania and several other defence delegations.

Uganda

EAM met FM of Uganda General Jeje Ogonda on the sidelines of the 78th UNGA in New York on 23 September. EAM offered India's full support to Uganda's upcoming NAM and G77 Presidencies.

A MoU for setting up of the first off-shore campus of National Forensic Science University of India in Uganda was signed on 12 April. In December, India gifted 10 tractors, 5 ambulances, 10 buses and NAM members' country flags for the upcoming NAM Summit.

Zambia

Speaker of National Assembly of Zambia Nelly Butete Mutti, led a 9-member delegation to India for an orientation visit to Lok Sabha from 01-05 February. She called on the Hon'ble President, Vice-President and also met the Speaker of Lok Sabha and EAM.



EAM met Foreign Minister of Uganda General Jeje Ogonda on the sidelines of the 78th UNGA in New York, September 2023

A fourteen-member delegation led by Defence Minister Ambrose Lwiji Lufuma attended Aero India held in Bengaluru from 13-17 February. Defence Minister Ambrose Lwiji Lufuma held a bilateral meeting with Raksha Mantri on the sidelines of Aero India 2023.

Minister of Agriculture of Zambia Reuben Mtolo Phiri, attended the Global Millets Conference held in New Delhi on 18 March 2023. During the visit, Phiri held a bilateral meeting with the Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The 3rd India-Zambia Foreign Office Consultations was held on 24 and 25 May in New Delhi. The Indian side was led by JS (E&SA) and the Zambian side was led by the Permanent Secretary (IRC) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Zambia, Ambassador Isabelle M.M. Lemba.

Twenty Zambian diplomats attended a Special Course conducted by SSIFS from 17-28 April.

A MoU on establishment of a Chair of Indian Studies at University of Zambia was signed on 03 April.

Zimbabwe

The Prime Minister sent a congratulatory letter to President E.D. Mnangagwa, following his re-election in August.

The relations were bolstered by high-level visits from both sides. Vice-President Gen (Retd.) CGDN Chiwenga led the

Zimbabwean delegation to the CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India Africa Growth Partnership in June. He was accompanied by Information Minister, Monica Mutsvangwa, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Dr. David Musabayana, Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, Raj Modi, and Deputy Minister of Finance, C. Chiduwa. During the visit, Vice-President Chiwenga met the Vice-President. M/S RITES and the National Railways of Zimbabwe signed an agreement on the sidelines of the Conclave on cooperation in the railway sector, including procurement of wagons and locomotives from India.

MoS (RRS), met Foreign Minister Frederick Shava on 07 March on the sidelines of the UN Conference of the Least Developed Countries in Doha. Deputy Minister Dr. David Musabayana met MoS (VM) on 16 June and discussed bilateral matters.

Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce, Raj Modi, visited India in January to attend the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs, Oppah Muchinguri Kashiri, visited India and met Raksha Mantri; and attended Aero India, held from 13-17 February.

Minister of Energy and Power Development Zhemu Soda, visited India in February and attended ELECRAMA, the exhibition of electrical and allied electronics equipment and technology. During the visit, he met the MoS (VM), Minister of Power, and Director General, International Solar Alliance.

CHAPTER

8

Europe & the European Union

Central Europe

Albania

India-Albania relations are positive, friendly, and forward-looking and both countries also cooperate in multilateral forums. Deputy Minister of Education and Sports of Albania Albana Tole participated virtually in the 2nd virtual Voice of Global South Summit held on 17 November.

The 3rd India-Albania Foreign Office Consultations were held on 23 March in New Delhi.

The then Deputy Minister of Tourism and Environment of Albania Ornela Cuci visited India under ICCR's Important Visitor's Programme from 30 September-08 October. An International Film Festival was held in Tirana where six movies directed by the renowned Indian filmmaker Satyajit Ray were screened during 24-28 September. Four young leaders from Albania including a Member of Parliament visited India to participate in ICCR's Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme from 17-26 August.

Austria

India and Austria have always had close relations. India and Austria entered the 75th Year of diplomatic relations in November. EAM visited Austria from 31 December 2022 to 03 January 2023 on the invitation of the Austrian Foreign Minister Alexander Schallenberg. During the visit, Agreements on Gainful Employment of Spouses of Diplomats, Working Holiday Program and Cultural Cooperation were signed on 02 January. Agreements on Migration and Mobility and Visa Waiver on Diplomatic Passports were initiated on 02 January and signed during EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm on 13 May.

Minister for Road, Transport and Highways visited Austria on the invitation of Minister of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology of Albania Leonore Gewessler, to participate in the INTERALPIN 2023 trade fair at Innsbruck from 18-21 April. The Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Housing & Urban Affairs visited Vienna for the 3rd India-OPEC Dialogue on 08-09 November.

The 16th Round of Joint Economic Commission (JEC) was held on 12-13 June in Vienna, while the 3rd round of Consular Dialogue

was held on 23 November. The 1st JWG meeting on Migration and Mobility took place on 01 December and the 7th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held in New Delhi on 30 May.



EAM signed agreements on Migration and Mobility and Visa Waiver on Diplomatic Passports with the Foreign Minister of Austria Alexander Schallenberg in Stockholm, May 2023

Bosnia and Herzegovina

India's relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to be steady during the year. Diplomatic relations between the two countries were established in 1995. EAM met Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina Elmedin Konakovic on the sidelines of the 78th session of the UNGA in New York on 24 September.

Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations of Bosnia and Herzegovina Ljiljana Lovric participated in the Commerce and Trade Ministers' session of the 1st Voice of Global South Summit held virtually on 12 and 13 January.

Bulgaria

EAM met with the President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev in Vienna on 01 January. EAM met with the caretaker Foreign Minister of Bulgaria Ivan Kondov on the sidelines of the EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum held in Stockholm on 13 May.

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Bulgaria from 30 November - 01 December.

There were two incoming bilateral visits during the year. An official delegation led by the caretaker Deputy Minister of Defence of Bulgaria Katerina Gramatikova participated in the 14th edition of 'Aero India 2023' exhibition held in Bangalore from 13-17 February. Two former Members of the National Assembly of the Republic of Bulgaria participated in the 9th batch of Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme organised by ICCR from 09-19 April. The MoU between the Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski regarding the Hindi Chair was renewed for fostering continued academic and cultural exchanges.

A business delegation from the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO) comprising 35 Indian companies visited Bulgaria from 17-26 March.

Croatia

Bilateral relations between India and Croatia strengthened further with several first-ever visits to India from Croatia. The then President of Croatia Kolinda Grabar Kitarovic visited India in March under the ICCR's Distinguished Visitors Programme; the then Minister of Science & Technology Dragan Primorac's visit entailed exploring cooperation opportunities in healthcare technologies; Mayor of Rijeka Marko Filipović and Member of Parliament Domagoj Hajdukovic participated in ICCR's Gen Next Democracy Network Programme.

In keeping with outgoing visits, MoS (ML) visited Croatia twice, first in April on a bilateral visit and then in July to participate in the prestigious Dubrovnik Forum.

President of ICCR visited Dubrovnik to participate in the 10th Dubrovnik International conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas (DICSEP) in August.

Strengthening our cultural cooperation further, for the first time a 16-member group "Kumpanjija" from Croatian island of Korcula participated in ICCR's International Folkloric Festival in Delhi and Meghalaya.

Cyprus

EAM had a meeting with Foreign Minister of Cyprus Constantinos Kombos on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum

in Stockholm on 13 May 2023. He also met Foreign Minister Kombos on 23 September on the sidelines of 78th UNGA.

The Minister of State for Ports, Shipping and Waterways visited Cyprus from 08-11 October to participate in the "Cyprus Maritime 2023 Conference".

The Chief of Defence Staff had a telephone conversation with the Chief of National Guard of Cyprus on 14 August.

Czech Republic

The Bilateral relations remain robust between India and the Czech Republic. Minister of Foreign Affairs Jan Lipavsky, led a delegation comprising Parliamentarians, business persons and government officials on an official visit from 26 February-01 March. He met with EAM, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Secretary of Defence. Foreign Affairs Minister Lipavsky participated in the India-Europe Business and Sustainability Conclave.

The Minister of Road Transport and Highways visited Prague on an official tour on 01-03 October. He met with Transport Minister of the Czech Republic Martin Kupka, and participated in the 27th World Road Congress.

Minister of Industry and Trade Jozef Sikela visited India from 04-07 December. He participated in the 12th meeting of the Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation (JCEC) and held bilateral meetings with the Minister of Commerce & Industry; Minister of Road Transport & Highways; Minister for Civil Aviation & Steel and Minister of Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs.

Denmark

Bilateral relations between India and Denmark continued to strengthen during the year. India-Denmark Green Strategic Partnership got a boost during the year with an official visit by the Crown Prince Frederik André Henrik Christian and the Crown Princess Mary Elizabeth to India from 26 February-02 March. They were accompanied by Minister for Foreign Affairs Lars Lokke Rasmussen and Minister for Climate, Energy and Utilities Lars Aagaard along with a high-level business delegation. The Prime Minister held a telephonic talk with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on 20 April.

A new chapter opened in growing relations with Faroe Islands and Greenland. Prime Minister of Faroe Islands Aksel V. Johannesen, visited India from 21-23 November to participate in the 2nd India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave held in New Delhi.

Minister for Foreign Affairs Lars Lokke Rasmussen participated in the Raisina Dialogue 2023 in New Delhi. Danish Parliamentary Standing Committee for European Affairs led by Danish MP Niels Fleming Hansen visited India from 17-20 April.

Denmark engaged with India's G20 Presidency by participating in the Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group. Danish Minister for Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Dan Jorgensen visited India in July to participate in the G20 Energy Ministers' Meeting, Environment and Climate Ministers' Meet and Clean Energy Ministerial-Mission Innovation Summit in Goa. He also met the Minister of New and Renewable Energy and the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change. India participated in the Copenhagen Climate Ministerial held from 20-21 March in Copenhagen.

The 7th Round of FOCs was held on 01 April in Copenhagen. Secretary (West), also participated in the first consultation meeting held on the Ukrainian Peace Formula on 24 June in Copenhagen. India and Denmark held two rounds of consultations for signing a Partnership Agreement on Migration and Mobility in New Delhi (17 April) and Copenhagen (03 July).

Trade, Commerce and Economic Cooperation witnessed increased interactions by business delegation visits led by trade promotion councils (CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, NASSCOM) and state ministers. Development Cooperation and Global Climate Policy Minister Dan Jorgensen participated in the Uttar Pradesh Global Investors Summit. Danish businesses also participated in the Wind Energy India 2023 in Chennai, World Food India in New Delhi and Indus Food in Hyderabad. Denmark was one of the partner countries at the GMIS 2023 held in October in Mumbai. India's growing significance in the changing geopolitics, increased business opportunities, cultural heritage & Incredible India's tourist attractions were showcased at the high-profile "Folkemødet Democracy Festival" and the "Danish Travel Fair" held in Bornholm and Herning.

Cultural exchanges have also been invigorated. Launch of Air India direct flight operations between India and Denmark three to four times a week, further strengthened people-to-people exchanges and intense business interactions. A joint exhibition "Silver Treasures from India and Denmark" was inaugurated by Crown Prince Frederik and Crown Princess Mary at the National Museum in February.

Estonia

India's relations with Estonia continued to strengthen during the year. India and Estonia on 25 January formalised the Joint Declaration of Intent (JDI) extending the current MoU for Cooperation in Cyber Security for another period of three years, with the provision of further extension. Estonian Vice Minister for Economic and Development Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Mariin Ratnik visited India on 22-23 November to participate in the 2nd edition of CII India Nordic-Baltic Business Conclave in New Delhi.

An agreement was signed on 10 February between Rashtriya Raksha University (RRU), Gandhinagar and CybExer Technologies in furtherance of bilateral MoU on Cooperation in the areas of Cyber Security.

Finland

India's relations with Finland continued its positive trajectory in 2023, characterised by ministerial visits, and convergence in Science and Technology, Renewable Energy, Education and Startups and emerging areas of technology like Quantum Computing, 5G/6G and Artificial Intelligence. The new Consulate of Finland in Mumbai became operational in January.

Minister for Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Skinnari visited New Delhi and Mumbai from 08-10 February leading a business delegation to strengthen the commercial and economic cooperation between Finland and India. Minister of Education Anna-Maja Henriksson visited India on 16-20 October to explore opportunities for collaboration in higher education and vocational education between India and Finland.

A group of nine MPs from the Environment Committee of the Finnish Parliament visited Delhi and Mumbai from 19-26 November to explore bilateral opportunities in green transition and clean technology. Minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade Ville Tavio visited India to participate in the

2nd India-Nordic-Baltic Business Conclave from 22-23 November in New Delhi. Startup India led an official Indian participation with 26 Indian Startup companies at SLUSH 2023 held from 29 November-01 December.

The 12th India-Finland Foreign Office Consultations were held in New Delhi on 01 November.

A 14-member delegation from National Defence College of India was on a study-tour to Finland from 05-09 June.

Greece

India's close and friendly relations with Greece continued to grow steadily in 2023. Bilateral relations between India and Greece have been traditionally long standing, warm and friendly marked by consistent support to each other on issues of core national interest. The bilateral relations elevated to Strategic partnership after the visit of the Prime Minister to Greece in August.

On 25 August, the Prime Minister paid an official visit to Greece, the first by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years. A MoU on Agriculture Cooperation between India and Greece was signed during the visit of the Prime Minister. Furthermore, the leaders agreed to double bilateral trade by 2030. During the visit the Prime Minister was awarded the Grand Cross of the Order of Honour by Greek President Katerina N Sakellariopoulou.



EAM participated in the 2nd edition of CII India Nordic-Baltic Business Conclave held in New Delhi, November 2023



Prime Minister received the Grand Cross of the Order of Honour by the President of Greece Katerina N. Sakellariopoulou in Athens, August 2023

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Greece from 30-31 January. 13th India-Greece Foreign Office Consultations were held in Athens on 14 June.

Minister of Rural Development and Food of Greece Eleftherios Avgenakis visited India in November to participate in the 'World Food India (WFI) 2023'. During the visit, he also met with the Minister of Commerce and Industry and Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Issues related to developing partnerships in agri-food products between Greece and India were discussed.

Indian Air Force participated in the multinational air exercise INIOCHOS-23 hosted by the Hellenic Air Force from 24 April to 04 May. Hellenic Air Force Chief Lt. General T. Bourolas paid an official visit to India from 12-15 June. During his visit, he met the Chief of Defence Staff, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Air Staff and Asst. Chief of Naval Staff. The INS Chennai naval ship of the Indian Navy visited Souda Bay, Crete from 27-29 July and undertook a Passage Exercise with the Hellenic Naval Ship Nikiforos Fokas in the Aegean Sea. On 16 September, INS Sumedha naval ship undertook a maritime partnership exercise with the Hellenic Navy ship HS Elli in the Mediterranean Sea.

Hungary

India's friendly relations with Hungary continued to grow steadily throughout the year. The year 2023 marked 75

years of diplomatic relations between India and Hungary, first established in 1948.

Balázs Orbán, the Political Director of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and MP, participated in the Raisina Dialogue on 03-04 March. Deputy Speaker of Hungarian National Assembly Istvan Jakab accompanied by Director of Foreign Relations and State Secretary Péter Sárdi, and Rector MATE Agricultural University Csaba Gyuricza visited India during 05-12 February.

The First India-Hungary Joint Working Group constituted for the implementation of the MoU in the field of water management held a meeting in the Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation at New Delhi on 25-27 April. A Working Programme plan for Bilateral Cooperation for the period 2023-2025 was signed during the event.

The Holy See

India and the Holy See have friendly relations dating back to the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1948.

Iceland

The relationship between India and Iceland continues to be warm and friendly. The 3rd Foreign Office Consultations were held on 06 March. A Joint Task Force on Geo-Thermal energy cooperation held its meeting in March in New Delhi. The 2nd



EAM met the then Foreign Minister of Latvia Edgars Rinkēvičs on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm, May 2023

Meeting of the India-Iceland Joint Working Group on Fisheries was held on 22 February in a virtual mode.

Latvia

India-Latvia relations continued to be steady during the year. There is a significant amount of interest in Indian culture, Yoga, and Ayurveda among the people of Latvia.

EAM had a bilateral meeting with the then Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs in Stockholm in May on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm.

Parliamentary State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Gunda Reire participated in the Raisina Dialogue in March held in New Delhi. Parliamentary Secretary in the Ministry of Economics Jurgis Miežainis participated in the second edition of the CII India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave held on 22-23 November in New Delhi.

Lithuania

India and Lithuania share a common link through language. Lithuanian is widely acknowledged as being the language grammatically closest to Sanskrit and signifies close ancient links. Bilateral relations between India and Lithuania are vibrant and growing. India opened its Embassy in Lithuania in Vilnius on 31 March. On the sidelines of the EU-Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Sweden in May, EAM held a meeting with Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis. The Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs Egidijus Meilūnas visited India to co-chair the 9th Foreign

Office Consultations held in New Delhi on 21 November. He also participated in the 2nd CII India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave from 22-23 November in New Delhi.

Vice Minister of Economy and Innovation of Lithuania Karolis Zemaitis visited Hyderabad and New Delhi from 24-28 February. He participated in the BioAsia 2023 conference.

The Principality of Liechtenstein

The bilateral relations between India and the Principality of Liechtenstein continued to be smooth. The Indian Embassy in Berne is concurrently accredited to the Principality of Liechtenstein and maintains regular contact with political and business leaders in the Indian Diaspora in the Principality.

Malta

High-level engagement between India and Malta continued in 2023. The close and friendly relations between India and Malta continued to gain momentum during the year with exchange of high-level visits. Malta's Minister of Foreign and European Affairs and Trade Ian Borg, accompanied by senior officials of the Malta Government, visited India from 06-08 October. Both sides held the 3rd round of Foreign Office Consultations on 29 September in New Delhi.

Minister of Economy, European Funds and Land Silvio Schembri took part in the Special Plenary Session of the CII India-Europe Business and Sustainability Conclave on 01 March in New Delhi.

Malta sent the youngest MP from the ruling Labour Party Omar Farrugia to India to join 28 delegates from nine democracies for ICCR's 10th batch of Gen Next Democracy Network Programme held in India during 15-24 May. Chairperson of Confederation of Young Leaders, New Delhi visited Malta in May and called on the President of Malta, Tourism Minister and Energy Minister. Consultations on UN issues took place in Valletta on 19 January between India and Malta soon after India finished its UNSC term in December 2022 and Malta started its two-year UNSC term in January 2023.

ICCR sponsored Indian musical band 'Astitva' participated at the Destination North festival in September in the first visit by a cultural troupe from India to Malta in many years. The band presented Sufi, folk and Bollywood songs at the first edition of Gozo Theatre Festival in Malta's sister island on 24 September.

Moldova

On 28 December 1991, India recognized Moldova and established diplomatic ties on 20 March 1992. The relationship between India and Moldova is amicable and cordial.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture & Food Industry of Moldova Vladimir Bolea visited India from 31 July-01 August 2023. He met the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, and Secretary (West). Moldovan Environment Minister Iordanov Iordanca-Rodica participated online in the 1st Voice of South Summit in January. Three Members of Parliament from Moldova visited India to participate in ICCR's Gen-Next Democracy Network Programme from 17-26 August.

The State Secretary from the Ministry of Finance of Moldova Ion Gumene participated in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November. The Republic of Moldova opened its Embassy in New Delhi in June.

North Macedonia

The friendly and cordial relations between India and North Macedonia continued in the year 2023. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of North Macedonia visited India from 31 August-01 September. Kaja Shukova, Minister for Environment and Physical Planning of North Macedonia participated in the virtual Environment Ministers' session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held on 17 November. Earlier, the Minister for Environment and Physical Planning Naser Nuredini participated in the Environment Ministers' Session of the 1st Voice of the Global South Summit held on 12 January.

MoS (ML) visited North Macedonia from 10-11 July. During the visit, she called on the President of the National Assembly of the Republic of North Macedonia Talat Xhaferi.

Norway

The year witnessed a number of interactions and exchange of visits at Parliamentary, Ministerial, official, and academic levels, as well as signing of MoUs between India and Norway. A delegation from the Norwegian Parliament's Standing Committee on Energy and Environment, led by Marianne Sivertsen Naess, Committee Chair, visited India from 14-22 January to learn about the growing energy sector. Minister of Trade & Industry Jan Christian Vestre visited India along with a business delegation from 08-10 February. Jan Christian Vestre visited India again on 26 April and met the Minister of Commerce & Industry; the discussions centred on India-EFTA TEPA (Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement) negotiations.

The EFTA Parliamentary Committee, composed of ten parliamentarians from all EFTA countries, led by Trine Lise Sundnes (Norwegian Parliament) visited India from 17-21 April to give impetus to the negotiations on India-EFTA TEPA.

The Minister of Earth Sciences visited Norway from 11-17 June, to enhance bilateral engagement in the field of Higher Education, Arctic and Polar research. Minister of Earth Sciences participated as the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the Conference "Sustainable Pathways: Norway-India Collaboration in Research, Education and Innovation", which also saw the participation of the Minister of Foreign Affairs Anniken Huitfeldt, and Minister of Research & Higher Education Ola Borten Moe.

The second and third meetings of the India-Norway Joint Task Force on Energy were held in New Delhi on 09 February and 27 October. During the meeting on 27 October, Ocean Sun (Norwegian company) signed two MoUs on floating solar projects with (i) SJVN Limited and (ii) Anert (Agency for New and Renewable Energy Research & Technology, Kerala).

Joint Secretary (Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways), Chairman of V.O. Chidambaranar Port Authority, Tuticorin, and CMD of Cochin Shipyard Limited visited Norway from 3-11 June and participated in the 'Nor Shipping 2023' exhibition. The Joint Secretary (PAI) visited Norway from 12-15 June and participated in the Oslo Forum Conference. The Minister for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, and MoS for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying Information & Broadcasting, visited Norway from 21-25 August. They participated in the biennial Aqua Nor exhibition in Trondheim and held meetings with Norwegian companies involved in fishing technology, besides meeting Minister of Fisheries & Ocean Policy Bjornar Selnes Skjaeran. A CII Business delegation also visited Norway from 21-24 August and participated in the Aqua Nor exhibition and held meetings with Norwegian companies.

Andreas Motzfeldt Kravik, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway visited India from 22-25 November to participate in the CII India-Nordic-Baltic Business Conclave and the meeting of India-Norway Joint Task Force on Blue

Economy for Sustainable Development. The 6th meeting of the India-Norway Joint Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development was held in New Delhi on 23 November.

Under the ICCR's Important Visitors Programme (IVP), Rev. Pastor Jan Aage Torp visited India from 15-21 January. Under the ICCR's Academic Visitors Programme (AVP), Prof. Michael Rygaard Hansen, Dean, and Prof. Linga Reddy Cenkeramaddi, Department of ICT, Agder University visited India from 19-28 February. Under the AVP, Prof. Olav Gaute Hellesø, Head of Department, and Prof. Balpreet Singh Ahluwalia, Department of Physics and Technology, UiT-the Arctic University of Norway, visited India from 17-26 November.

Knut Arild Hareide, Director General of Shipping and Navigation, Norwegian Maritime Authority, and Ingvar M. Mathisen, Director/CEO, Ports of Norway, participated in the Global Maritime India Summit 2023 held from 17-19 October in Mumbai. On the occasion, three MoUs were signed on 18 October between the Port of Oslo and (i) Indian Ports Associations and (ii) Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority on "Cooperation in Green Port Policies & Technologies" and (iii) Mumbai Port Authority on "Cooperation in Green Port Policies & Technologies, including Green City Development of Designated Port Controlled Areas".

A six-member delegation from the Haryana Legislative Assembly led by the Assembly Speaker visited Norway from 23-27 September on a study tour before participating in the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference in Accra. A six-member delegation from the Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly led by the Assembly Speaker visited Norway from 09-12 October on a study tour following the 66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference held in Accra. Minister of International Development Anne Beathe Tvinningreim visited India from 14-17 November.

Poland

India and Poland share a long-standing friendly relationship, marked by historical cultural linkages.

Marian Banaś, President of the Supreme Audit Office of Poland visited India to participate in the SAI20 Summit, which was held in Goa from 12-14 June. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India led a five-member delegation to Poland from 18-21 August to participate in the 20th Indo-Polish Joint Seminar. Additional Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General of India visited Warsaw from 09-12 October to participate in the 16th meeting of the EUROSAT IT Working Group. President of ICCR visited Poland during 12-13 October to formally confer the distinguished Indologist award. A delegation led by the Director General of ICWA participated in the 9th ICWA-PISM Strategic Dialogue, held in Warsaw from 07-09 November.

Two Polish Indologists were recognized by the Government of India for their outstanding contribution to Indology: (i) Dr. Monika Browarczyk, Head of the South Asian Studies at the

Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań was conferred the Vishwa Hindi Samman award and (ii) Prof. Joanna Jurewicz at the Faculty of Oriental Studies in the University of Warsaw was conferred with ICCR's Distinguished Indologist Award 2022 (also known as Bharat Mitra Samman-Indology). Polish scholars, students and professionals actively participated in various programs conducted by the Ministry and ICCR. Three Polish professionals participated in capacity building training programs in India under the ITEC Program; three students from Poland availed ICCR scholarship for studying Hindi and Sanskrit in India; three Polish students participated in the Hindi Vishwa Yatra organised by ICCR in May and three Polish Indologists were extended the invitation to the Knowledge India Program hosted by ICCR in December.

Indian trade delegations under the aegis of export promotion councils participated in major international exhibitions and fairs in Poland. FIEO coordinated participation of 39 Indian companies in the Tools & Hardware Show, Indian textile companies participated in Fast Textile show, and CAPEXIL coordinated participation of 24 companies in the Stone Fair in Poznań, Poland.

Romania

Bilateral relations between India and Romania are warm and friendly. This year marked 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Romania. EAM met Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu on the sidelines of the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum in Sweden on 13 May 2023. The 5th India-Romania Foreign Office Consultations were held on 12 June in Bucharest. A Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement between India and Romania was signed in March.

Romanian versions of Bhagavad Gita and Upanishad were released in May in Bookfest International Book Fair. 'Fascinating India' Exhibitions were organised in June and July to commemorate the 75th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. A permanent exhibition on India was inaugurated in Dimitrie N. Ghika Museum of Ethnography and Art, Comanesti in September. The book, Ayurveda in Romania Vol. III, was launched in September.

Serbia

Bilateral relations between India-Serbia are robust, multifaceted and are rooted in history and tradition. The deep bond of friendship between India and Serbia, as co-founders of the Non-Aligned Movement, continued in the subsequent decades resulting in close and friendly ties between the two countries.

At the invitation of the President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić, Hon'ble President paid a State Visit to Serbia during 07-09 June 2023. This was her first visit to Europe, and the first-ever visit by a Head of State of either country.

On 17 November, Serbian President Aleksandar Vučić participated virtually in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, hosted by the Prime Minister, in virtual format. The Writers' Association of Serbia honoured eminent Indian poet/author Dr. Jernail Singh Anand during their 60th anniversary celebrations in October.

The 8th Foreign Office Consultations between India and Serbia were held on 03 February in New Delhi.

Slovakia

India and Slovakia have had traditionally warm and cordial relations. EAM met Foreign Minister of Slovakia Rastislav Káčer at Slavkov Format in Vienna, Austria on 02 January 2023. Foreign Minister Rastislav Káčer visited India for Raisina Dialogue in 2023 from 02-04 March. During the visit, an Agreement on Cultural Exchange programme (2023-2026) was signed between India and Slovakia. The Slovak Minister of Economy visited India on 27-29 March for Smart Cities India Expo 2023 held in New Delhi. The sixth round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) was held on 10 February in New Delhi.

The 11th session of the Joint Economic Committee (JEC) was held in Slovakia on 14-15 June. An MoU on cooperation on exchange of technical information & cooperation in the field of Regulation of Safe Use of Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes was signed between India and Slovakia on 25 September in Vienna on the margins of the International Atomic Energy Agency General Conference.

Slovenia

The bilateral relations between India and Slovenia are cordial.

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Tanja Fajon visited India in March 2023 to participate in the Raisina Dialogue. Minister of Higher Education, Science, and Innovation Igor Papic visited India in November to participate in the 8th India Water Impact Summit and 1st Climate Investment and Technology Impact Summit in New Delhi. At the 8th India Water Impact Summit, under its G20 Presidency, MoS (ML) visited Slovenia in April.

India announced the Global River Alliance, of which Slovenia is one of the founding members. 9th India-Slovenia Foreign Office Consultations were held on 06 January in Ljubljana.

Sweden

India and Sweden have had long standing close relations based on common values, strong business, investment, and research and development linkages, and similar approaches to meet global challenges of peace and security, and development. 2023 was a landmark year in India-Sweden relations. It marked 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Sweden. This year also saw India's G20 Presidency and Sweden's Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Several Ministerial visits in 2023 provided momentum for further strengthening of bilateral ties between India and Sweden.

EAM visited Stockholm in May to participate in the EU-Indo Pacific Ministerial Forum. During his visit, EAM met the Prime Minister of Sweden Ulf Kristersson, Foreign Minister Tobias Billström, Defence Minister Pål Jonson, National Security Advisor Henrik Landerholm, and Parliament Speaker Andreas Norlen.



EAM met the Prime Minister of Sweden Ulf Kristersson on the sidelines of 2nd EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in Stockholm, May 2023

The SEB Bank (Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken) held its annual conference for more than 80 CEOs of Nordic companies in Delhi in March. EAM addressed a session at the conference, along with former Prime Minister of Sweden Carl Bildt.

Foreign Minister Tobias Billström visited India to participate in the 8th edition of the Raisina Dialogue from 02-03 March in New Delhi.

CMD SAAB India Technologies Pvt. Ltd. participated at the CEO Round Table Conference during the Aero India 2023. Raksha Mantri visited the SAAB pavilion which displayed Carl Gustaf Mark IV and Gripen aircraft. The Chief of Air Staff, Chief of Army Staff and Vice Chief of Air Staff also visited the SAAB pavilion. All these high-level visits and interactions reflect the priority that Swedish Government and businesses attach to India.

Infrastructure and Housing Minister Andreas Carlson visited India in April and participated at the high-level EU-India Aviation Summit in New Delhi. Finance Minister Elisabeth Svantesson visited India to represent the EU Council of Ministers at the G20 Finance Ministers meeting in Bengaluru from 22-23 February. Minister for Financial Markets Niklas Wykman participated in the 2nd edition of CII India Nordic Baltic Business Conclave held on 22-23 November in New Delhi. A Swedish Parliamentary delegation visited India from 28 August to 06 September.

State Secretary for Foreign Trade Håkan Jevrell visited India twice in March and October. During his visit to India in March, two MoUs were signed: a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) and Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education (STINT) to strengthen cooperation and promote research networking between research institutions from both countries; and a cooperation agreement between Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and Sweden-India Business Council (SIBC).

The first ever EU 27-India Political Directors dialogue was hosted by Sweden in Malmo in April during Sweden's Presidency of the EU Council. An Indian delegation, led by Secretary (West), participated in the event and also had bilateral interactions with State Secretary for Trade Håkan Jevrell and State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Jan Knutsson.

During the year, several high-profile Swedish business delegations visited India. Investment promotion delegations from Tamil Nadu received excellent reception in Sweden. CII-led Indian business delegations from Steel, Cement and Pulp & Paper industries have also visited Sweden.

The 10th edition of the India Sweden Innovation Day held in Sweden on 09 October was jointly inaugurated by the Minister for Science and Technology and the Swedish Minister for Infrastructure and Housing Andreas Carlson.

Switzerland

The year 2023 marked the commemoration of 75 years of the signing of the India-Switzerland friendship treaty. The India-Switzerland friendship treaty was signed in 1948. Switzerland was one of the first countries to sign such a treaty with India.

In November, a five-member delegation of the Foreign Affairs Committee of Swiss Parliament visited India. The Delegation met the Minister of Commerce and Industry and members of the Parliamentary External Affairs Committee. It also took a tour of the New Parliament Building.

On the innovation front, India-Swiss innovation platform was launched on 30 October to harness Swiss innovation capacity developed through a vibrant SMEs ecosystem. 19th Session of India-Switzerland Joint Economic Commission (JEC) meeting was held on 23 November.

The 18th round of India-EFTA TEPA negotiations was held in New Delhi in July. The discussions were primarily centred around the areas of trade in goods, trade in services, rules of origin, intellectual property rights (IPR), and trade and sustainable development. Another comprehensive round of discussions was held in November in Geneva.

During India's presidency of the G20 Summit, Switzerland was invited as a guest country. Switzerland participated for the 8th time in succession in the Financial Track of G20. Issues concerning financial sector regulation are coordinated directly by the Financial Stability Board (FSB), which was also one of the international organisations invited by the Indian Presidency. Switzerland is a permanent member of the FSB and is actively involved in its reform projects. Other than financial tracks, Switzerland participated in anti-corruption working group meetings, and health working group meetings during India's G20 presidency this year.

Türkiye

The President of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited India to participate in the G20 Summit in New Delhi from 09-10 September.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu visited New Delhi on 01-02 March to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Speaker of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye Numan Kurtulmus visited India to participate in the 9th G20 Parliamentary Speaker's Summit (P20) and Parliamentary Forum from 12-14 October.

Turkish Ministers participated in several other G20 Ministerial Meetings in India. Minister of Treasury and Finance Nureddin Nebati participated in the 1st Finance Ministers and Central Bank



Prime Minister met the President of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

Governors (FMCBG) Meeting and 2nd Finance and Central Bank Deputies (FCBD) Meeting on 25 February. Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy and Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Ozgul Ozkan Yavuz participated in the Tourism Ministers Meeting on 21-22 June. Minister of Treasury and Finance Mehmet Simsek participated in the 3rd FMCBG Meeting from 14-18 July. Minister of Labour and Social Security Vedat Isikhan participated in the Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting on 21 July.

Deputy Minister of Energy & Natural Resources Ahmet Berat Conkar participated in the Energy Ministers Meeting on 22 July. Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas participated in the Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment from 02-04 August. Minister of Industry and Technology Mehmet Fatih Kacir and Deputy Minister of Industry and Technology Ahmet Yozgatligil participated in the Digital Economy Working Group Ministers Meeting on 19 August; Minister of Trade Omer Bolat and Deputy Minister of Trade Mustafa Tuzcu participated in the Trade & Investment Ministers Meeting on 25 August. Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism Serdar Cam participated in the Culture Ministers Meeting on 26 August. Minister of Treasury and Finance Mehmet Simsek participated in the 4th FMCBG and FCBD Meeting from 11-13 October.

A Parliamentary delegation from India participated in the 13th Plenary Session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly (APA) on 08 January in Antalya, Türkiye. Director General-Joint Secretary level talks between the two Foreign Ministries were held in Ankara on 16 January. The Turkish side was led by Oguzhan Ertugrul, Director General for South Asia, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Indian side was led by the Joint Secretary (Central Europe).

On 06 February, two devastating earthquakes struck the Southern region of Türkiye, resulting in the loss of over 50,000 lives, directly affecting more than 13.5 million people and widespread damage. The quakes, which measured 7.7 and 7.6 on the Richter scale, struck at a depth of seven kilometres and were felt across eleven provinces, including worst-hit Hatay, Adiyaman, Kahramanmaraş, and Malatya. Following the earthquake, India carried out 'Operation Dost' to provide necessary support in terms of search and rescue efforts as well as medical assistance and humanitarian assistance to people of the Republic of Türkiye. The Turkish leadership expressed appreciation for India's timely assistance.

Europe West

Europe West Division handles relations with 10 countries and 3 Principalities in Europe and also the European Union (EU), out of which 5 countries are part of G20 with Spain being the permanent invitee. India invited the Netherlands as a Guest country during India's G20 Presidency. India's relations with these countries and the EU continued to witness a growing momentum in bilateral exchanges and cooperation.

During 2023, the Vice-President visited London on 05-06 May to participate in the Coronation ceremony of King Charles III on behalf of the Government of India. Prime Minister paid an official visit to France from 13-14 July as the Guest of Honour at the French National Day (Bastille Day) and was conferred with France's highest honour, the grand cross of the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor).

EAM had successful visits to Belgium, Portugal, Italy and the United Kingdom. EAM along with the Minister of Commerce and Industry visited Belgium for the 1st Meeting of India-EU Trade & technology Council in May. During the meeting, they also met Prime Minister of Belgium Alexander De Croo. Furthermore, EAM met with the EU High Representative and Vice President (HRVP) Josep Borrell. EAM's visit to Portugal in October was the first visit by the EAM of India, in more than two decades. During the visit, he called on the Prime Minister and President of the Portuguese Parliament, and held delegation level talks with his Portuguese counterpart Joao Gomes Cravinho. EAM visited Italy in November, called on the President of the Italian Republic, and held delegation level talks with his Italian counterpart Antonio Tajani. He also met the Minister of Defence, Minister of Enterprises & Made in Italy and addressed the Joint Committees

of External and Defence Affairs, and EU Affairs in the Italian Senate. During the visit, significant agreements on Migration and Mobility Partnership and Cultural Cooperation with Italy were signed. EAM visited the UK in November and held meetings with the UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the former Prime Minister Tony Blair, Foreign Secretary David Cameron, Home Secretary James Cleverly, NSA Tim Barrow and Defence Secretary Grant Shapps.

There were several high level incoming visits. Prince Albert II of Monaco and Grand Duke of Luxembourg visited Mumbai from 13-17 October for the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz paid a State Visit to India on 25-26 February. Chancellor Scholz's State Visit to India was the first standalone visit by a German Chancellor since the creation of the IGC framework. Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni visited India on 02 March for a state visit. Prime Minister Meloni was the Chief Guest of the "Raisina Dialogue 2023".



Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni gave the keynote address at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, March 2023

Seven Heads of State from countries handled by this Division visited India for the G20 Leaders' Summit in September. The Prime Minister met the President of the European Council, President of the European Commission, President of France, Prime Minister of the UK, German Chancellor, Prime Minister of Italy and Prime Minister of the Netherlands during the G20 Leaders' Summit in September in Delhi. Two significant outcomes of G20 Leaders' Summit were- the Global Biofuel Alliance was joined by Italy and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to promote connectivity was joined by Italy, France, Germany and EU. EU High Representative and

Vice President Josep Borrell participated in the Raisina Dialogue 2023. Several Ministers from Italy, France, Germany, the UK, EU as well as G20 invitees such as Spain and Netherlands also participated in the various G20 Ministerial tracks in India.

Netherlands was India's largest trading partner in Europe (2022-23). There has been good progress on the FTA negotiations with the UK and EU. The India-UK FTA negotiations, launched in January 2022, saw 14 rounds of negotiations till December 2023; whereas six rounds of negotiations were held with the EU.

The year 2023 marked 25 years of India-France Strategic Partnership. The bilateral relations with Italy were upgraded to the level of Strategic Partnership in March. India also celebrated 75 years of establishment of diplomatic relations with Italy and Luxembourg in 2023. The inaugural India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) held its first Ministerial Meeting in Brussels on 16 May.

Andorra

In 2023, Secretary (West) made the first Secretary level visit to Andorra from India, when he led the Indian delegation for the Foreign Office Consultations with Andorra on 11 October. The Andorran side was led by Foreign Minister Imma Tor Faus. During his visit, Secretary Verma also called on the Head of Government of Andorra Xavier Espot Zamora and discussed the growing bilateral ties and thanked Andorra for their constant support in multilateral fora.

Bilateral trade between India and Andorra stood at USD 3.28 million in 2022-23 with nearly all trade being Indian exports to Andorra (USD 3.27 million) which included textiles and garments, leather products and footwear, iron and steel and precious and semi-precious stones. The International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2023 celebrations were held on 08 June at the iconic Plaça del Poble, where the seat of the Government of Andorra is located.

Belgium

India and Belgium share a close bilateral relationship based on shared commonalities and commitment to the rule of law, federalism and pluralism. Belgium supports India's aspiration for permanent membership of the UNSC.

EAM along with the Minister of Commerce and Trade visited Brussels for the 1st Meeting of India-EU Trade & Technology Council in May during which they also met Prime Minister of Belgium Alexander De Croo. Belgium has been very supportive to India for various elections to the International Organizations.

The Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters which was signed in September 2021, entered into force on 04 March 2023, further strengthening close cooperation between the two countries.

Latest bilateral trade data available for the period January to September, shows the bilateral trade at USD 9.40 billion, comprising Indian exports of EUR 4.906 billion and Indian imports of USD 5.31 billion. Trade in precious metals and stones dominates the trade between the two countries. Belgium is the 15th largest investor in India.

There are around 175 Belgian companies present in India. Several Indian companies, particularly in the IT and software sectors, such as TCS, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, HCL, among others have established bases in Belgium to cater to the Belgian as well as European markets.

European Union

India and the EU are two of the largest and most vibrant democracies, open market economies and pluralistic societies. The India-EU Strategic Partnership was further strengthened with closer cooperation in the areas of security, trade, technology, fight against climate change, and connectivity in the context of a changing geopolitical landscape.

Key Highlights

- (i) India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) held its first Ministerial Meeting in Brussels on 16 May, followed by a virtual stock taking meeting of the Co-Chairs on 24 November.

- (ii) Six rounds of negotiations on the EU-India FTA, five rounds on the Investment Protection Agreement and Geographical Indications Agreement have been held so far.
- (iii) President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen participated in the launch of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi on 09 September.
- (iv) India and the EU signed a MoU on Semiconductors which was announced at the TTC virtual stock taking meeting on 24 November.
- (v) India and the EU conducted their first joint naval exercise in the Gulf of Guinea on 24 October.

High Level Engagements

President of the European Council Charles Michel and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen visited India to participate in the G-20 Summit in Delhi during 09-10 September and had a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister. She participated in the G-20 Virtual Leaders' Summit held on 22 November. The leaders also met briefly on the sidelines of the G7 Hiroshima Summit on 20 May. President of the European Council Charles Michel participated in the Green Credit Initiative co-hosted by India and the UAE at the COP 28 Summit in Dubai on 02 December.



Prime Minister met President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen and President of the European Council Charles Michel on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

There have been regular Ministerial-level interactions. EAM met the EU High Representative and Vice President (HRVP) Josep Borrell thrice in 2023 in Delhi, Brussels, and Jakarta. HRVP Borrell also participated in the Raisina Dialogue 2023. Minister of Commerce and Industry met with the European Commission Executive Vice President in-charge of trade Valdis Dombrovskis thrice in 2023 in Brussels, Delhi, and Tokyo apart from two virtual interactions. The then European Commission Executive Vice President in-charge of the European Green Deal Frans Timmermans visited India in May. In the context of G20, several EU Commissioners visited India for G20 Ministerial Meetings and held bilateral meetings on the sidelines.

A Delegation of Members of European Parliament comprising members from two Parliamentary Committees (Delegation for Relations with India and Sub-Committee on Security and Defence) visited India from 18-20 December. The delegation met with the EAM, Speaker of Lok Sabha, Deputy Chairman Rajya Sabha, Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, Standing Committee on Defence, Minister of Commerce and Industry, Chief of Defence Staff and Defence Secretary.

Trade and Investment

The EU is India's second largest trading partner while India is the EU's 10th largest trading partner. Bilateral trade in goods during January-August 2023 stood at USD 82.81 billion of which Indian

exports amounted to USD 48.28 billion and the EU's exports stood at USD 34.53 billion. In addition, the India-EU bilateral trade in services in 2022 stood at USD 51.60 billion. The EU's share in foreign investment inflows to India almost doubled from 8 percent to 18 percent in the last decade making the EU India's largest source of FDI.

Dialogue Mechanisms

Institutional dialogue mechanisms that met during 2023 include the Strategic Partnership Review Meeting (Delhi, May), High Level Dialogue on Trade and Investment (Delhi, August), Maritime Security Dialogue and Cyber Dialogue (Brussels, October), High Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility (Delhi, October), and the Joint Working Group on Renewable Energy (Virtual, July).

France

The year 2023 was an exceptional year with significant milestones in India-France relations. It marked 25 years of India-France Strategic Partnership. Prime Minister paid an Official Visit from 13-14 July as the Guest of Honour at the French National Day. The leaders inter alia adopted a roadmap 'Horizon 2047', setting the course for the next 25 years, which will in-turn mark centenaries of India's independence and diplomatic relations between both countries.



Prime Minister attended the Bastille Day military parade as the Guest of Honour in Paris, July 2023

On the cultural front, a four-day long Festival of India, 'Namaste France' was organised from 06-09 July in Paris, drawing renowned Indian performing and visual artists – classical, modern, contemporary and folk for live performances and exhibitions, showcasing India's diversity and richness of culture and cuisine.

Launched on 26 January 1998, India's first-ever Strategic Partnership, embodied the core vision of both the countries to enhance their respective strategic independence by drawing upon a strong and enhanced bilateral cooperation. Defence & security, civil nuclear matters and space constitute the principal pillars of this strategic cooperation and now includes a strong Indo-Pacific component. In recent years the partnership has broadened to include maritime security, digitalisation, cyber security and advanced computing, counter terrorism, climate change, renewable and sustainable growth and development among others.

The core of this long-standing partnership is underpinned by their shared democratic values, belief in multilateralism as a means to tackle global challenges, respect for international law, strong economic, cultural academic, and people-to-people ties.

High Level Exchanges

On 13-14 July, the Prime Minister paid an official visit to Paris at the invitation of President Macron as the Guest of Honour at the French National Day. The Prime Minister met President Macron and had delegation level talks at Élysée Palace (official residence of the President). Both leaders inter-alia adopted a roadmap "Horizon 2047: Charting the future of India-France Strategic Partnership", setting the course for the next 25 years. The Indo-Pacific Roadmap was agreed upon and important MoUs/Lols/Agreements were signed in the areas of institutional cooperation, space, defence, science, strategy, sustainable development and people-to-people cooperation.

The Prime Minister witnessed, along with President Macron, the Bastille Day Parade wherein, the Indian Air Force aircraft performed fly-past and a tri-services contingent took part in the Bastille Day Parade. President Macron hosted a banquet dinner in honour of the Prime Minister in the Louvre Museum. The Prime Minister was conferred with France's highest honour, the grand cross of the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honor). During the visit, the Prime Minister met French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne, President of Senate Gerard Larcher and President of National Assembly Yael Braun-Pivet. He also interacted with the Indian diaspora in a community event which was also attended by several members of the French Parliament, Mayors, French dignitaries and business leaders. He also met CEOs and eminent French personalities.



Prime Minister was conferred the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honour by the President of France Emmanuel Macron in Paris, July 2023

On 10 September, the Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting over lunch with President Macron during the G-20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi. President Macron also participated in the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit hosted by the Prime Minister on 22 November. On 01 December, the Prime Minister met President Macron on the sidelines of the COP 28 Summit in Dubai as well.

On 20 May in Hiroshima, the Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with President Macron on the margins of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima and discussed a broad range of issues, including cooperation in trade and economic spheres, co-production and manufacturing in the defence sector, and civil nuclear cooperation.

On 14 February, Prime Minister and President Macron virtually participated in the launch event of the new partnership between Air India and Airbus as Air India signed a Letter of Intent to acquire 250 aircrafts from Airbus. India's Aviation Minister, Airbus CEO and Chairman of Tata Sons also participated in the event.

Raksha Mantri visited Paris from 11-12 October for the 5th Annual Defence Dialogue with his French counterpart Sebastien Lecornu. He also visited the Safran Engine Division's R&D Centre at Gennevilliers near Paris and met with the CEOs of top French defence companies. He also interacted with the Indian community in Paris.

The Finance Minister visited Paris from 22-23 June to participate in the 'New Global Financing Pact' Summit. She met her

counterparts from France, Brazil and UAE on the sidelines. She met France's Minister of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty Bruno Le Maire and exchanged views on key G20 deliverables under Indian Presidency among other issues.

The Minister of Commerce & Industry visited Paris from 11-12 April to co-chair the India France Business Summit. He co-chaired a round-table luncheon meeting of CEOs along with Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade, Economic Attractiveness Olivier Becht. He also participated in the 'Namaste France' Gala Dinner as the Chief Guest along with Minister Becht.

Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs Catherine Colonna visited Delhi on 02 March for the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting. She met EAM and discussed major international issues and reviewed various aspects of bilateral partnership. She also met the Minister of Culture to discuss the new National Museum project. She unveiled the 'Villa Swagatam', an India-wide artist residency program, participated in an event on gender equality and launched an exchange program for talented French and Indian young people.

The Minister of Earth Sciences visited Paris from 08-10 November to participate in the 'One Planet Polar Summit'. He participated in the Presidential dinner at Élysée Palace. He also met French Minister of Higher Education and research, French Minister for the Ecological Transition Christophe Bechu and Mayor of Nice Christian Estrosi.

Minister of State for Development, Francophonie and International Partnerships Chrysoula Zacharopoulou visited India from 31 October-01 November to co-chair the 6th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance with the Minister of Power, and New and Renewable Energy. The visit also focused on the Paris Agenda for People and the Planet, which was adopted in June in Paris.

Édouard Philippe, the then Prime Minister of France and Mayor of Le Havre paid an official visit to India including Delhi and Mumbai on 14-17 March, to boost bilateral economic ties, cooperation on ports, and cooperation between local governments. He called on EAM and the Minister of Ports, Shipping and Waterways.

Minister for Economy, Finance, and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of France Bruno le Maire visited India from 23-24 February to participate in the G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting and then the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings. He also met the Finance Minister.

Defence Cooperation

The 5th Ministerial-level Annual Defence Dialogue was held on 11 October in Paris. Major ongoing defence-related projects include the purchase of Rafale aircrafts and the P-75 Scorpene Project.

Other potential new areas of collaboration being pursued are co-development of next generation engines for fighter planes.

India-France joint defence exercises have grown in scope and complexity over the years. Bilateral Exercise VARUNA 2023 Phase 1 was conducted from 16-20 January off the Coast of Goa. The maiden Joint Military Exercise FRINJEX-23 between Indian Army and French Army was conducted from 07-08 March 2023 at Pangode Military Station in Kerala. Multilateral Exercise La Perouse was conducted in the Indian Ocean Region from 13-14 March. The Indian Navy, Royal Australian Navy, French Navy, Japanese Maritime Self Defence Force, Royal Navy and the US Navy participated in the exercise. Indian Air Force (IAF) participated for the first time in the multilateral Exercise ORION from 13 April to 07 May. The exercise was conducted at the French Air and Space Force (FASF) base at Mont-de-Marsan.

Indian Defence Space Agency personnel visited France Space Command to participate in the ASTERX 2023 Space Exercise from 08-09 March as Military Observers. France participated in 'Aero-India' held from 13-17 February in Bangalore with a 10-members official delegation along with 27 French Defence Sector Companies.

There were several port calls during the year. INS Sindhuratna made an administrative port call at Le Havre from 06-09 March on its voyage back to India after a refit in Russia. INS Chennai made a port call at Brest from 12-16 July during the French National Day on 14 July. The Ambassador visited both INS Sindhuratna and Chennai during the port calls.

Trilateral Cooperation

Apart from bilateral dialogues, India and France also have separate trilateral institutional exchanges with Australia and UAE. The India-France-UAE Trilateral Focal Points meeting was held on 06 February in Paris. On 04 February, the three foreign ministers connected on a call to 'adopt a roadmap for implementation' of the trilateral initiative. The first Track 1.5 dialogue comprising parliamentarians, officials, former diplomats and think-tanks was held from 21-22 November in Paris. The second India-France-Australia Focal Points was held on 20 June comprising officials from the Ministry of External Affairs (India), Director Asia & Oceania (France) and First Assistant Secretary Australia-North and South Asia Division (Australia).

Space Cooperation

India and France have a rich history of cooperation in the field of space for over 50 years between ISRO and the French Space Agency, Centre National d'Études Spatiales (CNES). France remains a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme.

The first India-France Strategic Space Dialogue was held in Paris on 26 June led by Foreign Secretary and Secretary General Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs Anne-Marie Descôtes. It identified areas for cooperation under the civil space cooperation and defence space cooperation tracks.

ISRO and CNES concluded a joint declaration for cooperation in future launch vehicle technologies and agreement for Cooperation in joint Earth Observation mission TRISHNA, Maritime Domain Awareness (Short-Term plan) and Space Situational Awareness. While ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) has launched French satellites on a commercial basis, Arianespace, France has been the major provider of launch services to Indian Geo-Stationary satellites. Arianespace and NSIL concluded a Letter of Intent (LoI) for collaboration in commercial launch services.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

During the Prime Minister's visit to Paris in July, both leaders welcomed the progress made during discussions related to the Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project (JNPP). It was also agreed to work on establishing a partnership on low and medium power modular reactors or Small Modular Reactors (SMR) and Advanced Modular Reactors (AMR). The cooperation on JNPP and exploration of SMRs and AMRs signifies a shared vision for sustainable and efficient nuclear energy solutions.

Economic Cooperation

France is one of the largest investors in India with FDI inflow of USD 659.77 million for FY 2022-23 (as of June) and a cumulative FDI stock of USD 10.62 billion from April 2000 to June 2023.

For the FY 2023-24 (till August), Indian exports to France totalled USD 3.06 billion and imports from France totalled USD 2.36 billion. India's main exports to France include engineering goods including electrical machinery and boilers, petroleum products, pharmaceutical products, electronic equipment and ready-made garment and main imports from France are aviation products, machine equipment, electrical equipment and chemical products.

During the Prime Minister's visit to Paris, 11th round of bilateral CEO Forum was held on 14 July and three areas were identified for joint cooperation: (i) Construction value chain, smart cities and urban improvement, (ii) Green Hydrogen and Green Ammonia, (iii) R&D in manufacturing including smart manufacturing.

Bilateral Joint Working Groups exist in various fields of (i) IT & Tele-communications, (ii) Roads, (iii) Sustainable Urban Development, (iv) Agriculture and Food Processing, (v) Mineral Exploration and Development, and (vi) Energy. The 16th JWG on Sustainable Urban Development took place in New Delhi on 16 January.

Digital Cooperation

The launch of the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) was announced from the Eiffel Tower, during the Prime Minister's visit to France from 13-14 July. The initiative intends to offer secure and convenient transactions for Indian visitors and NRIs.

The 'India pavilion' was set up at 'VivaTech 2023' from 14-17 June. The 'VivaTech 2023' is Europe's largest annual start-up and technology event. Around 70 Indian start-ups from the fields of fintech, aerospace, healthcare, robotics and renewable energy, participated in the event.

Reflecting the strength of bilateral cooperation in the field of technology, C-DAC and Atos, a European multinational IT service and consulting company based in France have developed 14 supercomputers for India to date including the fastest supercomputer Param Siddhi at 4.6 petaflops/second. Eviden, which is an Atos business dealing with digital, cloud and big data & security won a USD 100 million contract with National Center for Medium Range Weather Forecast (NCMRWF), on behalf of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, in June to build two new supercomputers on weather modelling and climate research for Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and NCMRWF.

Culture and Tourism Cooperation

The grand Festival of India, 'Namaste France 2023' was organised by the Embassy of India in Paris with support of India's Ministry of Culture at La Seine Musicale in Paris from 06-09 July. This landmark event contributed to creating a strong public momentum in the build up of the Prime Minister's visit in July, as the Guest of Honour for French National Day.

Two Letters of Intent, for Cooperation and Collaboration on Broadcasting between Prasar Bharati (PB) and France Media Monde (FMM) and on the New National Museum and Cooperation on Museology were signed during the Prime Minister's visit to France from 13-14 July.

MoS (Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying) and MoS (Information and Broadcasting) inaugurated the 'Indian Pavilion' at the 76th Cannes Film Festival from 16-27 May. He was accompanied by a delegation.

An 'India Pavillion' was set up at the International and French Travel Market (IFTM) Top Resa tourism fair held from 03-05 October in Paris with special focus on the States of Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Maritime Cooperation

The 6th Meeting of India-France Maritime Cooperation Dialogue was held from 26-27 October in Paris. Deputy National Security Adviser led the Indian delegation and the Director General for

International Relations and Strategy (DGRIS) Alice Rufo, led the French side.

As part of G7++Friends of Gulf of Guinea (GoG), Indian Naval warship 'Sumedha' was sent for patrol for 31 days. The inaugural India-EU joint naval exercise with warships of France, Spain and Italy was concluded in GoG on 24 October.

Cooperation in the field of Blue Economy and Clean Energy

The first dialogue on Blue Economy was held on 12-13 October in Paris. CEO of NITI Aayog and Olivier Poivre d'Arvor, Ambassador for Poles and Oceans led the Indian and French delegations respectively. Both sides agreed that there exists significant potential for collaboration on capacity building, promotion of joint research and strengthening sustainable development of the blue economy while respecting marine and coastal biodiversity.

The first International Energy Agency (IEA) Critical Minerals and Clean Energy Summit was held at the IEA Headquarter on 28 September in Paris. Secretary, Ministry of Mines led the Indian delegation. The Summit focused on measures to promote the secure, sustainable and responsible supply of raw materials that have a central role in the global clean energy transition.

Cooperation in the field of Science & Technology

A Letter of Intent in the field of Health and Medicine and an MoU between the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT), Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES), Chennai and Institut Français de Recherche pour l'exploitation de la Mer (IFREMER) were signed during Prime Minister's visit to France in July.

A delegation led by the Secretary (Department of Science & Technology) visited Paris and held various meetings from 04-05 May 2023 besides Co-chairing the 36th Governor Body Meeting of Indo-French Center for Promotion of Advanced Research (IFCPAR).

Community in France and Indian Students/ Alumni in France

During the Prime Minister's visit to France in July, President Macron announced France's goal to welcome 30,000 students from India by 2030. Indian students holding Master's degree or above and have spent at least a semester studying in France are eligible for a 5-year Schengen visa.

The mainland France has an estimated 1,19,000 Indian community (including NRIs) largely originating from erstwhile French colonies of Puducherry, Karaikal, Yanam, Mahe and Chandernagore and the States of Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Punjab. The estimated Indian origin population in French

Overseas Territories is Reunion Island (3,00,159), Guadeloupe (57,180), Martinique (8,090) and Saint Martin (1950). There are over 50 Indian community organisations active in France.

Germany

As the largest economy and most populous country in the EU, Germany is one of India's most important partners. India was also amongst the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany after the end of the Second World War. Both countries have a shared interest in upholding democratic values, the rules-based international order, multilateralism as well as the reform of multilateral institutions. In addition to deep and wide-ranging economic ties by virtue of being the 4th and 5th largest economies in the world respectively, Germany and India also share a robust development cooperation partnership.

High Level Political Exchanges

There are continuous and sustained high level political exchanges between India and Germany. Prime Minister and German Chancellor meet regularly for bilateral engagements as well as on the sidelines of international summits. In 2023, Chancellor Scholz visited India for a state visit (25-26 February) as well as on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi (09-10 September). In addition, both leaders also met on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima in May. The State Visit of Chancellor Scholz was the first standalone visit to India by a German Chancellor since the creation of the IGC framework. During these meetings, the two leaders reviewed the Strategic Partnership and discussed ways to deepen cooperation in areas like defence, green and sustainable development, critical minerals, mobility of skilled personnel and education.

India's G20 Presidency in 2023 provided a platform for wide ranging engagements with Germany. In this context, the Chancellor congratulated the Prime Minister on the success of India's G20 Presidency while the Prime Minister appreciated Germany's support for India's G20 Presidency, marked by high-level participation at various G20 meetings, events and working groups.

There have been regular and sustained Ministerial engagements between India and Germany with meetings in both bilateral as well as G20 contexts throughout the year.

The Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change visited Germany on 01-04 May to participate in the Petersberg Climate Dialogue in Berlin. The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Housing and Urban Affairs visited Berlin on 06-08 November.

Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock visited India from 01-02 March to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting in New Delhi. Finance Minister Christian Lindner visited India from 23-25 February to participate in the G20 Finance Ministers'



Prime Minister welcomed the Chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz in New Delhi, February 2023

and Central Bank Governors' Meeting in Bengaluru. Minister of Defence Boris Pistorius visited India on 05-08 June during which he held a wide ranging discussion with Raksha Mantri on defence cooperation in New Delhi, and visited the Western Naval Command Headquarters and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited in Mumbai.

Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development Svenja Schulze visited India from 11-13 June to participate in the G20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi. Minister of Labour and Social Affairs Hubertus Heil visited India from 17-22 July to participate in the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers Meeting in Indore as well as for a meeting with his counterpart minister in New Delhi.

Vice-Chancellor and Minister for Economic Affairs and Climate Action Robert Habeck visited India from 20-23 July to participate in the G20 Energy Ministers' Meeting in Goa, the Indo-German Business Forum (IGBF) in New Delhi and company site visits in Mumbai.

Minister for the Environment, Nature Conservation, Nuclear Safety and Consumer Protection Steffi Lemke visited India from 25-28 July to participate in the G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministers' Meeting in Chennai and bilateral engagements in New Delhi.

Health Minister Karl Lauterbach visited India for the G20 Health Ministers Meeting from 18-19 August in Gandhinagar. Minister for Digital and Transport Volker Wissing visited India from 19-20 August to participate in the G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting in Bengaluru.

Multilateral Cooperation

Both sides work closely and engage with each other at multilateral fora including UN and G20 to jointly address global issues such as sustainable development and UN reforms. India and Germany reiterated their support for each other on UNSC expansion at the latest meeting of the G4 held on 21 September on the sidelines of the 78th UNGA and pointed out that the expansion of the UNSC in both permanent and non-permanent categories of membership is essential to make the body more representative, legitimate and effective. India and Germany also reaffirmed the importance of the Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on UNSC reform and encouraged renewed efforts by the PGA and the Co-Chairs to commence text-based negotiations without any further delay in the IGN.

Defence Cooperation

India and Germany are keen to open a new chapter in the field of defence and security cooperation. In June, German Federal Minister of Defence, Boris Pistorius visited India where he held meetings with Raksha Mantri, visited Western Naval Command HQ as well as Mazagaon Dock in Mumbai. During Minister Pistorius' visit, Germany's Thyssenkrupp and India's Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders signed an MoU to collaborate in future projects.

Chief of German Air Force, Lt. Gen. Ingo Gerhartz visited India from 08-11 August where he provided impetus to bilateral defence cooperation between the two Air Forces. At the working level, the Military Cooperation Sub-Group Meeting was held from 31 January-01 February in Berlin during which representatives of

the Armed Forces of India and Germany discussed the bilateral annual programme for military cooperation for the year 2023.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe. It has consistently been among India's top 15 global partners and was India's 12th largest trading partner in FY 2022-23. Bilateral trade in 2022-23 was USD 26 billion registering a growth of about 4.9 percent over FY 2021-22. Indian exports during this period increased by 2.5 percent reaching USD 10.1 billion and Indian imports increased by 6.4 percent to USD 15.9 billion. During FY 2023-24 (until September), bilateral trade reached USD 13.33 billion, registering an increase of 2.77 percent over the corresponding period in FY 2022-23. Indian exports with USD 4.8 billion during this period witnessed a decrease of about 5.31 percent and Indian imports with USD 8.53 billion registered an increase of 8.56 percent.

Germany is the 9th largest FDI source for India. Total FDI from Germany to India from April 2000 to July 2023 was over USD 14.2 billion. In FY 2022-23, German FDI in India was USD 547 million. There are more than 1,800 German companies and over 600 joint ventures operating in India. In this context, Mission's Market Entry Support Programme, the 'Make in India Mittelstand' (MIIM) for German Mittelstand (SMEs) and Family-Owned Businesses has been supporting high potential 'Mittelstand' companies with medium to long term potential for manufacturing in India. As of date, more than 180 companies are being facilitated through this Programme with a declared investment of nearly USD 1.75 billion. More than 30 of these companies are 'hidden champions' that are world market leaders in niche products/technologies.

In February, German engineering company Siemens received an order valued at USD 3.25 billion from Indian Railways for producing 1,200 electric locomotives over a period of 11 years. The locomotives will be produced by Siemens in India. In April, Germany's Hübner Group invested a total of USD 11.91 million in a new plant in Bengaluru to deliver a total of 540 transition systems for the Vande Bharat Express train to Indian Railways. In July, the Indian subsidiary of Carl Zeiss, a German manufacturer of optical systems and optoelectronics, announced plans to invest USD 268.02 million to build a new spectacle lens production facility in Bangalore. The new plant will manufacture up to 260,000 lenses per day and would create 600 new jobs. In October, DB subsidiary Deutsche Bahn International Operations (DB IO) started operation and maintenance of Delhi-Meerut RRTS system, which is implemented by the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC).

There are more than 240 Indian companies operating in Germany. Indian companies have invested in Germany mainly through Mergers and Acquisitions. Investments are mostly in IT, automotive, pharma, biotech and manufacturing. Major clusters of Indian companies are in the States of North-Rhine Westphalia, Hesse, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

The JWG's on (i) Automotives (ii) Quality Infrastructure (iii) Counter Terrorism and (iii) Vocational Education and Training (VET) took place in April 2023, April 2023, May 2023 and July 2023 respectively. The first meeting of the JWG on implementation of the provisions of the Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement (MMPA) was held in New Delhi in November.

The Fast Track mechanisms established by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and the German Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK), continue to address the grievances of companies based in India and Germany.

Development Cooperation

Germany has been an important development cooperation partner for several decades and India is Germany's largest Development Cooperation partner. For India, Germany is the 2nd largest partner after Japan. Priority areas for Indo-German development cooperation include energy, sustainable economic development, environment and management of natural resources. Major projects are in the sectors of energy (renewables, Green Energy Corridor), Indo-German Solar Partnership, Skill Development and sustainable urban development (water/sanitation/waste, climate friendly urban mobility, smart cities). Both countries are working on implementing the India-Germany Partnership on Green and Sustainable Development (GSDP). GSDP projects include trilateral development cooperation (TDC), solar partnership, solar alliance and on agro-ecology.

Under the TDC framework, specific pilot projects are ongoing with Ghana, Cameroon, Malawi and Benin on agriculture as well as with Peru on developing a geospatial portal prototype for social programs. The year 2023 also marked two anniversaries of KfW Development Bank in India, namely 75 years of KfW Group and 65 years of Financial Cooperation with India.

The Annual meeting of the Indo-German Negotiations on Development Cooperation took place in New Delhi on 01 November. The German government has committed a total volume of USD 1.14 billion for new funding for developmental projects and programmes in 2023. This includes USD 1.07 billion for financial cooperation projects, USD 45.46 million for technical cooperation and USD 10.39 million for the special initiative

focusing on transformation of agricultural and food Systems. Total volume of bilateral technical and financial cooperation by the end of 2023 amounts to about USD 25.98 billion.

Science & Technology Cooperation

Cooperation in Science & Technology is another important aspect of the India-Germany partnership. India's scientific establishments have close partnerships with German R&D institutions, including the Max Planck Society, Fraunhofer Society, Helmholtz Association and the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation. Over the last few years, Germany has emerged as a destination of choice for Indian students and researchers. The number of students coming from India to pursue higher studies in Germany went up to 43,000 in 2023 more than doubling in the past four years, making them the largest international student community in Germany.

The Indo-German Science and Technology Centre (IGSTC) Governing Body Meeting which gives the direction and guidelines for the future of the centre, was held in November in Dresden.

Cultural Cooperation

The highlight of cultural cooperation between India and Germany in 2023 was the 'Namaste Berlin' event organised in collaboration with Kultursommer festival and the Berlin Senate Department of Culture and Community on 05 August that saw around 7,000 participants. It showcased Indian cuisine, folk dances, classical and contemporary music, Yoga & Panchatantra stories for children, and screening of Bollywood movies.

Ireland

Formal diplomatic relations between India and Ireland were established in 1947.

On 23 March, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Roderic O'Gorman visited India for St. Patrick's Day. He led a delegation that explored education partnerships and collaborations in the cities of Delhi and Mumbai with representatives from Irish higher education institutions.

From 29 June to 02 July, a delegation led by the Speaker of Rajasthan Legislative Assembly visited Ireland as part of pre-66th Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) study tour. The delegation had a meeting with the Mayor of County Tipperary and took a tour of the Irish Parliament.

In October, National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) signed an MoU with the Electricity Supply Board of Ireland (ESB) for bilateral cooperation in the Power sector.

Italy

The year witnessed a historic upgrade of bilateral relationship to the level of Strategic Partnership between the two countries. The year saw two visits of Prime Minister Meloni to India. During her first ever bilateral state visit to India in March, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni was the Chief Guest of the "Raisina Dialogue 2023" and she held wide ranging discussions with the Hon'ble President and Prime Minister. The visit took place in the backdrop of the celebration of the 75th anniversary of establishment of India-Italy bilateral relations. Prime Minister Meloni again visited India for the G20 Leaders' Summit and met the Prime Minister during the G20 Leaders' Summit. Italy also became the only country in Western Europe to join almost all the important global initiatives of India namely International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI), Global Bio-fuels Alliance (GBA) and India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) to promote connectivity.

Bilateral Visits

Notable visits to Italy, during the year, included a visit by EAM (November), by Minister of Commerce and Industry (April), Raksha Mantri (October) after a gap of over 20 years, and visits by cabinet ministers. Furthermore, the Minister of State (Textiles) and Minister of State (Home) also visited Italy for various events. Mobility and Migration Partnership Agreement and Defence MoU were signed during the visit of Raksha Mantri and EAM respectively.

EAM visited Italy from 02-03 November at the invitation of the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Italy. During the visit, EAM called on President of the Italian Republic Sergio Mattarella and held delegation level talks with his counterpart Antonio Tajani. He also met Minister of Defence Guido Crosetto and Minister of Enterprises & Made in Italy Adolfo Urso. He addressed the Joint Committees of External and Defence Affairs, and EU Affairs in the Italian Senate, and also interacted with prominent think-tanks and thought leaders. EAM also held an interaction with members of the Indian community, India-Italy Parliamentary Friendship Group and senior dignitaries of the Italian government.

Several Ministers from Italy also participated in various G20 Ministerial tracks in India notably Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, Agriculture Minister Francesco Lollobrigida, Culture Minister Gennaro Sangiuliano and Education Minister Giuseppe Valditerra and Presidents of both Houses of Parliament Ignazio La Russa and Lorenzo Fontana. Italian State Secretary for Defence Matteo Perego di Cremona led the Italian delegation that participated in the Aero India Show 2023. Deputy Minister for Infrastructure and Transport Edoardo Rixi participated in the Global Maritime Summit in Mumbai from 16-19 October.



EAM with the President of Italy Sergio Mattarella in Rome, November 2023

Defence

On the defence front, Italy joined Indo-Pacific Ocean Initiative (IPOI) during Prime Minister Meloni's state visit to India and decided to take lead in the 6th pillar pertaining to Science and Technology and academic collaboration. Under this framework, the Italian Navy Ship (ITS Morosini) made a port call in Mumbai in August.

Trade

During the year, Italy became India's 4th largest trading partner in the EU after the Netherlands, Germany and Belgium. India-Italy bilateral trade in 2022-23 registered an impressive growth and crossed a record high of USD 14.53 billion with USD 8.691 billion as exports, raising the trade balance in India's favour. Air India resumed direct flights between Delhi and Milan promoting business and people to people ties.

Institutional Mechanisms

Business CEOs Forum, JWGs on Renewable Energy, Counter Terrorism and Agriculture were also held during the year. Several prominent commercial events such as visit of a FICCI delegation for a Knowledge Exchange Programme in Turin; a roadshow focusing on agriculture and fintech; visit of a delegation from Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation (RIIDC) to participate in Marmomac 2023 Exhibition in Verona; 'India: the Startup Nation' event; a four day textile

exhibition held in association with 'Accademia Belle di Arte' for promotion of One District One Product Programme and to celebrate the International Year of Millets; inauguration of the GJEPC Pavilion in the Vincenza d' Oro festival and Indian Pavilion in the AFL' Artigiano in Fiera Milano occurred over the course of the year.

Cultural Exchanges

On the cultural front, the year saw the first ever Diwali performance in Quirinale and the Italian Senate. India also participated in the Venice Biennale and Florence River to River Film Festivals during the course of the year. A new Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation (EPCC) between India and Italy for the period 2024-27 was also signed in November during the visit of EAM to Italy.

Multilateral Ties

On the multilateral front, India achieved several notable victories during the year namely re-election to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) Council, Finance Committee, Bureau of Committee on Food Security, as the convenor of World Food Program (WFP), election to the Chairpersonship of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law (UNIDROIT) General Assembly after a gap of 20 years and membership of the UNIDROIT Governing Council also after more than two decades. India also participated for the first time in the International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and

Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) General Assembly meeting in Rome.

Luxembourg

The diplomatic relations between India and Luxembourg were established in 1948. The bilateral relationship is characterised by a high degree of cooperation at bilateral and multilateral levels. The two sides marked 75 years of diplomatic relations in 2023. Grand Duke of Luxembourg, visited India in October to participate in the International Olympic Committee meeting.

Economic relationship is the core of India and Luxembourg relations. Luxembourg is the 5th largest investor from the EU and the 15th largest investor in India; Luxembourg is also the third largest source of Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPI) in India after the US and Mauritius. FDI flows from Luxembourg to India from April 2000 to December 2022 stood at USD 4.3 billion. Latest bilateral trade data available for the period January to September shows the bilateral trade at USD 101.86 million comprising Indian exports worth USD 33.56 million and Indian imports worth USD 68.20 million. Luxembourg is also an important financial centre from where Indian corporate houses and PSBs have been raising funds.

Monaco

India and Monaco established diplomatic relations in 2007 and the Ambassador of India in Paris is concurrently accredited to the Principality of Monaco.

Prince Albert II of Monaco, accompanied by a delegation, visited Mumbai on 13-17 October to participate in the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee.

Key areas of India-Monaco cooperation include trade, tourism and tax matters which enrich the overall positive relations between India and Monaco. The two sides vowed to explore other areas as well, including cultural relations, cooperation on marine biodiversity and clean energy.

The Netherlands

India and the Netherlands enjoy long-standing friendly and multifaceted relations with a broad agenda of cooperation marked by shared values of democracy, rule of law and growing convergences on global and regional issues. The year 2023 marked another milestone in our cooperation as India invited the Netherlands as a Guest country during India's G20 Presidency.

The highlight of the year was the visit of Prime Minister of the Netherlands Mark Rutte to India for the G20 Summit in September on the invitation of the Prime Minister. Prime Minister Rutte and Prime Minister had a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the Summit. The two leaders discussed India-Netherlands bilateral ties, including Strategic Partnership on Water and cooperation in the key areas of agriculture, health, high tech and emerging sectors of cooperation like semiconductors and clean energy. During the visit a business delegation with more than 60 companies covering key enabling technologies, travelled with Prime Minister Rutte to Bengaluru.



Prime Minister of Netherlands Mark Rutte met Prime Minister on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

The momentum of high-level interactions was further enhanced by the visit of Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of the Netherlands Sigrid Kaag for the G20 Finance and Central Bank Governors' Meeting held in Bengaluru in February. Foreign Minister of Netherlands Wopke Hoekstra visited India in March to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. He had a bilateral meeting with the EAM on the sidelines where discussions focused on Dutch-India cooperation on regional stability & security, semiconductors, migration & mobility and other regional & global issues. Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands Liesje Schreinemacher visited India in August for the G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting in Jaipur.

President of the Senate Jan Anthonie Bruijn visited India in October to participate in the P20 Summit. He had a bilateral meeting with Speaker Lok Sabha to discuss enhancing Parliamentary Exchanges. Visit of MoS (ML) to the Netherlands took place on 08-10 November. During the visit, MoS (ML) met several Dutch dignitaries at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Dutch Parliament, participated in cultural events and interacted with the Indian community and students.

The India-Netherlands Strategic Partnership on Water was taken forward during the year. A delegation led by Minister of Water and Infrastructure of Netherlands Mark Harbers visited India in April for the 1st meeting of the Ministerial Joint Working Group on Water co-chaired by Minister of Jal Shakti. He also met with the Minister of Shipping. India and the Netherlands renewed an MoU in the field of Ports and Maritime Transport and Logistics during the visit. A delegation from the State of Bihar led by the Water Resources Minister of Bihar visited the Netherlands in February to explore cooperation in flood control and water resources management.

A bilateral meeting took place between the Health Minister and Minister of Health of Netherlands Ernst Kuipers during the latter's visit to India in August for the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting. On the invitation of Minister Kuipers, Minister of State for Chemicals & Fertilizers, visited the Netherlands from 04-09 November to address the opening session of the 2nd World Local Production Forum hosted by WHO & Dutch Govt alongside the Dutch Minister of Health. A Memorandum of Intent on Medical Products Regulation was signed during the visit between CDSCO, India and Drug Control Authority of the Netherlands. In the field of agriculture, Prof. Ramesh Chand, member NITI Aayog visited the Netherlands in April-May to explore opportunities for cooperation in Agritech and related areas. A 22-member delegation from Maharashtra Legislative Assembly led by the Deputy Chairperson visited the Netherlands in August and interacted with the Dutch envoy on Agriculture.

In the field of Clean Energy, a cross ministerial delegation of 25 members from MNRE, CSIR, NITI Aayog, Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, State Governments, among others participated in the World Hydrogen Conference in Rotterdam

in May. In the field of Cyber Security, the second meeting of the India-Netherlands Joint Working Group on Cyber Security was held in Delhi in February. An MoU was signed between the Cyber Security Center of Excellence, Telangana and the Hague Centre for Strategic Studies (HCSS) in January during the visit of a delegation from Telangana led by the Principal Secretary, Industries and Commerce. In the field of Science and Innovation, the Meeting of the India-Netherlands Joint Working Group on Science and Innovation was held in New Delhi in July at the level of Secretary, DST and Vice Minister Sandor Gaastra of Ministry of Economic Affairs of the Netherlands on the sidelines of the G20 Research Ministers' Meeting. The President of Technical University of Delft visited India in October to explore opportunities for cooperation in higher education & research.

Trade and Commercial relations form the backbone of the vibrant India-Netherlands relationship. The Netherlands was India's largest trading partner in Europe (2022-23). Bilateral trade touched an all-time high of USD 27.582 billion (FY 2022-2023). During the financial year 2022-23, India's total exports to the Netherlands amounted to USD 21.62 billion and India's total imports from the Netherlands during the financial year 2022-23 stood at USD 5.961 billion. In the first six months of the CFY 2023-24, our bilateral trade stood at USD 12.349 billion, imports at USD 2.75 billion and exports at USD 9.599 billion. The total Foreign Direct Investment flows into India from the Netherlands during the financial year 2022-23 was USD 2.5 billion. The Netherlands is now the 5th largest investor in India with a total FDI of USD 45 billion since 2000. Indian companies are also investing in the Netherlands in a big way, with a total investment of USD 23.57 billion since April 2000.

In the field of culture and people to people cooperation, the relations with Netherlands were further strengthened as the State Secretary for Culture and Media Gunay Uslu visited India to participate in the G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting in August where she also met with the Minister of State for Culture. They interacted again during the visit of the Minister of State for Culture to the Netherlands in November to identify new avenues for cultural cooperation.

The Netherlands is home to the largest Indian diaspora in the EU comprising nearly 200,000 Surinamese Hindustani and 66,000 Indian professionals. More than 3,500 students from India are studying in the Netherlands in various universities.

Portugal

India and Portugal's bilateral relationship is based on historical maritime connections, diaspora linkages and shared values of democracy and multilateralism. In 2023, regular dialogue, working level visits and exchanges under institutional mechanisms have contributed to steady progress in the bilateral relationship in areas such as trade and economy; science and

technology; defence; start-ups; youth, academic and cultural exchanges; and migration and mobility.

Portugal and India have a steadfast tradition of reciprocally supporting each other in multilateral forums. Portugal has consistently supported India's bid for permanent membership in the UNSC. President Rebelo de Sousa reiterated Portugal's support for India to become a permanent member of the UNSC in his speech during the 76th session of the UNGA in September.

The 6th Joint Science and Technology Committee (JSTC) meeting was held in virtual mode on 14 March, which reviewed the status of collaboration. Discussions covered the setting up of a new joint fund of USD 4.33 million for joint research in Science & Technology, projects under the joint call for collaborative research projects, identifying new areas for collaboration such as green hydrogen, net zero emission programmes for industry, exchange of young scientists and startups.

Bilateral Exchanges

EAM paid an official visit to Portugal from 31 October-01 November. During the visit he called on Prime Minister Antonio Costa and President of the Portuguese Parliament Augusto Santos Silva. He held delegation level talks with his counterpart Foreign Minister Joao Gomes Cravinho, where the entire range of the bilateral relationship was discussed including high level political exchanges, trade and investment and growing potential in several sectors including IT, health and pharmaceuticals, renewable energy, defence industry, start-ups and mobility of youth, professionals and skilled workers. Both sides agreed on the implementation of a Standard Operating Procedure for

a pilot project on the Recruitment of Indian Citizens to work in the Portuguese Republic and begin India-Portugal Consular Dialogue. The two sides decided to celebrate the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties in 2025.

Other notable visits to Portugal included an Indian Member of Parliament and member of the Executive Council of Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) participated in the 290th session of the IPU Executive Meeting held in Lisbon and a delegation from Goa led by Minister for Tourism participated in BTL International tourism fair held in Lisbon from 01-05 March. From Portugal, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate, Ana Fontoura Gouveia visited Bengaluru to participate in the India Energy Week from 06-08 January and in October, Duarte Pacheco, Member of Parliament of Portugal and President of IPU visited India to participate in the 9th P20 summit, under India's G20 Presidency. Six Members of the Portuguese National Assembly participated in the 9th Gen Next Programme organised by ICCR from 10-19 April.

Trade

The trade balance continues to be in India's favour. Indian exports stood at USD 1,130.31 million in 2022 registering a 10.25 percent Year on Year (YoY) growth compared to 2021. The export from India for the months from January to July 2023 amounted to USD 692 million indicating robust export figures. Tourism post pandemic has seen a strong recovery too. Many Portuguese tourists visited India in 2023. The figure represented a 91 percent recovery compared to the pre-pandemic year of 2019, in which 74,743 Portuguese tourists visited India.



EAM with Foreign Minister of Portugal João Gomes Cravinho during a press conference after a bilateral meeting in Lisbon, October 2023

Cultural Exchanges

The President of ICCR visited Portugal in June. During the visit he participated in the commemoration of the International Day of Yoga. He also inaugurated an exhibition on 'Temples of India, Architectural Design and Principles', curated by Dr. Bhanuben Nanavati College of Architecture for Women, Pune and organised by Indo-European Science and Arts Association (IESAA) in collaboration with the Mission at the University of Coimbra.

San Marino

Relations with San Marino remained cordial and friendly. Both the countries have established a fruitful cooperation, particularly within international fora, but also at a bilateral level on issues of common interest.

The Republic of San Marino has extended support to India's candidature in UNIDROIT Governing Council for the term 2024-28, IMO Council Category B for the term 2024-25 and WHO External Audit for the term 2024-27. They have also supported India's candidature in the UNIDROIT Governing Council elections.

The total bilateral trade between the two nations currently stands at USD 0.29 million.

Spain

India-Spain relations continued to strengthen this year and both countries cooperated on multilateral fora. The year 2023 saw frequent engagement between both countries as India held the Presidency of G20 while Spain held the Presidency of the EU Council for the second half of the year.

Prime Minister and Spanish President Pedro Sanchez spoke on telephone in February to take stock of the growing bilateral relations. Since Spain is a permanent invitee to the G20, Spanish Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares visited India twice for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meet in March and the G20 Summit in September along with Deputy Prime Minister and Economy Minister Nadia Calviño. The Chief Minister of West Bengal paid an official visit to Spain in September along with a business delegation.

The 3rd Spain-India Forum was held in New Delhi from 21-24 November in which the MoS (ML) participated.

Foreign Office Consultations were held on 09 October in Madrid, in which a comprehensive review of bilateral relations was carried out, besides exchanging views on regional and global issues. The Indian delegation was led by Secretary (West) in the Ministry while the Spanish side was led by Under-Secretary for External Affairs Luis Manuel Cuesta Civis.

Defence Cooperation

The bilateral defence partnership witnessed rapid growth this year. The procurement of 56 C295 aircraft from Airbus Spain, 40 of which will be made in India by Tata Advanced Systems, is a landmark Make in India project in the defence-aerospace sector. The Chief of Indian Air Force presided over the handing over of the first C295 Aircraft to the Indian government on 13th September in Seville. Other Spanish defence companies such as Navantia and Indra have active collaboration with Indian partners for various projects.

Vessels of the Indian Navy participate frequently in Passage Exercises and Port Calls in Spanish coasts, the latest being INS Sindhuratna, INS Tarkash, INS Chennai and INS Sumedha in 2023. A delegation of senior officers from the National Defense College visited Spain for a study tour in June to understand the functioning of the Spanish Armed Forces. A new defence wing at the Indian Mission in Spain is being established which will give further fillip to the strategic ties between the two countries.

Economic Cooperation

Commercial ties continue to remain strong between India and Spain. Bilateral trade between the two countries reached record USD 7.92 billion in 2022 and in 2023 it reached USD 5.56 billion till August, indicating a strong upswing. Spain continues to remain India's sixth largest trade partner in the EU. Spain is the 16th largest investor in India with cumulative FDI stock of USD 3.94 billion (April 2000-September 2023). To strengthen bilateral economic and commercial relations, the Mission established the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Spain in October 2023 to create a platform for business interaction.

United Kingdom

India-UK historical ties have transformed into a robust, multi-faceted and a mutually beneficial relationship over the years. The relations were upgraded to Comprehensive Strategic Partnership along with the adoption of an ambitious Roadmap 2030 at the Virtual Summit meeting held on 04 May 2021.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak met the Prime Minister at the G20 Summit hosted by India on 18-10 September 2023. They reviewed the progress on various aspects of India-UK relations. The Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to Prime Minister Sunak for a separate visit at the earliest convenience. Both leaders also met at the G7 Summit in Hiroshima in May. They discussed progress on a UK-India Free Trade Agreement. They agreed that their teams would continue to work at pace to finalise an ambitious and mutually beneficial deal.



EAM called on the Prime Minister of UK Rishi Sunak in London, November 2023

The Vice-President visited London on 05-06 May to participate in the Coronation Ceremony of King Charles III. He interacted with King Charles III, President of Israel, First Lady of the US, President of Italy, President of Brazil, during reception at Buckingham Palace. The Vice-President also addressed the members of the Indian community in the UK. He also interacted with Indian origin MPs of the UK, and Indian students.

Outgoing Bilateral Visits

EAM visited the UK from 11-15 November and had bilateral meetings with UK Prime Minister, former UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron, UK Defence Secretary Grant Shapps, UK Home Secretary James Cleverly, UK NSA Tim Barrow, Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy and UK Leader of Opposition Keir Starmer.

The Minister of Commerce and Industry visited the UK from 10-13 July to review progress of the FTA. During the visit, he had meetings with Kemi Badenoch, UK Secretary of State for Business and Trade and Douglas McNeill, Chief Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of the UK.

A delegation led by the Minister of Law and Justice visited the UK on 05 June. He participated in the 2nd 'Arbitrating Indo - UK Commercial Disputes conference' held in London and spoke about reforms and initiatives by the government in the legal sector and arbitration mechanisms. He had a meeting

with the Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice; where they discussed India-UK cooperation in the field of law and justice.

The Minister of State for Science and Technology and Earth Sciences visited the UK from 25 April-01 May. He held a series of meetings with his counterpart Ministers in the UK and as well as Indian diaspora, StartUps and academicians. He co-chaired the India-UK Science & Innovation Council with the British Minister for Science, Innovation & Technology and exchanged MoU for wider cooperation between two countries, particularly in quantum Technology, clean energy. India UK Space Parks Partnership was also announced.

Minister of State for MeitY visited the UK from 01-02 November and participated in the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Summit hosted by the UK. He also had meetings with Michelle Donelan, UK Secretary of State for Science, Innovation and Technology and Viscount Camrose, Minister of State for AI and Intellectual Property during the AI Summit.

Other visits include a delegation led by the Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog from 06-10 February to address the opening session of the Investors Showcase Event on 09 February 2023. The Chief Justice of India visited the UK from 27 September-03 October to participate in the opening of the Legal Year.

Incoming Bilateral Visits

The then Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs James Cleverly visited India from 01-03 March. He participated in the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting hosted by India and launched the new UK-India Young Professional Scheme and announced the creation of the UK's first Tech Envoy to the Indo-Pacific region.

Chancellor of Exchequer, Jeremy Hunt travelled to India for the 12th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) on 11 September with his Indian counterpart. He alongside Andrew Bailey, the Governor of the Bank of England, visited India from 23-25 February and participated in a meeting of G7 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors on 23 February. The Chancellor also participated in the first G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meeting under the Indian Presidency. UK's Secretary of State for International Trade Kemi Badenoch visited India on 24 August for G20 Trade Ministers' meeting and participated in the ongoing FTA negotiations.

The then UK Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero Grant Schapps visited India and participated in the G20 Energy Transitions Ministerial in Goa on 22 July. The Minister of State (Minister for Energy Security and Net Zero) Graham Stuart visited India and participated in the G20 Climate and Environment Ministerial meeting on 04 September.

Alex Chalk, Secretary of State for Justice visited India to participate in International Lawyers' Conference 2023 in New Delhi on 24 September. He called on the Prime Minister and held a meeting with his counterpart.

Parliamentary Under Secretary of State of Department for Culture, Media and Sport Parkinson visited India and participated in G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting on 24 August. He also met MoS (ML) and discussed cultural cooperation between our two countries and ways to further strengthen people-to-people connect.

Tom Tugendhat, the UK Minister of State (Minister for Security) visited India and met EAM on 10 August.

The then UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero visited India and participated in the G20 Environment and Climate meetings in Chennai on 28 July. Sir John Whittingdale, UK Minister of State (Department for Culture, Media and Sport) visited India on 21-22 June to participate in the G20 Tourism Ministerial meeting in Goa.

UK Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Mel Stride visited India and participated in the G20 Labour & Employment Meeting in Indore on 20-21 July. UK Minister of State for Science, Innovation and Technology George Freeman visited India from 04-07 July and participated in the G20 Research Ministers' meeting in Mumbai.

UK Minister of State for Schools Nick Gibb visited India from 20-23 June to participate in the G20 4th Education Working Group meeting (EdWG) in Pune. He met the Minister of Education and Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on the sidelines of 4th EdWG and had productive discussions on innovation and scientific research and other areas to strengthen education partnership between India and the UK.

The then UK Minister of State (Minister for Defence Production) Alex Chalk represented UK's Secretary of State for Defence in Aero India-23 which was held from 13-17 February at Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bangalore and attended meetings with Indian government dignitaries.

Tariq Ahmad, Minister of State for the Middle East, South Asia, UN, visited India from 27 to 31 May. The Minister visited India covering Jodhpur, New Delhi and Hyderabad to boost UK-India tech and innovation partnership which includes health tech startups, youth skills development and emerging women leaders. The Minister of State in the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) Andrew Mitchell visited India from 11-12 June to participate in the G20 Development Ministerial Meeting in Varanasi and to boost UK-India cooperation on development including through climate and tech partnerships.

The APPG-India delegation co-led by Baroness Sandip Verma and Lord Karan Bilimoria visited India from 09-15 April. The delegation visited Mumbai, Pune, Delhi and Ahmedabad to discuss trade, research ties in India. They met with Vice-President, Foreign Secretary, Commerce Secretary, Chief Minister of Gujarat, Minister of Commerce and Industry, and Minister of Railways and IT.

A team led by Chief Hydrographer visited the UK from 05-07 July to participate in bilateral and technical meetings at the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO), Taunton. He visited technical facilities and conducted discussions with UKHO on diverse issues of mutual interest. The longstanding MoU for cooperation between the Royal Navy and Indian Navy was reviewed during the visit.

Bilateral Dialogues

The 2nd edition of the India UK Financial Markets Dialogue (FMD) was held on 19 April in London. 5th India-UK Home Affairs Dialogue (HAD) was held in New Delhi on 12 April. NSA Sir Tim Barrow met NSA Ajit Doval in New Delhi on 07 July and held productive and wide-ranging discussions on furthering the UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and also covered global security issues.

The 12th EFD meeting was held on 11 September in New Delhi led by Minister of Finance and UK Chancellor of Exchequer Jeremy Hunt.

Inaugural India-UK 2+2 Foreign and Defence Dialogue was held on 16 October in New Delhi. It was led by Joint Secretary (EW)

and India Director, FCDO. India-UK DCG meeting was held in New Delhi on 24 November. It was led by the Defence Secretary and Permanent Under Secretary for Defence.

Economic Relations

India-UK bilateral trade grew steadily in 2023. India-UK bilateral trade (both goods and services) stood at USD 46.13 billion during the FY 2022-23 (April 2022 - March 2023), an increase of 34.2 percent or USD 11.69 billion from 2021-22. Out of the above, India's total imports from the UK amounted to USD 18.68 billion and India's total exports to the UK amounted to USD 27.45 billion. India was the UK's 12th largest trading partner in this period accounting for 2.1 percent of UK's total trade. During the period April-August, total bilateral trade in goods was USD 9.44 billion, of which India's export to the UK was USD 5.34 billion while India's import from UK was USD 4.10 billion.

Indian companies invested in 118 projects and created 8,384 new jobs in the UK to retain the position of second-largest source of foreign direct investment (FDI) after the US in 2022-23. There are 954 Indian companies operating in the UK, with combined revenues of almost USD 64.18 billion. Together, they paid over USD 1.19 billion in corporate tax and employed 105,931 people. This figure excludes employees of UK branches of Indian companies. Fourteen rounds of negotiations of the FTA have been completed so far.

Education

The cooperation between India and the UK in the education sector has witnessed a major boost after the signing of the MoU on Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications in July 2022. The UK Home Office's 2022 study visa data shows that there were almost 140,000 visas issued in 2022 for Indian students, which is a 73 per cent growth over 2021. India overtook China which saw a 13 percent decline in the number of student visas during the same period.

MoUs and Agreements

On 26 April, the UK and India signed a landmark agreement on science, research and innovation during the UK-India Science and Innovation Council meeting held in London, launching a series of joint research programmes.

The Law Society of England and Wales, the Bar Council of England and Wales and the Bar Council of India signed an agreement in June to strengthen cooperation in the legal services sector.

Letters of Intent for foreign investments were signed between the Government of Uttarakhand and businesses in the UK during the visit of Chief Minister of Uttarakhand to the UK in September.

Defence Cooperation

The Chief of the Army Staff visited the UK from 09-11 August on the invitation of the Chief of General Staff, British Army. He was the first ever Indian Army Chief to be the chief guest and reviewing officer for the Sovereign's Parade at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst on 11 August.

The Vice Chief of the Air Staff visited the UK from 11-15 July and participated in the Global Air and Space Chiefs' Conference (GASCC) and Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT)-2023.

A delegation of three officers led by the Joint Secretary (Naval System) visited the UK from 02-04 March. The inaugural meeting and visit of the Joint Working Group on Electric Propulsion Capability Partnership (EPCP-JWG) was conducted at Portsmouth, UK from 02-03 March.

Commandant, DSSC Wellington-led two-member delegation visited UK Defence Academy Shrivenham from 28 February-02 March. The delegation had productive discussions with the UK side about engagement in the Professional Military Education domain.

A 12-member delegation of the National Cadet Corps (NCC) from India visited the UK from 05-19 August. A 12 member UK youth and cadet delegation visited India and participated in Republic Day camp 2023 from 16-30 January as part of the India-UK Youth Exchange Programme (YEP). A 16-member delegation from the 63rd course of NDC including five officers from Friendly Foreign Countries (FFCs) led by Rear Admiral Sanjay Sachdeva visited the UK on Foreign Studies Tour from 04-09 June.

The then UK Minister of State (Minister for Defence Production) Alex Chalk represented Secretary of State for Defence, UK and AVM Rich Maddison, Air Officer Commanding, 22 Group of Royal Air Force represented the CAS, Royal Air Force at Aero India-23 which was held from 13-17 February at Air Force Station Yelahanka, Bangalore.

Bilateral Exercises

IAF participated in a Multi-National Air Exercise Cobra Warrior 23-1 at Royal Air Force Waddington, UK from 01-27 March. Indian Army (Bihar Regiment) took part in 7th Edition of Ex Ajeya Warrior (India-UK Biennial Exercise) conducted at Salisbury Plain Training Area (SPTA), Salisbury, UK from 27 April-11 May 2023. The IN-RN annual bilateral maritime Konkan 2023 edition was held from 20-22 March in the Arabian Sea off the Konkan Coast. INS Trishul and HMS Lancaster participated in the exercise.

CHAPTER

9

The Americas

North America

United States of America

India-US relations acquired a new momentum in 2023 with both countries charting a futuristic road-map. High-level dialogue continued with two Leader-level engagements and several wide-ranging high-level interactions. The historic State Visit of the Prime Minister to the US in June elevated our comprehensive global strategic partnership to address shared priorities of the 21st century. President of the US, Joseph. R. Biden's visit to India for the G20 Summit served as another opportunity to advance the bilateral partnership.

Regular official engagements under institutionalised mechanisms continued apace. Visits of senior US Cabinet members for G20 meetings in India also provided an excellent opportunity for bilateral dialogues.

Technology collaboration emerged as a central pillar of India-US ties, with the initiative for Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) becoming a key platform for building resilient high-tech supply chains. Through iCET, both sides are taking forward engagement in new domains such as semiconductors, telecom, space, quantum, AI and defence. Key outcomes include investment announcements by five major US semiconductor companies which are currently under implementation.

Bilateral defence cooperation acquired a new dimension, with enhanced focus on linking the respective industries and efforts to facilitate technology transfer, co-production and innovation linkages. Bilateral trade registered a robust growth reaching almost USD 200 billion while FDI continued to grow in both directions.

Multilateral cooperation between India and the US remained strong with a growing agenda of global issues of mutual interest. The US supported India's G20 Presidency. The Prime Minister participated in the Quad Leaders' Summit and G7 Summit on 19-21 May in Hiroshima. The countries also established an India-US Global Challenges Institute to bring together leading research institutions for advancing new frontiers in Science and Technology. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor was announced by India, the US and other partners for enhanced connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Gulf and Europe.

People-to-people ties would be further strengthened through the opening of new consulates by the US in Bengaluru and Ahmedabad and India in Seattle.

High Level Visits

India-US ties registered an upward trajectory in 2023. The historic first State Visit of the Prime Minister to the US in June, and the first visit of the President of the US, Joseph R. Biden



Prime Minister was welcomed at the State Dinner hosted by the President of the United States of America Joseph Biden and the First Lady Dr. Jill Biden at the White House, June 2023

to India in September were instrumental in ushering in a new chapter in the bilateral strategic partnership.

Prime Minister's first State Visit to the US from 21-23 June at the invitation of President Biden was historic and resulted in substantive outcomes. Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with President Biden and addressed a Joint Session of the US Congress. He also interacted with captains of the industry, thought leaders, and members of the Indian community. The Prime Minister is among the few world leaders who addressed the US Congress more than once. During the visit, ISRO signed onto the Artemis Accords with the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). The Joint Statement included deliverables such as collaborations in emerging technologies, boosting commercial ties, diversifying defence cooperation and augmenting people-to-people ties.

President Biden's visit to New Delhi from 08-10 September to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit was his first as Head of State. He held a bilateral meeting with the Prime Minister on 08 September. A Joint Statement issued at the conclusion of their meeting, showcased progress of implementation of outcomes of the Prime Minister's visit to the US in June. President Biden co-hosted a group of G20 leaders to accelerate investments in high-quality infrastructure projects. Prime Minister joined President Biden and other like-minded partners to launch the India Middle East-Europe Economic Connectivity Corridor.

In addition to their Summit level interactions, the two Leaders spoke over a phone call on 14 February. The Prime Minister participated in the Second Summit for Democracy on 29 March in virtual mode. This event was convened by President Biden. He also participated in the 5th Quad Leaders' Summit and the G7 Summit on 20 May in Hiroshima, Japan. Prime Minister and President Biden also held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit.

Ministerial Engagements and Bilateral Dialogues

EAM and the US Secretary of State Antony Blinken maintained regular contact throughout the year. Secretary Blinken visited New Delhi on 01-03 March to participate in the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and held a bilateral meeting with EAM. EAM and Secretary Blinken also met in Jakarta on 14 July on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

EAM visited Washington DC from 27 September to 01 October to hold discussions with Secretary Blinken, Secretary of Defence Lloyd J. Austin, Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan, US Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai and several political and Congressional leaders. He also interacted with business leaders, think-tanks and members of the Indian community.



Raksha Mantri and EAM, US Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd J. Austin III attended the 5th 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue in New Delhi, India, November 2023

The 5th India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, co-led by Raksha Mantri and EAM and their US counterparts, Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin, was held on 10 November in New Delhi. Secretary Blinken and Secretary Austin held bilateral meetings with their respective counterparts and jointly called on the Prime Minister. Secretary Austin visited India twice this year and Secretary Blinken visited thrice.

The inaugural meeting of iCET was co-chaired by the two NSAs and held on 31 January in Washington DC. The event witnessed the participation of high-ranking domain experts from both sides. iCET will enable cooperation in critical and emerging technologies, co-development and coproduction, and connect the respective innovation ecosystems.

US NSA Jake Sullivan visited India on 13-14 June, his first since assuming the role. He had a bilateral meeting with our NSA, met with the EAM and called on the Prime Minister. Both NSAs co-chaired the second iCET meeting and reviewed preparations for the Prime Minister's visit to the US.

Principal Deputy National Security Advisor (PDNSA) Jonathan Finer visited India on 04 December, for a mid-term review of iCET co-chaired by his Indian counterpart. PDNSA Finer also met the EAM, NSA and Foreign Secretary. He also delivered a keynote address in the annual Global Technology Summit hosted by Carnegie India.

Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs (FM) visited the US to participate in the IMF-World Bank Spring Meetings in April. She also met US Secretary of Treasury Janet Yellen and held other engagements. Secretary Yellen attended the G20

Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors meetings on 24-25 February in Bengaluru and 17-18 July in Gandhinagar, respectively.

Minister of Jal Shakti visited the USA from 26 February-01 March to participate in Water Week organised by the World Bank Group in Washington DC. Minister of Commerce and Industry (CIM) co-chaired the 13th India-US Trade Policy Forum (TPF) along with USTR Katherine Tai on 11 January in Washington DC. They announced the setting-up of a new TPF Working Group on Resilient Trade.

CIM visited the US from 14-16 November to participate in the third Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) Ministerial Meeting and Leaders' Summit in San Francisco. At this meeting, India became a signatory of Pillar-II of IPEF on Supply Chain Resilience. He also represented India at the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) Investor Forum, and the APEC Leaders' Summit, where India was invited as a guest economy. Furthermore, CIM and the US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo held a bilateral meeting with leading CEOs and signed an MoU on 'Innovation Handshake' which seeks to strengthen the startup ecosystem in deep-tech sectors and promote bilateral cooperation in critical and emerging technologies.

Minister for Electronics and Information Technology visited California from 08-12 May to meet Industry leaders, especially those from the semiconductor domain. A MoU between India Semiconductor Mission and Purdue University was signed during his visit.

US Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo travelled to India in March to chair the Commercial Dialogue along with CIM. The Ministers also participated in the India-US CEOs Forum. Secretary Raimondo called on the Prime Minister and met with EAM, the Minister of Electronics and Communication Technology (MeitY), and the FM. The two sides also announced the launch of the India-US Strategic Trade Dialogue (IUSSTD) for easing export control approvals and technology transfer, to boost high-tech trade and collaborations. A MoU between the US Department of Commerce and Ministry of Commerce and Industry was signed to facilitate cooperation in the semiconductor domain.

Secretary of Energy Jennifer Granholm visited India on 18 July to co-chair the India-US Strategic Clean Energy Partnership (SCEP) Ministerial with her counterpart Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. They agreed to advance development and deployment of energy storage technologies, expand collaboration in support of their respective national hydrogen strategies, and accelerate cooperation in new and emerging renewable energy technologies.

A nine-member Congressional delegation led by Senate Majority Leader Senator Chuck Schumer (D-NY) visited India from 18-23 February. He was accompanied by Senator Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-MN), Senator Mark Warner (D-VA), Senator Gary Peters (D-MI), Senator Catherine Corbett (D-NV) and Senator Peter Welch (D-VT). Senator Todd Young (R-IN) visited India on 11-15 April.

A bipartisan Congressional delegation led by the co-chairs of the House Caucus on India and Indian Americans, Congressman Michael Waltz (R-FL) and Congressman Ro Khanna (D-CA) visited India from 10-16 August. They were accompanied by Congresswoman Deborah Ross (D-NC), Congresswoman Kat Cammack (R-FL), Congressman Shri Thanedar (D-MI) and Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett (D-TX). In addition, Congressman Rich McCormick (R-GA) from the House Armed Services Committee and Congressman Ed Case (D-HI) visited New Delhi from 15-17 August, while Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) visited the country from 15-22 December.

Foreign Secretary visited Washington DC from 04-06 June to co-chair the first IUSSTD along with Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland and Under Secretary of Commerce for Industry and Security Alan Estevez. They discussed ways of facilitating strategic technology and trade collaborations and easing export control regimes to boost high-tech trade and interactions. They also set-up a Monitoring Mechanism at the level of Assistant Secretary. This mechanism convened its first session in New Delhi on 07 December.

Foreign Secretary also met the then Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman, Deputy USTR Sarah Bianchi, PDNSA Jonathan Finer and Indo-Pacific Coordinator in the US National Security Council Kurt Campbell among others.

The 10th India-US Consular Dialogue, co-chaired by US Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs and Joint Secretary (CPV) in MEA was held in Washington DC on 27 April. The 4th meeting of the India-US Counter Narcotics Working Group led by the Director General of India's Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and the US Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy Dr Rahul Gupta, was held in Washington DC on 19-20 July. India also joined the US-led Global Coalition to counter Synthetic Drugs. Dr. Gupta visited India on 19-21 November to hold bilateral meetings where he also met his counterpart in NCB.

Other incoming visits included the US Special Presidential Envoy on Climate John Kerry on 25-29 July, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland on 30-31 January and National Science Foundation Director Sethuraman Panchanathan on 21-22 August, among others.

Defence Cooperation

Defence partnership, a key pillar of the India-US strategic partnership witnessed an intensification in joint military exercises, defence industrial collaborations, technology transfer, defence trade, cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy efforts.

US Secretary of Defence, Lloyd Austin's visit to New Delhi from 04-05 June ensured continuation of high-level dialogue with Raksha Mantri. Both sides agreed to a Defence Industrial Roadmap to augment co-production, co-development and other exchanges between the respective defence industries.

Defence Secretary visited Washington DC on 16-18 May and co-chaired the 17th Defence Policy Group (DPG) meeting with the then Under Secretary of Defence Policy Dr Colin Kahl.

There were several incoming visits from the US this year. In March, Secretary of US Air Force, Frank Kendall III and INDOPACOM Commander Admiral John Aquilino visited India. In April, Pacific Air Force Commander General Kenneth Wilsbach visited India, while Under Secretary of Defense for Research and Engineering Dr Heidi Shyu visited New Delhi on 16-18 September.

There were several outgoing visits to the US from India. The Chief of Defence Staff visited the US from 15-17 May, while the Chief of Naval Staff Admiral visited the US from 15-22 September to participate in the International Sea Power Symposium. The Air Chief Marshal visited the US to participate at the Pacific Air Chiefs' Symposium from 13-16 November.

India conducts more bilateral exercises with the US than with any other country. Bilateral military exercises grew in scale and complexity with deployment of more assets, equipment and personnel. Bilateral Air Exercise Cope India held in West Bengal from 10-21 April witnessed the largest participation of US fighters and bombers so far. The bilateral Army Exercise Yudh Abhyas was held in Alaska from 25 September to 08

October and the Special Forces Exercise Vajra Prahar was held in Meghalaya from 21 November to 11 December. The Malabar Naval Exercise witnessed the participation of the navies of India, US, Australia and Japan and was held from 11-21 August off the coast of Australia.

Two US MSC ships, USNS Matthew Perry and USNS Salvor visited India for repair and maintenance in March and July under commercial contracts. L&T shipyard in Kattupalli and Mazagaon Docks Ltd shipyard in Mumbai signed commercial agreements with the US for ship repairs.

The India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS X) was launched under the bilateral Defence Industrial Roadmap to promote defence innovation by involving private sector and academia. INDUS X announced two challenges pertaining to maritime intelligence, surveillance & recognizance and underwater communication. The Memorandum of Agreement between Anthropological Survey of India and US Department of Defense Prisoners of War/Missing In action (POW/MIA) Accounting Agency was renewed to facilitate the recovery of fallen US Service members who had served in World War II from India.

The India-US Joint Technology Group (JTG) meeting was co-chaired by the Director General, DRDO and Principal Deputy Chief Technology Officer (PDCTO) of US Department of Defence Terence Emmert from 15-17 March in DRDO, New Delhi.

Defence cooperation amongst the countries further intensified through meetings including the 26th India-USA Army-to-Army Executive Steering Group (ESG) meeting held on 20-21 April in New Delhi and the 20th India-US Military Cooperation Group (MCG) Meeting held in Hawaii on 30-31 August. The Indian and US Armies co-hosted the Indo-Pacific Army Chiefs Conference (IPACC), Indo-Pacific Management Seminar (IPAMS) and Senior Enlisted Leaders Forum (SELF) in New Delhi from 25-27 September. The US Army delegation including US Army Chief for IPACC Gen Randy George, also participated in the event.

In an unprecedented step, the US Government granted manufacturing licence to Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the F414 engines of GE Aerospace Ltd which will power the indigenisation of the Tejas Mk2 fighter aircrafts.

The inaugural AI and Space Dialogue was held in New Delhi on 22 May to enhance collaboration in new defence domains.

Trade and Economic and Cooperation

Expanding commercial linkages is an important aspect of the bilateral agenda. India-US trade reached USD 191 billion in 2022. The US has been India's largest goods trading partner since the financial year 2021-22 with rapid growth in sectors such as energy, defence, manufacturing, and information technology.

The year witnessed a significant growth in two-way investments with the establishment of more than 2000 US companies in India. In the year 2022-2023, the US's FDI to India stood at USD 6.04 billion. The US' total cumulative investment to India between April 2000 and September 2023 to India stood at USD 62.25 billion.

This year both countries resolved seven outstanding bilateral trade disputes in the WTO with a forward-looking approach. Five US semiconductor companies made announcements about investments in India including Micron's combined investment of USD 2.75 billion, LAM Research's to train 60,000 engineers, Applied Materials to invest USD 400 million to establish a collaborative engineering centre in India, Advanced Micro Devices' announcement to invest USD 400 million in India and Microchip Technology to invest USD 300 million in expanding its R&D presence in India. Telecom sector saw focused efforts with both sides setting up two public-private Task Forces for Open RAN and R&D in 5G/6G technologies. India also joined the US-led plurilateral Minerals Security Partnership to accelerate the development of diverse and sustainable critical energy minerals supply chains globally.

Energy and Climate Cooperation

The US and India continued to collaborate on clean energy by pursuing efforts in emerging fuels, electrification and decarbonization of end-use sectors, R&D for smart grids and energy storage, and Carbon Capture, Utilisation, and Storage (CCUS). The Renewable Energy Technology Action Platform (RETAP) was set-up in August to enable the deployment and scaling of green/clean hydrogen, wind energy, long duration energy storage, geothermal energy, ocean/tidal energy and other emerging technologies.

The two countries are also collaborating on a Green Transition Fund of USD 1 billion, wherein USD 500 million each have been committed by the National Infrastructure and Investment Fund of India and the US Development Finance Corporation. The two countries are developing a payment security mechanism through public and private funds to decarbonize the transport sector by deploying 10,000 made-in India electric buses in India.

Space, Science & Technology and IT Cooperation

ISRO India signed the Artemis Accords on 21 June with the NASA in US. Under the framework of these Accords, ISRO now joins other signatories in peaceful exploration of outer space in accordance with international law. ISRO and NASA also agreed to develop a Strategic framework for human spaceflight cooperation and undertake a joint effort to the International Space Station.

There was an exchange of visits by Chairman, ISRO to the US during January 30 to February 04, and NASA's Administrator Senator Bill Nelson to India from 27 November to 01 December. The 8th India-US Civil Space Joint Working Group meeting was held at Washington DC on 30-31 January.

Growing ties with US National Science Foundation (NSF) were instrumental in expansion of existing R&D linkages through Implementation Agreements (IA) between the respective stakeholders. The Department of Science and Technology, India and the US NSF signed an IA on 30 January for supporting research in computing, communications, information science and engineering, advanced cyber infrastructure, secure and trustworthy computing, cyber-physical systems, among others. MeitY and NSF signed an IA on 26 May for joint research collaborations in semiconductors, next generation communication systems, cyber-security, sustainability and green technologies, and intelligent transportation systems. Department of Biotechnology (DBT), India and NSF also signed an IA on 22 August for collaboration on biotechnology research and biomanufacturing and presented India's vision for Biotechnology.

The 'India-US Science and Technology Endowment fund' of USD 2 Million was announced in June for joint development and commercialization of AI and quantum technologies for health care.

Health Cooperation

The 5th India-US Health Dialogue was co-chaired by the Deputy Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services of the US and Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Secretary of Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) from India. The dialogue was held from 10-13 October in Washington DC. The two countries discussed collaboration in several areas including pandemic preparedness and response.

Under the Cancer Moonshot initiative finalised in June, Department of Biotechnology India and US National Cancer Institute will work together to expand access to cancer prevention screening, treatment and care for people, including through increasing cancer research infrastructure and training.

Education, Culture Cooperation and People-to-People Exchanges

Education exchanges are robust with more than 260,000 Indian students presently pursuing programs in US' higher educational institutions. The India-US Working Group on Education and Skill Development was launched in May to focus on skilling and vocational education, certification and recognition, matchmaking between higher educational institutions and engaging with the private sector.

The Council of Indian Institutes of Technology, and the Association of American Universities signed an MoU for establishment of an "Indo-US Global Challenges Institute". With funding of USD 5 million from each side, the Institute will bring together leading research and higher-education institutions for collaborations in sustainable energy and agriculture, health and pandemic preparedness, and critical technologies.

During the Prime Minister's visit to the US in June, the US Government handed over 105 trafficked antiquities, as part of their ongoing efforts to return illegally acquired cultural artefacts.

MoUs and Agreements

- Artemis Accords: Principles for cooperation in the civil exploration and use of the Moon, Mars, Comets and Asteroids.
- Implementation Arrangements between DST and NSF; MeitY and NSF; and DBT and NSF for collaborative research and technology development.
- MoU on Semiconductor cooperation between the US Department of Commerce and the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- MoU for setting-up the framework of Innovation Handshake by the US Department of Commerce and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- MoU between India Semiconductor Mission (overseen by MeitY) and Purdue University.
- The Council of Indian Institutes of Technology, and the Association of American Universities signed an MOU on establishment of an "Indo-US Global Challenges Institute".
- Renewal of Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between Anthropological Survey of India and US Department of Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency; to facilitate recovery of the fallen US Service members from India, who served in World War II.

Canada

India-Canada relations are based on strong people-to-people ties and robust economic linkages. Canada participated in India's G20 proceedings through Ministerial and official participation. There was regular dialogue and engagement in 2023, especially during visits by Foreign Minister of Canada Melanie Joly to India and Minister of Commerce and Industries to Canada. Prime Minister of Canada Justin Trudeau participated in the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi in September.

The statement and allegations by Prime Minister Trudeau in the Canadian Parliament in September were rejected. We continued

to engage with the Government of Canada to address our national security concerns and asked them to deny space to anti-India and extremist elements operating from Canadian soil.

High Level Visits

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended the G20 Leaders' Summit in New Delhi on 09-10 September. Prime Minister and Prime Minister Trudeau also held a bilateral meeting on the sidelines. Furthermore, Prime Minister Trudeau attended the G20 Leaders' Summit hosted by the Prime Minister on 22 November in virtual mode.

Deputy Prime Minister (DPM) and Finance Minister Chrystia Freeland visited Bengaluru in February to participate in the 1st G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting. Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs (FM) and the Canadian DPM held several bilateral meetings in February and actively interacted on sidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings on 14 April in Washington D.C. The Ministers also met on sidelines of 3rd G20 Finance Ministers' Meeting held on 16 July in Gandhinagar and the Central Bank Governors' Meeting.

Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly and EAM co-chaired the India-Canada Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi on 06 February. They also met on the sidelines of the ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting in Jakarta on 14 July.



EAM and Foreign Minister of Canada Mélanie Joly co-chaired the India-Canada Strategic Dialogue in New Delhi, February 2023

Raksha Mantri had a telephone conversation with the then Minister of National Defence of Canada, Anita Anand on 19 April. Minister of Commerce & Industry (CIM) visited Canada from 07-11 May and co-chaired the 6th Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment (MDTI), with Minister for International Trade of Canada Mary Ng in Ottawa on 08 May. The CIM was accompanied by an Indian business delegation and interacted with a cross-section of Canadian business leaders, Pension Fund and investors.

Foreign Minister Joly attended the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting 01-02 March in New Delhi and participated in Raisina Dialogue on 03 March. The then Minister for International Development Harjeet Sajjan participated in the G-20 Development Ministers' Meeting in Varanasi on 11-13 June.

The then Minister of Agriculture Marie-Claude Bibeau attended the G20 Agriculture Ministers Meeting in Hyderabad on 15-17 June. She met her Indian counterpart, CIM and Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying. Minister of Environment and Climate Change Steven Guilbeault attended the G20 Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministers Meeting in Chennai on 28 July. Minister for International Trade Mary Ng attended G20 Trade and Investment Ministerial Meeting in Jaipur on 24-25 August.

Premier of Saskatchewan Province Scott Moe visited Mumbai, Chandigarh and Delhi with a trade delegation from 26 February-03 March. He met some Ministers and business leaders, and participated in the Raisina Dialogue. Premier of Yukon Province Ranj Pillai visited Thiruvananthapuram and New Delhi along with a business delegation from 13-18 September. He met the Chief Minister of Kerala and some senior GoI officials.

Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan Province Randy Weekes visited Haryana along with a five-member delegation from 09-14 April. Minister of Agriculture of Saskatchewan David Marit led a delegation to India to attend the 'Pulses Conclave' in Mumbai from 16-18 February. Canadian Member of Parliament Chandra Arya met the EAM on 11 July.

Bilateral Mechanisms

Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs and Deputy Foreign Minister David Morrison co-chaired the Foreign Office Consultations in Ottawa on 11 April to review bilateral cooperation, and regional and international issues of shared interest. Secretary (East) also met with the then Minister of National Defence Anita Anand, National Security and Intelligence Advisor Jody Thomas and the then Vice Chairperson of Canada-India Parliamentary Friendship Group Brad Redekopp.

Secretary (Mines) in the Ministry of Mines participated in the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada in Toronto from 05-08 March. Secretary, Petroleum & Natural Gas, participated in the 24th World Petroleum Congress in Calgary, Canada from

17-21 August. He also interacted with the Premier of Alberta Province Daniella Smith, other Provincial Ministers and met several companies from the energy sector.

India-Canada Joint Working Group meeting on Counter-Terrorism was co-chaired by the Joint Secretary (Counter-Terrorism) and his Canadian counterpart and held in New Delhi on 03 February.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

Trade and investment linkages are a key component of the bilateral partnership. India's exports to Canada in 2023-24 (April-September) were worth USD 1.88 billion and imports from Canada were worth USD 2.04 billion. Total bilateral trade was USD 3.92 billion in 2023-24 (April-September). Ongoing negotiations for the bilateral Early Progress Trade Agreement were put on hold by Canada.

Portfolio investments from Canada into India increased to more than USD 75 billion, on account of India's economic growth potential. More than 600 Canadian companies have established a presence in India and more than 1000 companies are pursuing business opportunities in India.

People-to-People Exchanges

Canada has one of the largest Indian Diasporas in the world comprising 1.6 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs). Canada's Indian diaspora accounts for around 3% of its total population. There are around one million non-resident Indians in Canada.

The Diaspora, mainly concentrated in Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, Calgary, Ottawa and Winnipeg, has contributed significantly to the Canadian polity, economy & society. There are numerous business and Diaspora organisations, supporting enhanced people-to-people and cultural linkages. India is Canada's largest source-country of foreign students with an estimated 230,000 Indian students. On 03 May, ICCR and McGill University, Montreal signed a MoU, for establishment of a Chair on Indian Studies.

Following an assessment of the security situation in Canada and threats to our diplomats, visa operations were briefly suspended and partially resumed later.

Quad Engagement

Dialogue and engagement under the Quad framework has gained momentum and salience in recent years with the participation of the Prime Minister in the Quad Leaders' Summit, regular meetings of Foreign Ministers, and the announcement of initiatives for delivery of public goods to countries in the Indo-Pacific.

On 20 May, the Prime Minister joined the Quad leaders from the US, Japan and Australia, in Hiroshima, Japan for the Leaders' Summit. They discussed regional developments and ways to deepen existing Quad cooperation in areas such as climate and clean energy, health, infrastructure, connectivity, space, cyber and critical & emerging technologies. On conclusion of the Summit, a Joint Statement and Vision Statement were issued, to enunciate their shared vision for the Quad and the Indo-Pacific region.

Quad Foreign Ministers met in New Delhi on 03 March, on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers meeting. They also participated in a joint session at the Raisina Dialogue on 03 March organised by the think-tank ORF India.

Quad Foreign Ministers met again on 22 September in New York on the sidelines of the UNGA. They issued a Joint Statement reaffirming the importance of upholding mutually determined rules, norms, and standards, and deepening Quad cooperation in the international system. They reiterated their commitment to the UN Charter and its purposes and principles. Furthermore, they noted their commitment to advancing a comprehensive UN reform agenda including through the expansion in permanent and non-permanent seats of the UNSC.

Quad Workshops and activities in 2023:

- Events under Climate, Cyber, Counter-Terrorism, and HADR Working Groups.
- The first batch of Quad STEM Fellows commenced academic courses in Fall 2023 in the USA.
- Quad Investors Network (QUIN) organised the Quad Investment and Technology Dialogue on 16 October in Washington D.C.

The next Quad Leaders' Summit would be held in India in 2024.

Latin America and the Caribbean

India's relations with the 33 countries of Latin America and the Caribbean region witnessed unprecedented growth with a renewed momentum in bilateral and multilateral ties.

President of Cooperative Republic of Guyana Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali and President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi, visited India to participate at the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas as the Chief Guest and Guest of Honour, respectively. They were received by the Hon'ble President and Prime Minister. On 25 January, the Hon'ble President participated virtually in the plenary session of 7th Summit of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean Nations (CELAC) as Special Guest. The Hon'ble President made her maiden state visit to Suriname in June to attend the celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of Indians in Suriname, during which she was conferred with the highest civilian award of Suriname - the Grand Order



EAM attended the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave in New Delhi, August 2023

of the Chain of the Yellow Star. Vice President received his counterparts from Guyana, Venezuela and Dominican Republic. Prime Minister met President of Brazil Lula da Silva in New Delhi on 10 September, on the sidelines of the G20 Summit and earlier in May on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Hiroshima. At the closing of the G20 Summit, the Prime Minister handed over the gavel to the President of Brazil. India, Brazil and the US launched the Global Biofuel Alliance on 09 September.

EAM paid his first official visits to Guyana, Panama, Colombia and Dominican Republic. EAM received Foreign ministers of El Salvador, Honduras, Panama and Suriname and also met his counterparts from Argentina, Brazil and Mexico on the sidelines of the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting. Partnerships with regional bodies such as the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Central American Integration System (SICA) were strengthened. EAM met the Secretary General of CARICOM Dr. Carla Natalie Barnett on 21 April in Georgetown and co-chaired the 4th India-CARICOM Ministerial Meeting with Foreign Minister of Jamaica Kamina Smith in Georgetown. EAM also participated in the 4th India - SICA Foreign Ministers Meeting on 26 April in Panama City. MoS (ML) paid official visits to Cuba, Guatemala, El-Salvador and Bolivia in January and to Paraguay and Ecuador in November. Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) were held with Chile, Peru, El Salvador, Brazil, Ecuador and Guatemala.

India-Latin American Countries (LAC) bilateral trade surged to almost USD 50 Billion during the financial year 2022-23. The 9th CII India-LAC Conclave under the theme "Furthering Economic Partnerships for Shared & Sustained Growth" was organised in New Delhi from 03-05 August and witnessed the participation of high-level delegations, senior Government officials and business people from India and LAC countries.

The newly opened Indian Embassy in Dominican Republic was

formally inaugurated as a testimony of India's commitment to strengthening ties with the region and expanding its diplomatic footprint. India continued its development-partnership-association with Latin America and the Caribbean through assistance in form of grants and lines of credit. India-built Ocean-going Passenger-cum-Cargo Ferry MV 'Ma Lisha' was commissioned on 23 April at Georgetown and delivered to Guyana.

South America

Argentina

India-Argentina bilateral relationship continued to flourish with enhanced engagements and interactions across a wider spectrum.

Riding high on the platform presented by India's G20 Presidency, there were multiple exchanges of visits in the year 2023. The then President of Argentina Alberto Fernandez participated in the 18th G20 summit held in September in New Delhi. He also participated in the virtual Summit held on 22 November. The then Defence Minister of Argentina Jorge Taiana, paid the first ever bilateral visit to India, marking the first ever visit by the Defence Minister of Argentina in July. The then Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Daniel Filmus also paid a visit to the country in February.

Several Argentine Ministers and senior officials visited India for the G20 Ministerial and other meetings. The then Minister of Women, Gender and Diversity Ayelén Mazzina, attended the G20 Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment in August at Gandhinagar. The then Minister of Labour, Employment and Social Security Kelly Olmos attended the G20 Labour and Employment Ministerial Meeting in July at Indore, while the

then Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Daniel Filmus attended the G20 Research Ministers' Meeting in July in Mumbai. The then Foreign Minister Santiago Cafiero attended the G20 Foreign Ministers Meeting in March in New Delhi and the then Minister of Economy Sergio Massa attended G20 Finance Ministers' Meeting in February in Bengaluru. On the sidelines of these G20 Ministerial meetings, bilateral meetings between visiting Argentine Ministers and their Indian counterparts were also organised. The then Minister of Health Carla Vizzotti participated virtually in the Health Ministers' session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held on 17 November.

The second meeting of the Joint Coordination Committee under bilateral Agreement for cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was held in Buenos Aires on 01-03 August.

On 29 September, Ambassador of India to Argentina and the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina Santiago Cafiero signed a Social Security Agreement (SSA) to facilitate transfer of workers' benefits and improve labour mobility.

An India-Argentina Center of Excellence in IT (CEIT) was inaugurated by the then Education Minister Jaime Perczyk on 18 April at National University of Hurlingham. On 13 November, Ambassador of India to Argentina and the then Defence Minister Jorge Enrique Taiana signed a Specific Implementing Arrangement on Academic Cooperation, under the framework of an MoU on Defence Cooperation between India and Argentina.

Bilateral trade continued on its healthy growth trajectory, enabling it to double from USD 3 billion in 2019 to USD 6.4 billion in 2022. CHEMEXCIL signed an MOU for cooperation with its Argentine counterpart CAPQ. OVL Ltd and YPF (Argentine public sector company) signed a MoU to promote cooperation in the oil and gas sector in February. The first ever commercial agreement in the defence sector was signed between Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Argentine Air Force in February for helicopter spares and engine maintenance. HAL and FAdeA (Argentine PSU in aviation sector) signed a cooperation agreement in June.

Bolivia

India-Bolivia ties continued to strengthen during 2023.

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Bolivia on 20 January and met with the then Foreign Minister Rogelio Mayta. This was the first ever visit from MEA to Bolivia. The then Minister of Development Planning Sergio Cusicanqui visited India from 03-05 August and participated in the 9th CII-LAC Business Conclave. On the margins of the conclave, he met EAM, Union Finance Minister and the General Manager of EXIM Bank. The third meeting of the Joint Working Group (JWG) on Traditional Medicines was held on 17 February. The second meeting of the JWG on Mineral and Geology was held on 09 June 2023.

In 2022-23, two-way trade amounted to USD 2,274.90 million. India's exports to Bolivia were valued at USD 222.33 million, while its imports were pegged at USD 2,052.57 million.

Brazil

India and Brazil commemorated 75 years of the establishment of their diplomatic relations in 2023. India-Brazil relations continued to deepen further with high level exchanges and regular meetings across their respective institutional mechanisms of cooperation. Prime Minister met President of Brazil Lula da Silva for the first time, on the sidelines of the G7 summit, held in Hiroshima, Japan on 21 May. They reviewed their Strategic Partnership, and discussed ways to further deepen it. The leaders issued a joint statement at the conclusion of their second meeting, held in New Delhi on 10 September at the sidelines of the G20 Summit.

The Prime Minister welcomed President Lula's announcement supporting India's candidature for the non-permanent seat of the UNSC for the 2028-29 term. Both sides celebrated the establishment of the Global Biofuels Alliance announced during India's G20 presidency, as founding members of the grouping. The leaders also welcomed the establishment of the India-Brazil Business Forum as a dedicated platform for private sector collaboration. Prime Minister handed over the gavel to President Lula, at the closing of the G20 Summit. The Prime Minister also received a telephone call from President Lula on 10 November. President Lula also participated virtually in the concluding session of the 2nd Voice of the Global South Summit, held in November.

EAM met Foreign Minister of Brazil Mauro Vieira on 28 February in New Delhi. EAM and Foreign Minister Vieira also met on the sidelines of the BRICS Foreign Ministers' meeting in June. Being a G20 Troika member, several Brazilian ministers visited India to participate in important G20 Ministerial Meetings including Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors Meeting, Foreign Ministers Meeting, Research Ministers Meeting, Energy Working Group Ministerial Meeting, and Health Working Group Ministerial Meeting. Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira also participated in the Raisina Dialogue. President of the Brazilian Chamber of Deputies Arthur Lira participated in the P20 Summit in New Delhi on 12 October.

The 2nd Foreign Office Consultations between India and Brazil were held in Brasilia on 20 June and was co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Secretary for Asia and the Pacific, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Brazil.

The Brazil-India Parliamentary Friendship Group was inaugurated on 04 April in the Senate under the leadership of Senator Nelson Trad Filho. The India-Brazil Parliamentary Friendship Group was constituted following the general elections held in Brazil. Federal Deputy Vinicius Carvalho serves as the President of the group.

An Indian Parliamentary Goodwill delegation led by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines, visited Brazil on 11-13 June. During the visit, the delegation held meetings with President of India-Brazil Friendship Front and Members (Senators) of the Front Senator Nelson Trad, President of the Federal Senate National Congress of Brazil Rodrigo Otavio Soares Pacheco, and President of the India-Brazil Parliamentary Friendship Group and Members of the Group Federal Deputy Vinicius Carvalho. The delegation, during their visit to Rio de Janeiro, Brasilia and Sao Paulo also interacted with the Indian community based in these cities.

A group of 13 Parliamentarians including 3 Senators and 10 Congressmen visited India in July. The visit was aimed at generating greater awareness of the potential for engaging with India in different sectors including in the field of ethanol.

Brazil handed over the International Solar Alliance (ISA) Instrument of Ratification on 03 February after becoming a full member of the International Solar Alliance.

The year 2023 marked high level exchanges of defence delegations and visits of defence industries. Indian Defence PSUs along with Indian private defence equipment manufacturers participated in the 13th edition of Latin American Defence and Security Exhibition (LAAD) held at Rio de Janeiro from 11-14 April. Army Commander of Brazil General Tomas Miguel Mine Ribeiro Paiva led a four-member team's visit to India from 29 August-01 September. A Brazilian Navy delegation led by Chief of General Staff of Brazilian Navy Admiral José Augusto Vieira da Cunha de Menezes visited India in September. INS Tarini made a port call at Rio de Janeiro on 04 February after participating in the "Cape to Rio Race."

India-Brazil bilateral trade has been growing rapidly, almost doubling from USD 7.26 billion in 2020-21 to USD 16.59 billion, in 2022-23. The bilateral trade expanded by 32%, with India's exports pegged at USD 9.92 billion and imports at USD 6.67 billion.

The 6th Meeting of the Brazil-India Trade Monitoring Mechanism was held on 04 October in Brasilia. The meeting was led by the Commerce Secretary and the Brazilian Secretary of Foreign Trade of Brazil.

A delegation from Brazil led by Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Food Supply Carlos Favaro visited India in November. The Minister met the Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs & Food & Public Distribution and Textiles, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and other dignitaries. A delegation led by Governor of the State of Mato Grosso of Brazil, Mauro Mendes Ferreira visited India in November. The delegation met the Minister of Food Processing Industries and MoS (ML). On the International Day of Yoga, the Brazilian Parliament hosted a special session chaired by Congresswoman Érika Kokay.

Chile

Bilateral relations between India and Chile continued to grow and strengthen, with continued interaction and cooperation in multilateral forums.

The then Foreign Minister of Chile, Antonia Urrejola participated in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the inaugural edition of the Voice of Global South Summit held on 12-13 January. Eighth Round of India-Chile Foreign Office Consultations took place on 31 March in New Delhi. The Indian side was led by Secretary (East) and the then Ambassador, Secretary-General of Foreign Affairs (SEGEN) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Chile Alex Wetzig.

Vice Minister for International Economic Relations (SUBRIE) of Chile, Claudia Sanhueza, visited India on 23-25 October. She met the Minister of Commerce and Industry and MoS (ML). The Foreign Minister of Chile who is also in-charge of Foreign Trade participated in the Commerce & Trade Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit held on 17 November. A delegation led by the Director General of Bilateral Economic Affairs of SUBRIE Sebastian Gomez, participated in the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave held in Delhi on 03-04 August.

India and Chile signed an MoU for cooperation in the fields of agriculture and allied sectors. Chile became a member of the International Solar Alliance subsequent to ratification of the ISA Framework Agreement.

Colombia

India and Colombia continued to deepen their multifaceted partnership and maintained a high level of bilateral engagement during the period.

EAM paid an official visit to Colombia from 25-27 April. This was his first visit to Colombia and also the first visit of an EAM from India. EAM met Foreign Minister of Colombia Alvaro Leyva Duran, on 26 April. Cultural Exchange Programme 2023-26 was signed during the visit.

The then Minister of Finance of Colombia Jose Ocampo participated virtually in the Finance Ministers' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit on 12 January. Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Francisco Coy participated virtually in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November.

Bilateral trade for the period January-September stood at approx. USD 3 billion. Imports from Colombia for the period stood at approx. USD 2.1 billion while exports to Colombia stood at approx. USD 0.89 billion.



EAM met Foreign Minister of Colombia Alvaro Leyva Duran during his official visit to Colombia, April 2023

Cuba

India-Cuba bilateral relations further strengthened with increased political and commercial interactions at all levels. India assisted Cuban food security with the procurement of around 166,000 MT of rice, under short-term Line-of-Credit to the tune of EUR 100 million, signed in June 2022. The rice was shipped from India to Cuba in 6 shipments between January to June. Prime Minister and President of Cuba Miguel Díaz-Canel interacted on the sidelines of the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa.

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Cuba from 12-14 January where she called on the President of Cuba and President of the National Assembly of People's Power of Cuba Esteban Lazo Hernández, met with Minister of Culture Alpidio Alonso Grau, and the Acting Minister of Foreign Affairs Gerardo Peñalver Portal. The Chief Minister of Kerala led an official delegation of the Kerala Government to Cuba from 14-16 June. He called on the President of Cuba, and held meetings with Cuban sports and health institutions, Ministries of Public Health, and Foreign Trade & Investment, and the Governor of Havana.

Cuba participated in the Education Ministers' Session on 13 January in virtual mode. The then Minister of Higher Education of Cuba Dr. C. José Ramón Saborido Loidi addressed the session based on the theme "Human Resource Development and Capacity Building". The two countries held inter-foreign ministerial consultations in Havana on 07 April chaired by India's Joint Secretary (UNP) and the Director-General of Multilateral and International Law at the Ministry of Foreign Relations of Cuba. Cuba hosted the HOG/HOS level summit on 15-16

September being the G77 and China Chair in 2023. Secretary (West) led the Indian delegation to the HOG/HOS summit. Secretary (West) also called on Deputy Prime Minister of Cuba Jorge Luis Tapia Fonseca and met with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cuba Josefina de la Caridad Vidal Ferreiro on the sidelines of the HOG/HOS summit. Cuba also participated in the 1st Global Summit on Natural and Traditional Medicine by WHO in India on 18 August.

Cuba participated in the 6th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance held on 31 October in New Delhi. First Vice Minister of Energy & Mines of Cuba Argelio Jesús Abad Vigoa led the Cuban delegation at the ISA Assembly and during the visit, met with Secretary (ER). Cuba also participated in the 2nd edition of the VOGSS on 17 November. First Vice Minister Vigoa virtually addressed the Energy Ministers' session at the 2nd edition of VOGSS based on the theme "Affordable & Inclusive Energy Transition for Sustainable Development".

Minister of Foreign Trade & Investment of Cuba Rodrigo Malmierca Díaz paid an official visit to India from 09-15 March and led a business delegation to participate in the Partnership Summit. A delegation led by Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Investment Déborah Rivas paid a visit to India to participate in the 9th edition of India-LAC Conclave on 03-04 August. The Governor of Cienfuegos province of Cuba Alexandre Quintero also accompanied the Cuban delegation.

Deputy Minister of Communications of Cuba Grisel Reyes Leon led a Cuban delegation to India from 26 March-01 April to participate in the INDIASOFT event.

Ecuador

India and Ecuador relations witnessed significant advancement during the period, marked by an upswing in high-level political and commercial engagement.

The then President of Ecuador, Guillermo Lasso participated in the Leaders' Session of the Voice of Global South Summit on 13 January. The then Minister of Mines and Energy of Ecuador Fernando Santos Alvite participated virtually in the Energy Ministers' session of 2nd Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) on 17 November.

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Ecuador from 04-07 November. MoS called-on the then President of Ecuador Guillermo Lasso on 07 November. MoS also met the then Foreign Minister of Ecuador, Gustavo Manrique Miranda on 07 November. Cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector was further enhanced with signing of agreement between drug regulators of the two countries.

The 5th round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOC) between India and Ecuador was held on 23 June in Quito. It was co-chaired by Secretary (East) and the then Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility of Ecuador Ambassador Luis Vayas Valdivieso.

For the period January-September 2023, bilateral trade stood at approx. USD 1.04 billion. The second meeting of the India-Ecuador Joint Economic and Trade Committee was held through video conference on 21 September.

Paraguay

MoS (ML) paid an official visit to Paraguay from 02-04 November

and met with the then Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Victor Alfredo Verdún Bitar, Minister of Industry and Commerce Javier Gimenez Garcia De Zúñiga, Minister Executive Secretary of Culture Adriana Ortiz Semidei, and the President of Paraguayan Industrial Union (UIP), Enrique Duarte Luraghi.

Vice Minister of Armed General (R) Angel Javier Cristaldo Navarro, led a four-member delegation to participate in Aero-India from 13-18 February.

Two delegates from Paraguay, Counsellor Canindeyu Department Carlos Ozorio and Representative of Paraguayan Industrial Union (UIP) Christian Rojas participated in the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave held on 03-04 August.

Peru

The year 2023 marked the 60th anniversary of establishment of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Vice Foreign Minister of Peru Ignacio Higuera visited New Delhi on 15 April and participated in the second India-Peru Joint Commission meeting co-chaired by Secretary (East). A MoU on Institutional Cooperation between Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) and Peruvian National Institute of Health (INS) was signed during his visit. The third meeting of JWG on Minerals & Geology and second meeting of the Joint Committee on Renewable Energy were conducted in March. Vice Minister of Foreign Trade and Tourism of Peru Teresa Mera visited India to participate in the ministerial sessions of the 9th CII-India LAC Business Conclave held on 03-05 August.



MoS (ML) called on the then President of Ecuador Guillermo Lasso in Quito, November 2023

India handed over 1000 vials of Human Immunoglobulin in order to help Peru tackle the cases of Guillain Barre syndrome in September. President of Peru Dina Boluarte participated virtually in the 1st Voice of Global South Summit held in January in virtual mode, while Vice Minister Ignacio Higuera participated in the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit's Foreign Ministers' Meeting through a pre-recorded message in November.

The trade between India and Peru during the Financial Year 2022-23 was USD 3,291.64 million, of which India's exports were worth USD 1160.64 million and imports from Peru were USD 2,131.00 million.

Uruguay

A 10-member Parliamentary goodwill delegation led by the Minister of Parliamentary Affairs & Coal and Mines visited Uruguay 14-17 June. A Rajya Sabha delegation comprising four Members of Parliament participated in the 2nd World Summit of Committees of Future held in Montevideo on 25-27 September.

Minister of Education Dr. Pablo da Silveira participated in the first Voice of South Summit on 13 January in virtual mode. Minister of Foreign Affairs Omar Paganini Herrera participated in the Trade / Commerce Ministers' session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November via video-conferencing. Deputy Foreign Minister Nicolás Albertoni visited India for the fifth round of Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) held on 06 March in New Delhi and also participated in the Raisina Dialogue.

Venezuela

India and Venezuela celebrated the 64th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations in October.

The then Venezuelan Executive Vice President and Minister for Petroleum Tareck El Aissami participated in the First Voice of Global Summit held in virtual mode on 13 January.

Executive Vice President of Venezuela Dr. Delcy Rodríguez visited India to participate in the 9th CII-LAC Conclave on 03-05 August. She was accompanied by Minister of Foreign Affairs Yvan Gil Pinto, Sectoral Vice President for Science, Technology, Innovation, Health and Education Gabriela Jimenez, Vice Minister for Asia, Middle East and Oceania Tatiana Pugh, Vice Minister for External Trade and Promotion of Investments Johan Alvarez in addition to a 25-member strong business delegation during the visit.

Director General of Alternative Energies, Ministry of Electric Energy Benjamín Bustamante represented Venezuela at the 6th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) hosted in New Delhi on 31 October. Venezuela was the Vice President of the ISA Permanent Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, a position held jointly with the Commonwealth of Dominica.

Bilateral trade between India and Venezuela during January to November 2023 amounted to USD 296.64 million. India's exports to Venezuela were pegged at USD 132.94 million, while its imports from Venezuela amounted to USD 163.7 million.

Central America

Belize

Ambassador Amalia Mai, CEO, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Immigration represented Belize at the India-CARICOM Fourth Foreign Ministers' Ministerial Meeting in Georgetown on 21 April. On 25 April at the SICA-India Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation in Panama City, EAM met Foreign Minister of Belize Eamon Courtenay along with the Foreign Ministers of other Central American Integration System (SICA) member countries and adopted a Joint Communiqué.

MoS for Finance, Economic Development and Investment of Belize Christopher Coye participated in the 1st VOGSS Finance Ministers' Session on 13 January. Minister of Health Dr. Kevin Bernard participated virtually in the Health Ministers' session in the 2nd Voice of Global South virtual summit held on 17 November.

The India-UNDP fund approved USD 1 million for Belize to finance the project "Strengthening of the maternal and child health services in CARICOM Member States to support the attainment, maintenance and sustainability of the Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission (EMTCT) plus of HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis B diseases." Belize also received 10,000 doses of Covovax vaccines from India in April.

Indian experts from HMT (I) started on-the-job training of Belizeans at 'India-Belize Centre of Engineering' at University of Belize implemented by HMT (India) in July and completed the training on 30 August.

Costa Rica

Minister of Education of Costa Rica Sonia Marta Mora Escalante participated virtually in the Education Ministers' Session of 1st Voice of South Summit on 13 January. Vice Minister of Health of Costa Rica Dr Mario Urcuyo Solórzano participated virtually in the Health Ministers' Session of 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November.

The Chief Election Commissioner of India visited Costa Rica from 07-09 July and held a meeting with the authorities of the Electoral Commission of Costa Rica.

El Salvador

The year 2023 witnessed the bilateral relations between India and El Salvador further widened and deepened in all spheres, including political, commercial and cultural.

MoS (ML) visited El Salvador from 17-19 January. During the visit, MoS (ML) called on President of El Salvador Dr. Nayib Bukele and met Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexandra Hill Tinoco, Minister for Culture Mariem Pleitez, and Secretary of Commerce and Investment J. Miguel Kattan. Minister of Foreign Affairs Alexandra Hill Tinoco visited India from 09-13 February. EAM hosted the visiting Foreign Minister for a bilateral meeting on 10 February. Vice Minister of Defence General of Air Brigade and Commander of the Air Force of El Salvador visited Bengaluru for Aero India from 13-17 February.

The 4th Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) between India and El Salvador was held in New Delhi on 01 May. The FOCs were co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Adrian Mira.

Guatemala

India and Guatemala commemorated the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries in 2023. MoS (ML) visited Guatemala from 14-17 January. During the visit MoS met the Vice President of Guatemala Guillermo Castillo Reyes, Minister of Foreign Affairs Mario Bucaro, Minister of Culture Felipe Aguilar, Minister of Health Dr. Francisco José Coma Martín and the then Minister of Energy & Mines Alberto Pimentel Mata.

India hosted a 15-member business delegation led by Vice Minister of Economy Fernando Escalante to participate in the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave on 03-04 August in Delhi. The 3rd India-Guatemala FOC was held in New Delhi on 04 November and was co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Karla Gabriela Samayoa Recari.

Mexico

India and Mexico share a privileged partnership and the year 2023 witnessed a deepening of the bilateral relations through continued high-level exchanges.

The then Foreign Minister of Mexico Marcelo Ebrard visited India from 28 February-07 March for the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting. He also held bilateral meetings with EAM, Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Minister of State for Science & Technology. During his visit, an MoU was signed between India's Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation (AMEXCID). A joint accelerator fund of USD 1 million was announced as part of this MoU. EAM held a bilateral meeting with the incumbent

Foreign Minister of Mexico Alicia Barcena on the sidelines of the UNGA in September.

Foreign Minister Alicia Barcena designated her Chief of Staff Martin Borrego to participate in the Foreign Ministers' Session in the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November in virtual mode. She participated virtually G20 Leaders' Summit held on 22 November.

Minister of Economy of Mexico Raquel Buenrostro led a delegation to India to attend the G20 Leaders' Summit held in New Delhi from 09-10 September. Governor of the State of Nuevo Leon in Mexico Samuel Alejandro Garcia Sepulveda along with the Minister of Economy Ivan Rivas visited India to take part in the CII India-LAC conclave from 002-4 August. The Ministers also met the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, Governor of Maharashtra and Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra.

Minister of Labour and Employment held a bilateral meeting with the then Minister of Labour and Social welfare of Mexico Luisa Maria Alcalde Lujan at Geneva on the sidelines of the 111th Session of the International Labour Conference (ILC) of International Labour Organization (ILO) in June. A multi-party 11-member Parliamentary delegation from Mexico headed by Deputy Salvador Caro Cabrera, President of the India-Mexico Parliamentary Friendship Group, visited India from 14-21 March. A 5-member group of Mexican delegates which included 3 Parliamentarians visited India as part of the 8th Gen-Next Democracy Network Program from 06 -16 March.

President of Mexican Chamber of deputies Marcela Guerra and President of Mexican Senate visited India to take part in the P20 forum in October. The Government of the State of Uttar Pradesh and state of Nueva Leon signed an MoU for cooperation in trade, tourism, pharma and health sectors, during Governor Sepulveda's visit to India in August.

During India's G20 presidency, the Director General of the Mexican Space Agency Dr. Salvador Landeros Ayala represented his country at the 4th edition of ISRO's Space Economy Leaders Meeting (SELM) held on 06-07 July in Bengaluru. The India-Mexico Research Consortium (IMRC) was launched in January with researchers, academicians and scientists from both India and Mexico.

A delegation from Bharat Electronics Ltd. (BEL) participated in the Mexico Aerospace Fair (FAMEX), from 26-29 April. India was the Guest of Honour at the 12th Edition of the International Image Festival (FINI) at the Autonomous University of the State of Hidalgo, and held from 20-28 April. India also participated in the International Cervantino Festival, the most important and the biggest cultural festival of Latin America.

Nicaragua

Foreign Minister Denis Moncada Colindres met EAM in Panama City on the sidelines of India-SICA Foreign Ministers' meeting held on 25 April.



EAM participated in the 4th India-SICA Ministerial meeting in Panama City, April 2023

Finance Minister of Nicaragua Ivan Montalvan participated virtually in the Finance Ministers' Session of the 1st VOGSS held on 12 January. Minister of Health of Nicaragua Dr. Martha Reyes participated virtually in the Health Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November.

India donated 2,00,000 doses of COVOVAX vaccine to Nicaragua in May.

Panama

President of Panama Laurentino Cortizo Cohen participated in the concluding session of the 2nd VOGSS held virtually on 17 November.

EAM visited Panama on 24-25 April. He interacted with Foreign Minister Janaina Tewaney and met President Laurentino Cortizo during his visit. EAM's visit was the first for any Indian Foreign Minister to the country. The Latin American Business Forum was held during the visit of EAM and witnessed participation from the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). In addition, the SICA Foreign Ministers' meeting took place in Panama during the visit of EAM.

Foreign Minister Jananina Tewaney Mencomo participated in the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas (PBD) convention held in Indore from 08-10 January. During her visit, a MoU between Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) and the Ministry of External Relations of Panama was signed. She also participated in the 1st VOGSS held in January 2023 in virtual mode. The Chief Election Commissioner of India visited Panama from 05-07 July and signed a MoU on Electoral Cooperation between the two countries.

Caribbean Countries

Antigua & Barbuda

Minister of Information Communications Technologies, Utilities and Energy Melford Walter Nicholas participated in the DPI Summit along with Director (Information Technology) Luxmore Edwards. India and Antigua & Barbuda signed MoU on sharing INDIA STACK i.e. successful digital solutions implemented at population scale. The Minister also chaired the session on 'Overview of Digital Public Infrastructure' on 12 June.

Minister of Tourism Charles Henry Fernandez led a delegation to India for the 9th edition of the India-LAC Conclave held on 03-04 August in New Delhi.

The Bahamas

Minister of Education and Technical and Vocational Training Glenys Margarit E. Hanna-Martin participated virtually in the 1st VOGSS held in January. Parliamentary Secretary Jahmal Strachan participated virtually in the 2nd VOGSS Foreign Ministers' session, held in November. He also held a bilateral meeting with EAM on the sidelines of the India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers Meeting, held in Georgetown in April.

Bilateral trade registered a marked increase during this period at USD 16.48 million (up to September 2023) as against USD 16.44 million in the previous year.



Vice President of the Dominican Republic Raquel Peña met the Vice President in New Delhi during her official visit to India, October 2023

Barbados

Bilateral relations between India and Barbados continued to deepen during the year.

Minister of Education, Technological and Vocational Training of Barbados Kay S. McConney participated virtually in the 1st VOGSS Education Minister's session in January.

Two projects were completed and handed-over to Barbados under the India-UNDP Fund. The first project, "Local Content Development in Energy Industry value chain" was valued at USD 550,000 and handed over to the Minister for Energy and Business of Barbados in August. The second project on "Support on Covid-19 Response" was valued at USD 675,000.

The EXIM Bank of India completed its consultancy assignment for Export Barbados to establish an Export Credit Agency (ECA) and successfully submitted a report for the same in March. The assignment was carried out, following the signing of a letter of intent for USD 118,700 in 2022.

Commonwealth of Dominica

Minister of State of Health, Wellness and Social Services Dr. Cassandra Williams attended the Health Ministers' Session at the second VOGSS on 17 November. Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business, Trade & Energy Dr. Vince Henderson participated in the 'India-UN for Global South: Delivering for Development' hosted by India in New York on 23 September.

Dr. Henderson also attended the India-COFCOR summit held in Guyana on 21 April.

Dominican Republic

EAM paid an official visit to the Dominican Republic from 27-29 April. He called on President Luis Abinader, held bilateral meetings with Foreign Minister Roberto Álvarez and jointly inaugurated the Resident Mission of India in Dominican Republic with Foreign Minister Álvarez on 28 April. This was the highest level of visit from India to the Dominican Republic.

The Vice President of the Dominican Republic Raquel Peña paid an official visit to India from 03-05 October. This was the first ever visit to India by a Dominican Vice President and the first high-level visit after the then President Leonel Fernández's visit to India in February 2011. Vice President Peña called on the Hon'ble President and held meetings with the Speaker of Lok Sabha and EAM. The Vice President's visit to India witnessed the signing of several MoUs between Indian and Dominican institutions/organisations, including the MoU on cooperation in the medical products regulation signed between Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) and Directorate General of Medicines, Food and Health Products, (DIGEMAPS), MoU on Cooperation in the field of Marine Sciences signed between the CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (CSIR-NIO) and National Authority for Maritime Affairs (ANAMAR), Dominican Republic and MoU between IIT-Delhi and the Ministry of Higher Education, Science & Technology of Dominican Republic.

EAM unveiled a Mahatma Gandhi statue at a square in Gazcue which was renamed as Mahatma Gandhi Plaza, during his visit to Dominican Republic in April. He also inaugurated the 'India Pavilion' at the prestigious Faro a Colón museum, in Santo Domingo Este, Dominican Republic.

On 13 January, Foreign Minister Álvarez participated in the Foreign Ministers' session of the 1st VOGSS in virtual mode. Energy Minister & Mines Antonio Almonte Reynoso participated in the Energy Ministers' session of the 2nd VOGSS, held on 17 November.

A Dominican Republic delegation led by the Executive Director of the Export and Investment promotion agency of DR (ProDominicana) participated in the 9th CII Conclave held in New Delhi from 03-04 August. A Cooperation Agreement between CII and CONEP (Industrial body of DR) was signed on 28 April during the visit of EAM. MoU between Invest India and ProDominicana (Export and Investment promotion body of DR) was signed on 02 August.

In the financial year 2022-23, the total trade was USD 690 million with India exporting USD 330 million and importing USD 360 million.

Grenada

Minister for Foreign Affairs, Trade & Export Development Joseph Andall attended the India-COFCOR event in Georgetown on 21 April. Minister for Mobilisation, Implementation &

Transformation Andy Joseph Williams attended the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave in New Delhi on 03-05 August. Minister for Climate Resilience, the Environment and Renewable Energy Kerryne Z. James attended the 6th Assembly of the International Solar Alliance from 30 October-01 November in New Delhi. The 166th anniversary of the Indian Arrival Day was celebrated by the Mission in Grenada on 30 April.

Guyana

President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali led a delegation to an official visit to India from 08-14 January. The delegation comprised the Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation Hugh Hilton Todd, Minister in the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development Anand Persaud and several senior officials from Guyana. President Ali met with the Hon'ble President and Prime Minister during his visit. President Ali was called on by the EAM, Minister of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Minister of Food Processing Industries and Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, during his visit.

President Ali served as the Chief Guest for the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas and was conferred with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award at the Valedictory Session on 10 January in Indore. He also participated in the Global Investors Summit in Indore on 11 January. A MoU was signed between Invest India and Guyana Office for Investment for promotion of investments.



Prime Minister met President of Cooperative Republic of Guyana Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali on the sidelines of the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas celebrations in Indore, January 2023

Agriculture Minister Zulfikar Mustapha visited India for the Global Year of Millets Conference in New Delhi from 18-22 March. He met the Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister and Minister of State for Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying.

EAM paid a visit to Guyana from 20-24 April. During his visit, EAM met with the President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Speaker of the National Assembly Manzoor Nadir and Foreign Minister Hugh Todd. EAM and the Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation of Guyana chaired the 5th session of the India-Guyana Joint Commission Meeting. EAM also participated in the first ever India-Guyana Business Roundtable and a Diaspora Event, met the Secretary General of CARICOM Dr. Carla Barnett, attended India-COFCOR meeting; and held bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers of 8-member countries of CARICOM on 21 April.

Minister of Health Dr. Frank Anthony, National Security Advisor Captain Gerry Gouveia and CEO of Guyana Office for Investment Dr. Peter Ramsaroop and a large business delegation visited India for the 9th edition of the India-LAC Conclave held on 03-04 August in New Delhi.

India-built Ocean-going Passenger-cum-Cargo Ferry MV 'Ma Lisha' was delivered to Guyana under GoI Line-of-Credit-cum-grant assistance of USD 12.71 million and was commissioned on 23 April at Georgetown, Guyana. On 10 August, the ferry commenced service between Georgetown and Region One (Barima-Waini) and set sail on its inaugural journey with a full compartment of 276 passengers.

Prime Minister Brigadier (Ret'd) Mark Phillips distributed a number of home solar system units to equip each household with access to reliable electricity in the Karasbai region of Guyana. The initiative falls under the Solar Home Systems Project, which saw 30,000 units being acquired through a USD 7.2 million line of credit from India.

Haiti

On 13 January, Minister of Commerce and Industry Ricardin Saint-Jean, participated virtually in the Commerce Ministers' session, of the 1st VOGSS. Public Health and Population Minister Dr. Alex Larsen participated virtually in the Health Ministers' session of the 2nd edition of the VOGSS on 17 November.

The Indian Government funded a project worth USD 1 million under the India-UN Development Partnership Fund managed by the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation and jointly implemented by the UNDP and the Ministry of the Environment (MoE). This Project aims to install 8 Solar PV-based Water Pumping Systems for Land Irrigation and Drinking Water.

On 31 October, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) awarded two projects to Haiti under the Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) First Call for Proposals for Small

Island Developing States (SIDS), including : (i) Strengthening Capacities, Security and Resilience of Critical Infrastructure in Dominican Republic, Cuba and Haiti, and (ii) Revision of the Haitian National Building Code.

A delegation from ADIH (Association of Industries of Haiti) participated in the 9th CII Conclave held in New Delhi from 03-04 August. They also signed a cooperation agreement between ADIH and CII.

Honduras

Foreign Minister Enrique Reina visited India for the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave from 03-04 August and held a bilateral meeting with EAM on 04 August. In 2022-23, India's exports stood at USD 275.02 million, while imports from Honduras reached USD 17.09 million.

Jamaica

Prime Minister Andrew Holness participated in the Concluding Session of the 2nd VOGSS in November. Minister of Industry, Investment and Commerce Senator Aubyn Hill participated in the Commerce Ministers' Session. Senator Kamina Johnson Smith participated in the Foreign Ministers' session of the 1st edition of the VOGSS.

Minister Kamina Johnson Smith co-chaired the 4th India-CARICOM Ministerial Meeting on 21 April, in Georgetown. Senator Smith also had a bilateral meeting with EAM on the sidelines of the India-CARICOM Foreign Ministers Meeting. Senator Kamina Johnson participated in the panel discussion hosted by ORF, where EAM also participated during the UN session.

Letter of Agreement on Kitson Town community project supported by India's USD 1 million grant was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Mining, Government of Jamaica and Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO).

A three-member business delegation visited Jamaica to attend Jamaica Expo in April in Kingston. A 17-member business delegation led by India's Economic Trade Organisation (IETO) President visited Jamaica in July. A 2-member NPCL delegation visited Jamaica in May. A business delegation from Jamaica participated in the CII Conclave in August.

A MoU for extension of the ICCR Chair in the University of West Indies (UWI) for another 5 years was signed on 29 March. Jamaica organised the Indian Diaspora Conference, a first of its kind event on 26 March. More than 400 Indian diaspora participated in the Conference.

Bilateral trade between the two countries continued to grow during the period registering a high of USD 92.74 million, an increase of 12.58% over the previous year. India's exports accounted for more than 90 percent at USD 87.75 million.



EAM co-chaired the 4th India-CARICOM (Caribbean Community) Ministerial meeting with the Foreign Minister of Jamaica Kamina J Smith in Guyana, April 2023

Suriname

The Hon'ble President visited Suriname from 04-06 June and served as the Chief Guest for an event celebrating the 150th Anniversary of the arrival of Indian migrants. It was her maiden state visit and the Hon'ble President was accompanied by the MoS for Food Processing Industries and a high-level official delegation. At a ceremony held at the Presidential Palace, Hon'ble President was conferred with the highest civilian honour of Suriname 'Grand Order of the Chain of the Yellow Star' by the President of Suriname.

Hon'ble President handed over a symbolic box of medicines, worth USD 600,000 to the President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi as assistance for flood relief.

Two MoUs were signed during the visit: (i) MoU between Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation of India (CDSCO) and Ministry of Health of Suriname for cooperation in the field of medical products regulation, (ii) MoU between Ministries of Health of India and Suriname for extending recognition to Indian pharmacopoeia. A Joint Work plan for the period 2023-27 in Agriculture and Allied sectors under the Joint Working Group on Agriculture was exchanged between the two sides.

President Santokhi visited India on a 7-day official visit from 07-13 January. On 9 January, he addressed the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention as the special guest of honour and also met with the Prime Minister on the sidelines. On 10 January, he met with Hon'ble President. President Santokhi also addressed the Concluding Leaders' Session of the 1st VOGSS in virtual mode.

EAM met Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation Albert Ramdin twice; in January and during the India-COFCOR Meeting in Guyana on 21 April. Foreign Minister Albert Ramdin also participated virtually in the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd VOGSS held on 17 November. India and Suriname held the 8th Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) in New Delhi on 06 December with the participation of Minister of Foreign Affairs Ramdin and the EAM.

Other important visits during the year included those by: Minister of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Parmanand Sewdien from 18-21 March to attend the first Global Conference of the International Year of Millets (IYM), Minister of Spatial Planning & Environment Steven Mac Andrew from 08-10 April to attend the launch of "IBCA and Commemoration of 50 years of Project Tiger" in Mysuru, and Minister of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological innovations Rishma Kuldipsingh from 12-14 June to attend the Global Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) Summit in Pune. A MoU on India STACK, cooperation in digital technologies at population scales, was also signed.

At a ceremony presided over by President Santokhi, Suriname transferred the ownership title of 9822 square metres of land at Jagernath Lachmonstraat earlier gifted to India in 1998 on a lease of 40 years for construction of Chancery, Cultural Centre and Residences on 11 August.

Vice Chairman of the National Assembly of Suriname Dr. Dewanchandrebhose Sharman, received a Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award (PBSA) for Community Welfare from Hon'ble President on 10 January at the 17th PBD celebrations. On 7



Hon'ble President received Suriname's highest honour 'The Grand Order of the Chain of Yellow Star' from the President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi in Paramaribo, June 2023

March, President Santokhi inaugurated the celebrations of the International Year of Millets and the Exhibition. The Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations paid a visit to Suriname on 16-19 October. National Ayurveda Day was celebrated with President Santokhi as Chief Guest. President Santokhi announced the dedication of a 5-hectare land for opening of an Ayurveda Hospital and herbal garden in Suriname for promoting Ayurveda on 10 November.

An umbrella agreement on Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) for five years was signed on 10 March. Hon'ble President announced the setting up of a senior citizen home with an Indian grant of USD 2.8 million. Ambassador of India in Suriname attended a joint project signing ceremony for the implementation of "Enhanced Early Warning Service Delivery to Communities of Suriname in order to build their resilience to flooding due to excess rainfall" financed under an India-CARICOM grant of USD 1 million. On 27 November, the Ambassador of India and the First Lady of Suriname jointly unveiled a plaque to commemorate the completion of the "Every student a computer" project for which a grant assistance of USD 109,800 was provided by India.

St. Kitts & Nevis

EAM held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Minister Dr. Denzil Douglas of St. Kitts and Nevis on 21 April during his visit to Georgetown, Guyana.

Saint Lucia

Minister for Education, Sustainable Development, Innovation, Science, Technology and Vocational Training, Shawn Edward virtually addressed the Education Minister's Session of the 1st VOGSS on 13 January. Minister of Health, Wellness and Elderly Affairs Moses Jn. Baptiste participated in the 2nd VOGSS Health Ministers' meeting on 17 November.

EAM held a meeting with Foreign Minister Alva Baptiste on the sidelines of the India-COFCOR Meeting in Georgetown, Guyana on 21 April.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (SVG)

EAM had a bilateral meeting with the SVG Minister of Foreign Affairs & Foreign Trade, Keisal Melissa Peters during the India-COFCOR Meeting, held in Georgetown, Guyana on 21 April.

Minister of Education and National Reconciliation of SVG Curtis King addressed the Education Minister Session of the 1st VOGSS on 13 January, in virtual mode. Minister of Health, Wellness and the Environment St. Clair Prince virtually participated in the 2nd VOGSS Health Ministers' meeting on 17 November. Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, Rural Transformation, Industry & Labour of SVG Saboto Caesar visited India to attend the 9th Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)-Latin American Countries (LAC) Conclave from 03-05 August.

The Government of SVG organised a formal ceremony to mark the completion of the four Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) on 02 October. This event coincided with Mahatma Gandhi's 154th birth anniversary. SVG Prime Minister Dr. Ralph Gonsalves presided over the official opening of the Glenside Recreation Centre.

Trinidad and Tobago (T&T)

EAM met Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs of T&T Dr. Amery Browne, on the sidelines of the India-Council for Foreign and CARICOM Affairs (COFCOR) in Georgetown (Guyana) on 21 April. Minister of Digital Transformation Hassael Bacchus

led a delegation to India from 03-11 August and held meetings with MoS for Electronics and IT (MeitY) and MoS (ML). A MoU on 'Cooperation in the Field of Successful Digital Solutions and Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation' was signed during the visit.

Four Members of the Parliament of T&T visited India under ICCR's GenNext Democracy Network Programme from 15-24 May. A team of National Payments Council of India (NPCI) visited T&T on 1-12 May and held talks with concerned officials regarding the introduction of the UPI platform in the country. Officials from the Ministries of Trade and Industry and Digital Transformation of T&T attended the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave in New Delhi in August.

CHAPTER

10

Indo-Pacific

India's vision for the Indo-Pacific focuses on a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific. India emphasises respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations in the region, equality of all nations, peaceful resolution of disputes, avoidance of use or threat of use of force and adherence to international laws, rules and regulations. India's objective is a multi-faceted engagement with all countries in the region and those with interests in it, encompassing political, security, economic, and socio-cultural spheres, aimed at Security And Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).

In this light, the year 2023 witnessed intensification of India's engagement with various Indo-Pacific frameworks including, inter alia, Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Indian Ocean Commission (IOC), Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS) and Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle (IMT-GT).

Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN)

India's relationship with ASEAN is a key pillar of our foreign policy and the foundation of our Act East Policy. India supports

ASEAN centrality in the evolving architecture in the Indo-Pacific. Formal engagement of India with ASEAN began in 1992 as the Sectoral Dialogue Partner and subsequently as a Dialogue Partner in 1996. Engagement with ASEAN was upgraded to the Summit level in 2002, Strategic Partnership in 2012 and Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2022.

India and ASEAN have a comprehensive engagement covering a wide array of areas at all levels, including seven ministerial engagements in Foreign Affairs, Commerce, Tourism, Agriculture, Environment, Renewable Energy and Telecommunication, besides official level dialogues in other areas of cooperation.

Engagement with ASEAN is a multi-level interaction process. At the apex is the annual ASEAN-India Summit, supported by the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting and the ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting. In 2023, the Prime Minister attended the 20th ASEAN-India Summit held in Jakarta on 07 September.

The Summit was hosted by Indonesia as ASEAN Chair for 2023. This marked the Prime Minister's 9th engagement with ASEAN. At the ASEAN-India Summit, the Prime Minister held extensive discussions with ASEAN partners on further strengthening of the ASEAN-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and charting its future course.



Prime Minister participated in the ASEAN-India Summit in Jakarta, September 2023

In August, India and Indonesia established direct flight connectivity through IndiGo and Batik Air flights. Last year, we started direct flights with Vietnam. Earlier in February this year, we established a real time cross-border payment link with Singapore through UPI and Singapore's PayNow. We are looking at ways to expand this to other ASEAN countries.

The India-ASEAN comprehensive strategic partnership aims to further deepen practical cooperation between India and ASEAN in all areas including maritime, cyber security, digital economy, as well as, in new and emerging areas. The ASEAN-India Youth Summit was held in Hyderabad in February. Trade and business-to-business ties are integral to our relations with ASEAN. The 5th ASEAN-India Business Summit was held in March in Kuala Lumpur, with an aim to enhance business connectivity and supply chain resilience.

In May, India and ASEAN organised their first Maritime Exercise in South China Sea which was agreed to at the first ASEAN-India Defence Ministers' Meeting the previous year.

India and ASEAN also held a Conference on Traditional Medicines in July, focusing on their role in dealing with pandemics.

East Asia Summit (EAS)

Established in 2005, the Leaders-led EAS format is the most vital part of the ASEAN-led frameworks, primarily because of

the contribution it makes to build an environment of strategic trust in the region. India sees the EAS as the logical platform to promote a free, open, inclusive, transparent, rules-based, peaceful, prosperous Indo-Pacific region.

India's engagement with EAS is a multilevel interaction process; EAS at the apex, supported by the EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting (EAS FMM) and the EAS Senior Officials' Meeting (EAS SOM).

On 07 September 2023, Prime Minister participated in the 18th East Asia Summit, chaired by Indonesia in its capacity as the ASEAN Chair. The Prime Minister reiterated the importance of the EAS mechanism and reaffirmed our support to further strengthen it. Prime Minister underlined India's support for ASEAN Centrality and called for ensuring a free, open and rules-based Indo-Pacific.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

India assumed the role of Vice-Chair of Indian Ocean Rim Association for the year 2023-25. India will also lead the Working Group on Maritime Safety and Security and the Blue Economy Working Group. These decisions were announced during the Council of Ministers Meeting held in Colombo on 09-11 October, which the EAM participated in.

Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI)

On 01 June 2018, Prime Minister outlined India's vision for the Indo-Pacific region in his speech delivered at the Shangri La Dialogue in Singapore. India calls for a free, open and inclusive order in the Indo-Pacific, based upon respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations, peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue and adherence to international rules and laws. India's concept of the Indo-Pacific is inclusive in nature, and supports an approach that respects the right to freedom of navigation and overflight for all in the international seas. India's approach is based on cooperation and collaboration, given the need for shared responses to shared challenges in the region and is premised upon the principle of 'ASEAN-Centrality'.

On 04 November 2019, Prime Minister launched the Indo-Pacific Oceans' Initiative (IPOI) at the 14th East Asia Summit held in Bangkok. As an open global initiative, the IPOI draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanisms to focus on seven central pillars conceived around Maritime Security, Maritime Ecology, Maritime Resources, Capacity Building and Resource Sharing, Disaster Risk Reduction and Management, Science, Technology and Academic Cooperation, and Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport.

In 2023, Germany agreed to lead in the Capacity Building and Resource Sharing pillar; Italy joined in co-leading the Science, Technology, and Academic Cooperation Pillar; and the US committed to co-lead the Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport pillar.

Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

Established in 2000, Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is the oldest sub-regional mechanism in the Mekong sub-region. The 12th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) Foreign Ministers Meeting was held on 16 July 2023 in Bangkok. The Meeting was co-chaired by EAM and Deputy Prime Minister of the Lao PDR, and also saw the participation of Cambodia, Myanmar and Vietnam. To give a further boost to the cooperation under MGC, the ministers agreed to further streamline the functioning of MGC under the ten identified areas of tourism, culture, education, public health and traditional medicine, agriculture and allied sectors, transport and communication, Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), water resources management, science and technology, skill development and capacity building of cooperation, through the system of lead country for each area. They also agreed to set up the MGC Business Council to further enhance trade cooperation.

Under MGC, India implements several short-gestation, high-impact projects called as Quick Impact Projects (QIPs). These projects with a normal gestation period of up to one year directly benefit the local communities with results that are immediate and visible. Under this scheme each CLMV country (Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Vietnam) is currently offered to undertake a maximum of 10 projects per year at a cost not exceeding USD 50,000 per project. 105 such projects have been implemented so far since 2016. For capacity building, India, since 2005, has also been offering 50 MGC scholarships per year to students from MGC countries to pursue diploma and degree courses in history and culture, tourism, IT, vocational training, engineering, management, teachers' training, film direction, among others.

CHAPTER

11

BIMSTEC & SAARC

BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a unique regional organisation linking South Asia with South East Asia, while focusing on India's core concerns in the region. It fulfils India's key foreign policy priorities of 'Neighborhood First' and 'Act East'. India is currently leading the Security Sector out of a total of seven priority sectors under BIMSTEC Cooperation.

Cooperation within BIMSTEC had initially focused on six sectors in 1997 (trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism, and fisheries) and expanded in 2008 to incorporate agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people-to-people contact, and climate change.

The BIMSTEC Charter was signed and adopted during the 5th BIMSTEC Summit held in virtual format in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on 30 March 2022. BIMSTEC is a five-tiered organisation:

- i. The Summit level comprising the Heads of State or Government of the Member States
- ii. The Ministerial Meeting comprising the Ministers dealing with foreign relations of the Member States
- iii. The Sectoral Ministerial Meetings comprising the Ministers of line ministries responsible for carrying out the activities of the respective sectors
- iv. The Senior Officials' Meeting consisting of the Foreign Secretaries/ Secretaries/ appropriate Senior officials nominated by the BIMSTEC Member States
- v. The BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (BPCW) comprises senior officials of the respective National Focal Points.

On 17 July 2023 EAM attended the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok and called on the Prime Minister of Thailand along with colleagues from BIMSTEC countries. In addition, on the sidelines, EAM met with his counterparts from Nepal, Bangladesh, and Thailand.

Several significant activities were organised throughout the year to solidify the cooperation under BIMSTEC. The 10th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) was held from 12 and 13 January, in New Delhi. The 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting was held virtually on 09 March. Additionally, The Regional Seminar on Food Security and Sustainable Food System in BIMSTEC was held virtually in Nay Pyi Taw, Myanmar, on 25 January, at the invitation of the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar. The Special Meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee (S-BPWC) was held virtually at the BIMSTEC Secretariat in Dhaka, Bangladesh on 23 January. The Special Session of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (S-BNPTT) was held virtually from 08 and 09



EAM attended the BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers' Retreat in Bangkok, July 2023

May, in Bangkok, Thailand. The Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with the Indian Chamber of Commerce organised the BIMSTEC Business Conclave from 13-15 June, in Kolkata to commemorate 25 years of BIMSTEC.

With an aim to enhance capacity, the Ministry in collaboration with the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) organised the First Trade Facilitation Capacity Building Program for BIMSTEC Countries, from 08-19 May, in New Delhi. Another Workshop on Implementation of the BIMSTEC Master Plan for Transport Connectivity was held from October 02-03, in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Further, India had organised four workshops and six training in the field of Agriculture for the BIMSTEC Member States since September. Another Capacity Building Workshop and the 2nd Meeting of the JWG on Environment and Climate Change was held from October 09-13, in Thimpu, Bhutan.

SAARC

The South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), founded in 1985, is a regional consensus-based

organisation consisting of eight Member States. Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are the seven founding members. Afghanistan joined the regional organisation in 2007 through the signing of a Joint Declaration. SAARC Secretariat is located in Kathmandu, Nepal and is headed by a Secretary General Mohammad Golam Sarwar from Bangladesh who took over as the 15th Secretary General of SAARC on 25 October.

The last SAARC Summit was held in 2014 in Kathmandu, Nepal and it continues to hold the Chair of SAARC till the next Summit. The South Asian University (SAU) which was located in Akbar Bhawan, New Delhi was shifted to its permanent campus in Maidan Garhi, Mehrauli, New Delhi on 27 January. The 17th informal meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers was held on 05 May at Songdo Convensia, Incheon, Republic of Korea, on the sidelines of the 56th Annual Meeting (02-05 May) of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). India was represented by an official of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.

CHAPTER

12

UN & International Organisations

The 78th Session of the UN General Assembly

Ambassador Dennis Francis of Trinidad and Tobago was elected as President of the 78th session of the General Assembly (GA) on 01 June 2023. The vision laid out by the GA focussed on four pillars – Peace, Prosperity, Progress and Sustainability. The 78th session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA) opened on 05 September, with the theme “Rebuilding trust and reigniting global solidarity: Accelerating action on the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals towards peace, prosperity, progress and sustainability for all.” India actively participated and effectively articulated its position on various relevant issues, at the 78th session of the UNGA.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit held on 18-19 September, was the highlight of this year’s UNGA session. The Summit witnessed the 2nd session of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) on Sustainable Development, convened under the auspices of the UNGA. The HLPF commemorated the halfway mark of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. The Summit reviewed progress in the implementation of the Agenda

and its 17 SDGs which were found to be progressing at a slow pace. A political declaration was adopted during the opening segment of the Summit to revitalise global efforts towards achieving the SDGs. The Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog played a key role during the negotiations of this declaration and delivered India’s statement at the Leaders’ Dialogue on the theme “Strengthening integrated policies and public institutions for achieving the SDGs.”

EAM led the Indian delegation for the High-Level Week (HLW) at the 78th session of UNGA and addressed the General Debate of the High-Level Segment in New York on 26 September. In his statement, EAM commented on the current global challenges, highlighting the exceptional period of turmoil faced by the world and India’s role of Vishwa Mitra- a friend to the world. Underscoring the significance of the New Delhi G20 Summit, EAM noted that despite the sharp East-West polarisation and a deep North-South divide, India’s initiative helped facilitate the African Union’s admission as a permanent member of the G20. In addition, the EAM urged the UN to make the UN Security Council “contemporary” and highlighted the need for a “reformed multilateralism” that reflects today’s realities, gives voice to all stakeholders, addresses contemporary challenges, and focuses on human welfare.



EAM delivered the National Statement at the General Debate of the 78th session of United Nations General Assembly at the UN Headquarters in New York, September 2023

EAM held bilateral meetings with the Foreign Ministers of Armenia, Australia, Bahrain, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, Egypt, Guinea Bissau, Japan, Madagascar, Mexico, the UAE, MoS of the UK, and called-on the Prime Minister of Cambodia. EAM also held discussions with the UN Secretary General (UNSG) António Guterres and the PGA Dennis Francis. During the visit, EAM participated in plurilateral meetings of the Foreign Ministers of the Quad (India, USA, Australia and Japan) and IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa). On 25 September, EAM and his counterparts from several member states addressed the 'South Rising Partnerships, Institutions and Ideas' event, hosted by ORF.

The Summit of the Future (SoTF) aims to enhance cooperation on critical challenges; address gaps in global governance, reaffirm existing commitments including the SDGs the UN Charter and move towards a reinvigorated multilateral system that is better positioned to positively impact people's lives. India actively took part in the SoTF discussions this year. Secretary (West) delivered India's statement at the Preparatory Ministerial Meeting for the SoTF during the HLW, highlighting that event will be judged on its delivery of reformed multilateralism. He also called on the SoTF to provide answers on United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms within a fixed time frame.

Debates and processes

During the year, the UNGA organized more than 25 debates on various agenda items, such as prevention of armed conflicts,

implementation of the Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, prevention of genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, situation in Ukraine, Peacebuilding Commission and fund, Youth Office, SDGs and targets, Sexual exploitation and abuse, reports on International Criminal Court (ICC), UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), UNSC reforms; Oceans and the law of the sea, strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the UN, among others. India participated in several of these debates and contributed towards advancing progress on these agenda items.

As mandated by the UNGA, 16 negotiation processes were undertaken by the member states, during the 78th session. These processes included- Revitalization of the Work of the UNGA, Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) on UNSC Reform, Our Common Agenda (SoTF), Global Digital Compact, Declaration on Future Generations, Development-related-processes such as the SDG Follow-up and Review-Political Declaration, Financing for Development, HLPF, Steering Committee of Small Island Developing States (SIDS) Partnership, Health-related Processes (Universal Health Coverage or UHC), Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response (PPPR) and Fight Against Tuberculosis. The member states also participated in other processes such as UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS) Eighth Review, Disaster Risk Reduction, Open-ended Informal Consultative Process on Oceans and the Law of the Sea and Steering Committee on Accessibility. India actively participated in these processes and provided significant inputs to advance these agenda items.

UN Security Council

Despite the completion of its tenure in the Security Council on 31 December 2022, India continued to actively participate in the UNSC meetings this year. In particular, India took part in meetings on Afghanistan, bringing out its perspective as a contiguous neighbour. India also took part in Open Debates of the Security Council on various agenda items, covering both thematic issues as well as issues pertaining to the Middle East, where we made our positions known.

India also put forth its principled positions on such issues, including Ukraine and Afghanistan. Permanent Representative (PR) of India to the UN spoke on thematic issues such as Peace through Dialogue: the Contribution of Regional, Sub-regional and Bilateral Arrangements to the Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes, Maintenance of International Peace and Security: Advancing Public-Private Humanitarian Partnership, Promoting Implementation of Security Council Resolutions on Conflict-Related Sexual Violence, Effective Multilateralism through the Defense of the Principles of UN Charter, Rule of Law, Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace: Investing in people to enhance resilience against complex challenges, Sea Level Rise:

Implication for International Peace and Security, Women, Peace and Security: Towards the 25th Anniversary of Resolution 1325, Peace and Security in Africa, Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict, Climate Change, Peace and Security, Famine and Conflict-induced Global Food Insecurity, and Working Methods.

In keeping with India's high-level participation in various UNSC meetings this year, various dignitaries visited the country over the course of the period under review. UNSG Antonio Guterres visited India, to participate in the G20 Summit from 08-11 September and Deputy Secretary General of the UN Amina J. Mohammed visited India from 03-05 July. Notable outgoing visits include Secretary (West)'s participation in the high-level 'Open debate of the UNSC on Ukraine' on 21 September.

Reforms of the UN Security Council

India continued its efforts to move the process of UNSC Reforms forward, by actively engaging in the ongoing IGN process on the issue. India also commenced work on a digital repository of important documents. India also engaged in extensive outreach and coordination efforts with reform-oriented groupings like the G4 and L.69, and other like-minded delegations to achieve a meaningful and comprehensive outcome on UNSC reform. In this regard, the G4 Foreign Ministers (comprising India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan) held their annual meeting on 21 September on the side-lines of the 78th UNGA session to review progress on the UNSC reform. Upon the conclusion of the meeting, G4 Foreign Ministers released a joint press statement observing that the prevailing complex and interconnected global challenges necessitated the urgency of reforming the UN and updating its main decision-making bodies. Secretary (West) represented India in this meeting.

Reformed Multilateralism

In keeping with India's strong commitment to reformed multilateralism, the PR of India to the UN hosted a high-level Ministerial meeting of the L.69 group and other like-minded countries, on the theme 'Reinvigorating Multilateralism and Calling for Comprehensive Security Council Reform', on 21 September. This meeting was chaired by the L.69 Chair, Foreign Minister of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines and saw in-attendance, Foreign Ministers of nearly ten member states including Brazil, Bhutan and Nicaragua. This meeting also commemorated the 16th Anniversary of the founding of L.69 group of pro-reform member states, comprising primarily developing countries from across the world. Upon conclusion of the meeting, the participants issued a joint statement calling all UN member-states to work towards achieving comprehensive reform of the UNSC at the earliest.

International Day of Yoga

The Prime Minister led the 9th International Day of Yoga (IDY) celebrations, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 21 June. The Prime Minister was joined by the then-PGA Csaba Kőrösi, PRs, delegates from the UN Member States, senior UN officials, staff as well as eminent persons and members of the Indian community. The theme of the event was "Yoga for Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (Yoga for The World is One Family). The yoga event witnessed participation of people from more than 135 nationalities, thereby creating a new Guinness World Record. Upon the conclusion of the event, the Prime Minister paid a floral tribute at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi, located at the North Lawn Gardens of the UN.



Prime Minister led the 9th International Day of Yoga celebrations at the UN Headquarters where a new Guinness World record was created for the most diverse participation of people from 135 nationalities, June 2023

Non-Aligned Movement

India constructively engaged with the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries through regular NAM meetings, and contributed to various issues raised by NAM members. Secretary (West) participated in the NAM Ministerial meeting, held in Baku from 05-06 July. In his address, he reiterated India's commitment to support friendly NAM member states in their post-Covid recovery efforts. Secretary (West) also participated in the Ministerial Committee of NAM on Palestine. In keeping-up with its support for NAM, India also participated in the NAM Ministerial Conference on Advancing the Rights and Empowerment of Women, held in Baku, Azerbaijan from 20-21 November.

Peacekeeping

India continued to be the largest cumulative contributor of UN Peacekeeping troops, having provided more than 2,78,000 troops since inception. As of date, India is the third largest contributor with 6073 personnel deployed in 10 out of 12 peacekeeping missions. Nearly 180 Indian Peacekeepers have sacrificed their lives while serving in UN Missions.

India has always emphasised the need to support good governance structures, aimed at delivering development and maintaining security, to ensure lasting peace in areas where UN Missions are operational. In this regard, India continued to advocate for greater emphasis on the safety and security of its troops, through provision of better equipment and improved living conditions in mission areas. In addition, India continues to stress the need for institutionalised triangular consultations between UNSC, UN Secretariat and Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs), for mandate formulation, prioritisation and matching of tasks and resources.

In keeping with its focus on enhancing the prominence of women in Peacekeeping, India deployed its largest ever contingent of Women Peacekeepers with the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), based in Sudan in January. The contingent is deeply involved in community outreach and other mandated tasks, and has established itself as a force multiplier of the Mission.

The Group of Friends for promoting 'Accountability for Crimes against Peacekeepers' has been actively advocating the need to address impunity for crimes against Peacekeepers by promoting accountability and rule of law. To this end, India is interacting with the Secretariat, Missions, and like-minded member states to establish the lines-of-effort to achieve the Group's objectives.

Minister of State for Defence & Tourism represented India at the UN Peacekeeping Ministerial Meeting held in Accra, Ghana from 05-06 December. In this regard, India pledged special military and police units for UN Peacekeeping Operations. The

pledge, which included Quick Reaction Forces, Police Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) units, utility helicopters, counter-Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and surveillance units, reflects India's responsiveness to the evolving requirements of UN peacekeeping missions and underscores its role as provider of high-end technology-oriented units.

Peacebuilding

India has been an active member of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and is deeply involved in advisory roles at the PBC. India continued to advocate for national ownership of projects, development trajectories and provision of flexible, sustained financing for Peacebuilding; under appropriate oversight mechanisms. Secretary (West) participated in the PBC Ministerial level meeting, held during the UNGA HLW and articulated India's position in this regard.

Counter Terrorism

Counter-terrorism (CT) is one of the top priorities for India at the UN. India, under the auspices of the UN advocates for a comprehensive multilateral action to counter terrorism, provision of capacity-building support to member states, effective implementation of UN CT-related sanctions as well as strengthening the unity of collective action against terrorism.

India has consistently emphasised the importance of strengthening the UN's normative CT-framework, in particular the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy (GCTS), advocating for a "zero tolerance" approach to terrorism. India also reiterated its support for enhancing accountability of member states, particularly of those who not only evade the effective implementation of CT-measures, but also provide support/safe haven to the supporters, perpetrators of the terrorist acts. Additionally, India reaffirmed the need for strengthening the UN sanctions regimes, particularly ISIL/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee, to bring objectivity, and transparency in the UN's work.

India actively supports the capacity-building efforts of the UN Office of Counter Terrorism (UNOCT), and has been supporting a call for greater autonomy of the Office. India also emphasises greater synergies between UNOCT agencies and international forums such as the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), to promote and implement terror financing standards, counter the use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes and advocate for 'right to justice' for victims of cross-border terrorism, among others. Heightened interactions among these forums will facilitate the early finalisation and adoption of the Convention on Countering of International Terrorism (CCIT) thereby providing a legal definition of 'International Terrorism.'

In 2022, India submitted 5 proposals for designation of terrorists involved in cross-border terrorist attacks on India, to the 1267

Sanctions regime. On 16 January, India's efforts bore fruits when the ISIL/Al-Qaida Sanctions Committee designated Abdul Rehman Makki, a terrorist of Lashkar-E-Tayyiba, to the sanctions list. Makki was involved in several terrorist attacks committed on Indian soil, including the 26/11 Mumbai terrorist attack. India continues to engage with the 1267 sanctions committee as well as its Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team, through informal interactions.

On 19-23 June, UNOCT organised the 3rd Counter Terrorism Week, featuring the 3rd High-Level Conference of the Heads of CT Agencies of Member States, held from 19-20 June. The CT week concluded with adoption of the 8th review resolution of the GCTS. India actively participated in the negotiations of the 8th review of the GCTS held from April-June, and called for an inclusive and impartial approach to deal with issues pertaining to religion especially in the context of CT-discussions.

On 20 June, India participated in a victims' memorial event, organised by the UNOCT dedicating a tree in the memory of the victims of terrorism. On 22 June, India organised an event on the issue of use of new and emerging technologies for terrorist purposes, on the sidelines of the CT week. The event reviewed the progress on the implementation of the Delhi Declaration on the issue. The Declaration was adopted by the Counter Terrorism Committee in a Special meeting held in Mumbai and New Delhi, from 28-29 October 2022.

India participated in the 22nd Coordination Committee meeting and the 13th Ministerial meeting of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), held in New York from 19-21 September. Secretary (West) participated in the Ministerial level meeting of the GCTF as well as the Ministerial meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism (GOFVOT) held on 20 September. Secretary (West) also held a bilateral meeting with Under Secretary-General of the UNOCT Vladimir Voronkov, wherein he reiterated India's position on CT-issues and thanked him for paying attention to India's concerns. PR of India to the UN participated in general debate on the GCTS, reiterating India's CT priorities and concerns. India also participated in the periodical meetings of the Advisory Board to the UN Counter Terrorism Center (UNCCT), held in March and October chaired by Saudi Arabia.

In keeping with its commitment to CT-issues, India participated in a first-of-its-kind Regional Roundtable on Investigations and Prosecutions, Rehabilitation and Reintegration (PRR) of individuals suspected of terrorism, including Foreign Terrorists Fighters (FTFs) and their accompanying family members, held from 13-15 December in Almaty, Kazakhstan. This round table was jointly hosted by the UNOCT, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO RATS) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA).

Fourth Committee

On 04 October India emphasised its role in the struggle against colonialism, during the General Debate on Special Political and Decolonization Committee. In addition, India highlighted that the UN lagged in its commitments for the 'Fourth International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism' (2021-2023). India also advocated for pursuing a pragmatic approach towards decolonization, to fulfil the legitimate wishes of the people belonging to 17 non-self-governing territories. In line with its long-standing commitment to the just Palestinian cause, India participated in the Fourth Committee discussions on resolutions related to Palestine. The Committee adopted 19 resolutions, including 5 by-voting.

On 02 November, India urged the UN for transparency in the budgetary process of the 41 special political missions during the General Debate on Special Political Missions. The debate was followed by consensus-based adoption of the resolution on 'Comprehensive review of Special Political Missions.'

Committee on Information

On 25 April, India highlighted its role in successfully bridging the digital gaps, during the General Debate held at the Committee on Information. India urged the Committee to take a more proactive approach in disseminating information in the Hindi language and strengthen global outreach efforts in other unofficial languages as well. India appreciated the UN's support in commemorating the 'International Day of Yoga'. The debate was followed by the adoption of two resolutions by consensus, namely 'Information in the service of humanity' and 'United Nations Global Communications policies & activities.'

Hindi in the United Nations

Usage of Hindi in UN public communications (UN news, weekly audio bulletins on UN radio and UN social media) began in March 2018, following the first MoU signed by the UN with any country. Since the past 5 years, India has witnessed a steady increase in the volume and frequency of Hindi content on the UN's Hindi website as well as its social media platforms including- Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Hindi Website of UN News was launched in October 2019, and carries links of the social media accounts of UN News Hindi. On an average, 60 posts are uploaded on a weekly basis, across social media handles. The themes covered by the posts include COVID-19, Development issues, Environment, Human Rights, International Peace and Security, UN Matters, India-related general affairs, to name a few. The UN has developed a Hindi extension on the UN News app (available at iOS and Android), offered a newsletter subscription service and enabled RSS feed of UN News in Hindi.

Additionally, the social media reach of the 'Hindi@UN' account has witnessed an exponential rise in 2023, amassing nearly 51,100 followers on X, formerly known as Twitter.

International Conference on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

An International Conference on the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - The World is One Family was organised at the UN headquarters on 10 October. President of the ICCR and President of UN General Assembly Dennis Francis, apart from several Permanent Representatives (PRs)/Ambassadors, renowned academics and senior UN officials were among the prominent guests for the event. In keeping with India's world-view as a civilizational nation, President of the ICCR underlined the critical importance of unity for an interdependent, globalised world. The engaging panel discussions were followed by a Bharatnatyam recital, performed by international students. In addition, the President of the ICCR unveiled a plaque entitled 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - The World is One Family' at the Permanent Mission of India serving as a constant reminder of the relevance of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam in our international diplomatic outreach, especially at the UN.

Engagement with the Commonwealth

The 22nd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting, chaired by Rwanda was held in London on 15 March. The Indian side was led by the High Commissioner of India to the UK. The 10th Commonwealth Youth Ministers Meeting chaired by Pakistan under the theme, 'Aiming Higher: Delivering More for Young People in the Commonwealth' was held from 11-15 September in London. Secretary of the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports led the Indian delegation. The 23rd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers meeting chaired by Rwanda, was held on the margins of the 78th session of UNGA, on 21 September. India was represented by the Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs. On the same day, the UK chaired the inaugural Commonwealth Environment and Climate Ministerial meeting outlining the key priorities for COP28. India was represented by the Secretary (West).

The 2023 Commonwealth Trade Ministers Meeting chaired by Rwanda, under the theme 'Delivering a Common Future: Cooperation for Resilient, Inclusive, Green and Digital Economies' was held from 05-06 June at Marlborough House, London. It was attended by the First Secretary, High Commission of India in London.

The 35th Commonwealth Health Ministers' Meeting chaired by Kenya, under the theme 'Getting Universal Health Coverage in the Commonwealth on track for 2030,' was held on 20 May in

Geneva, on the eve of the 76th World Health Assembly. India was represented by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The 13th Commonwealth Women Affairs Ministers' Meeting chaired by the Bahamas, under the theme, 'Equality towards a common future' was held from 21-23 August, in the Bahamas. India was represented by the Joint Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Democracy Initiatives

Community of Democracies (CoD) is a global intergovernmental coalition of states that brings together governments, civil society and the private sector to support democratic values and strengthen democratic norms, institutions around the world. India as a founding member and the largest democracy in the world has maintained constant engagement with the CoD since its inception in 2000. India's Governing Council membership was renewed in 2018 for a period of 6 years. India has been regularly participating in the Ministerial conferences at EAM/MoS level. The 36th Governing Council Meeting of CoD took place in Warsaw, on 10 May. India was represented by the Ambassador of India to Poland.

International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA) is an intergovernmental organisation with a mandate to support and advance democracy worldwide. India is a founding member and continues to make regular annual monetary contributions towards the organisation. The former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India Sunil Arora, is a member of the Board of Advisors for the period of December 2021-December 2024. In 2023, India made an annual contribution of USD 50,000 to the IIDEA.

At the request of the IIDEA Secretariat, the Secretary General (SG) of IIDEA Dr. Kevin Casas-Zamora, visited India from 10-11 May. The SG held official meetings with MoS (VM) and other senior officials of Government of India, including the Secretary General of Lok Sabha, Chief Election Commissioner, G20 Chief Coordinator and DG of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

India makes an annual contribution of USD 150,000 to the United Nations Democracy Fund to support democracy initiatives around the world such as- community activism, electoral processes, gender equality, media and freedom of information, rule of law and human rights. These initiatives strengthen civil society interactions with governments and act as a tool for enhancing knowledge and youth engagement.

Human Rights, Humanitarian and Social Matters

The Third Committee of the UNGA continued to examine and address important questions pertaining to human rights and social development. The Third Committee held its meetings from

27 September-17 November, during the 78th Session of UNGA. It adopted 62 resolutions covering subjects like trafficking, rights of child, drugs and crimes, disability, development of youth, water and sanitation, strengthening the role of the UN in the promotion of democratisation, and country-specific resolutions. India co-sponsored 23 resolutions.

The “India section” in the UNSG’s 2023 Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) was removed after 12 years, in view of the recent positive measures undertaken by the Government of India to better protect children, and their continued engagement with UNSG’s Special Representative on CAAC. India had been featured in the Report as a ‘situation of concern’ since 2010.

The 61st session of the Commission for Social Development was held from 06-15 February. India was elected as the Chair of the 62nd Session of the Commission, marking its first selection since it held the same position in 1975.

The 67th session of the Commission on the Status of Women was held from 06-17 March. The Minister of Women and Child Development delivered India’s national statement. India is a member of the Commission for a four-year tenure, from 2021 to 2025.

The 56th Commission on Population and Development was held from 10-14 April. India highlighted its significant progress in the field of population, education and sustainable development.

Economic and Social issues

The Economic and Finance Committee (Second Committee) of the UNGA, conducted its meetings for the main session during the 78th UNGA from 02 October–22 November. The Committee dealt with 12 agenda items, covering 43 resolutions on areas such as macroeconomic policy, sustainable development, globalisation and interdependence, Conferences on Least Developed Countries (LDCs), Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS), South-South Cooperation, agriculture and food security.

During the general debate, India highlighted the focus areas of its G20 Presidency and shared the outcomes of the Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS), held in January. During discussions on specific agenda items, India highlighted its initiatives at the national and multilateral levels, particularly the G20 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on the SDGs, the report of the Independent Expert Group on Multilateral Development Bank (MDB) reform, and the inclusion of the African Union (AU) to the G20 as a permanent member.

The HLPF on Sustainable Development, organised under the auspices of the ECOSOC was held from 10-19 July. A High-level Dialogue on Financing for Development (FfD) was held at the General Assembly, on 20 September during the HLW. Vice Chairperson, NITI Aayog, delivered India’s statement at the

Interactive Roundtable on “Innovative solutions to unlock SDG investments”. The ECOSOC FfD Forum was held on 17-20 April at the UN Headquarters, in New York.

In April, India was elected to the UN Statistical Commission (2024-2027) and the Committee for Programme and Coordination (2024-2026).

Legal Issues

India actively participated in the UNGA Sixth Committee meeting from 02 October-17 November, to deliberate on legal issues of international importance including international terrorism. The UNGA adopted a Resolution, inter alia, calling upon all States to cooperate on the prevention and suppression of terrorist acts.

India delivered national statements during the 78th session of the Sixth Committee, which also witnessed deliberation on topics such as rule of law at the national and international levels, crimes against humanity, scope and application of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction, report of the UN Commission on International Trade Law on the work, Working Group on Protection of Persons in the event of Disasters, International Court of Justice (ICJ) and Oceans and the Law of Sea, among others.

An Informal Meeting of Legal Advisers was led by India from 23-24 October in New York. The meeting marked the traditional opening of International Law Week.

UN Climate Change Conference (COP28)

The Prime Minister participated in the World Climate Action Summit on 01 December, at the high-level segment of the 2023 UN Climate Change Conference or COP28. The event was held in Dubai, UAE from 30 November-12 December. Prime Minister delivered a Special Address at the Ceremonial Opening of the high-level segment, wherein he highlighted India’s contribution to global climate action, and expressed India’s willingness to host COP33 in the year 2028.

During his visit to the UAE, the Prime Minister also participated in a Leader’s event on Transforming Climate Finance, hosted by the COP28 Presidency on 01 December. The Prime Minister launched a “Global Green Credit Initiative” during a high-level event co-hosted by India and the UAE in the presence of the UAE President, Prime Minister of Sweden, President of Mozambique, and President of the European Council. Prime Minister and his Swedish counterpart co-launched the Industry Transition Platforms, under the Phase-II of the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT 2.0) for 2024-26. In addition, the Prime Minister held bilateral meetings with UNSG and several global leaders, on the sidelines of the COP28 summit.



Prime Minister participated in the COP28 Presidency's Session on Transforming Climate Finance in Dubai, December, 2023

The Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change led India's inter-ministerial delegation for negotiations at the COP28. India also launched the Global River Cities Alliance at the India Pavilion, during an event at the COP28 summit. On 09 December, India submitted its Third National Communication (TNA) and the Initial Adaptation Communication to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Global Capacity Building Initiative and India-UNDP Fund

On the margins of the UNGA HLW of the 78th session of the UNGA, India and UN launched a joint capacity-building initiative for the Global South on 23 September titled 'India-UN for the Global South: Delivering for Development.' The event was chaired by the EAM and witnessed participation of the PGA Dennis Francis, the Prime Minister of Samoa, Foreign Ministers of Bahamas, Bhutan, Dominica, Guyana, Mauritius, St. Lucia and Minister of State of Maldives, and other senior UN dignitaries. The event served as a platform to exchange experiences and share best practices from India's development cooperation with the countries of the Global South. It builds upon India's extensive bilateral cooperation with partner countries and complements the India-UN partnership through the India-UN Development Partnership Fund (India-UNDP Fund).

India celebrated the 6th anniversary of the India-UNDP Fund and its Commonwealth Window on 29 November, in New York, with the UN Deputy Secretary General presiding over the event as the keynote speaker. The event witnessed the participation

of the Director of the UN Office for South-South Cooperation, UN Officials, PRs and officials of many UN member states, representatives of international organisations, think tanks, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and academicians. The Fund has developed a portfolio of 76 projects across 54 countries, at a budget of USD 60 million.

Fifth UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5)

MoS (RRS) led India's delegation to the 5th UN Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) held from 06-07 March, in Doha and delivered India's national statement highlighting the country's commitment to South-South cooperation. He also served as a panellist at the round table titled "Leveraging the power of science, technology and innovation for the sustainable development of LDCs" and participated in the Ministerial meeting of South-South Cooperation. The decennial conference was aimed at renewing partnerships of 46 LDCs with their respective development partners.

India-UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

NITI Aayog and the UN in India, signed the Government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (GoI-UNSDCF) for the period 2023-2027 in New Delhi on 16 June.

UN Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS)

At the UNCOPUOS debate held on 23 October, India highlighted the achievements of ISRO including the milestone soft landing of the Chandrayaan-3 spacecraft near the Moon's South Pole and the launch of its first solar observatory mission Aditya L1. India also underscored its bilateral and multilateral cooperation with other states for the peaceful uses of outer space, by signing more than 260 space cooperation documents with 61 countries. The committee also witnessed the adoption of a resolution on peaceful use of outer space, by consensus.

International Day of Peace

India organised an event titled "Discourse on Peace" on 14 September, at the Trusteeship Council, UN Headquarters to commemorate the International Day of Peace. Yoga Guru Sri Sri Ravishankar served as the Chief Guest for the event, which also witnessed the participation of the High Representative for the UN Alliance of Civilizations, senior UN officials, noted members of the academia and PRs of the UN member states.

International Agreement on Conservation of Marine Biological Diversity

The UNGA endorsed the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) agreement, under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on 19 June. The BBNJ Agreement

will remain open for signatures from 20 September 2023 to 20 September 2025. India also participated in the substantive deliberations of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) sessions on BBNJ convened under the UNGA resolution 72/249, including the resumed 5th session of the IGC held from 20 February-03 March.

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

India successfully completed its fourth cycle of the Universal Periodic Review at the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC) on 10 November. A total of 130 countries took part in the interactive dialogue and made 339 recommendations. In consultation with the respective Ministries/Departments, India 'supported' 221 recommendations and 'noted' 118 recommendations. The recommendations were ultimately adopted by the UNHRC on 27 March.

As a member of the UNHRC for the 2022-2024 term, India continued its engagement and participation across various UNHRC sessions, its associated human rights bodies and processes. India continued to highlight its support for the global promotion and protection of human rights, especially technical assistance and capacity building cooperation among UN Member States.

India actively participated in the 52nd, 53rd and 54th UNHRC Sessions held in February-March, June-July, and September-October, respectively. India co-sponsored several resolutions at the sessions, such as right to development, human rights and unilateral coercive measures, and promoting and protecting



EAM chaired the launch of a joint capacity-building initiative for the Global South titled "India-UN for the Global South: Delivering for Development" in New York, September 2023

economic, social and cultural rights within the context of addressing inequalities. India was a party to Joint Statements, made by groups of countries at the UNHRC Sessions, on issues such as freedom of religion and belief, sexism in sport, President Nelson Mandela and his commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), and the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action (VDPA).

India's candidate was elected as one of the Advisory Committee members during the 54th Session of the UNHRC, held in November. On the sidelines of the 54th Session, India organised an event titled "UDHR75 and VDPA30: Implementing the Right to Development for Realising Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda" on 21 September. The event was organised to mark two important milestones, 75 years of UDHR and 30 years of VDPA. The event was co-sponsored by the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Kazakhstan, South Africa, Gambia, Vietnam, and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The commemoration of the 75th Anniversary of the UDHR, culminated in a High-Level Event from 11-12 December in Geneva.

International Labour Organization (ILO)

The Minister for Labour and Employment led India's delegation to the 111th Session of International Labour Conference (ILC) held in Geneva from 05-06 June. He addressed the event on the theme "Addressing Inequalities, Informality and Facilitating Inclusion." Furthermore, he held bilateral meetings with Director-General (DG), ILO Gilbert F. Houngbo and Heads of the Delegations of several countries.

Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment led India's delegation to the 347th, 348th and 349th Sessions of ILO Governing Body, held in Geneva in March, June, and October-November, respectively. She also led India's delegation to the 3rd G20 Employment Working Group (EWG) meeting held in Geneva from 31 May-02 June.

Secretary, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation, led the Indian delegation at the 21st Session of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, held from 11-20 October in ILO, Geneva.

The ILO in consultation with its constituents, launched the 4th Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) for India for the period 2023-27, post the completion of the 3rd DWCP (2018-22). The 4th DWCP has identified a set of decent work priorities and outcomes for implementation, pivoted towards the promotion of fundamental principles and rights at work, strengthening of Labour Market Information System (LMIS) for

gender inclusive job creation, building sustainable and resilient skills and developing an inclusive framework for ensuring social protection for all.

World Health Organization (WHO)

Prime Minister addressed the 76th World Health Assembly on 22 May via a video message. India tabled a resolution, requesting the DG, WHO to develop a new global strategy on Traditional Medicine for 2025-2034. The resolution was co-sponsored by 11 countries. In May, India launched the 'Group of Friends of Traditional Medicine' in Geneva, which as on date has 23 member countries.

India and the WHO co-hosted the first ever WHO Summit on Traditional Medicine, on 17-18 August in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. This event was one of the key initiatives under India's G20 Presidency.

India has actively participated in seven meetings of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body (INB), responsible for the WHO Pandemic Accord as well as five meetings of the Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations (WGIHR). In addition, India has continued to voice the concerns of the Global South at the INB to bring equity in the pandemic accord.

On 05 April, India began its term as a member of the Coordinating Board, for the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS Program (UNAIDS) after being elected from the Asia-Pacific region. India's term at the UNAIDS ends on 31 December 2025.

In May, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG), was re-elected as the External Auditor of the WHO for a four-year term, from 2024 to 2027.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

On 22 March, Prime Minister inaugurated the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)'s Innovation Centre and Area Office in New Delhi, in presence of Secretary General ITU. The facility will serve eight countries in the region including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Iran, Maldives Nepal and Sri Lanka. The Center will give impetus to research and development in telecommunication technologies and provide opportunities to academia, start-ups and enterprises to develop and showcase their innovation at a global stage. ITU has ratified India's bid for hosting the prestigious Global Standardization



Prime Minister inaugurated the Innovation Centre and Area Office of International Telecommunication Union in New Delhi, March 2023

Symposium (GSS) on 14 October 2024 and the World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly (WTSA) on 15-24 October 2024 in New Delhi.

Universal Postal Union (UPU)

In July 2023, a regional office of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) was established in New Delhi, to help India undertake the UPU's technical assistance activities in the South Asia region. DG, UPU visited India during the occasion. The Minister of State for Communications announced India's funding worth USD 200,000 for the Asia-Pacific Postal Union (APPU) and the Asia-Pacific region through UPU's development cooperation programme, for a term of four years. It was also agreed that India would be imparting 3 types of fully sponsored ITEC training for up to 75 persons.

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), Department of Posts and the UPU commenced their joint assessment aimed at testing the technical feasibility of India's UPI for facilitating international remittances, through UPU and India's postal systems.

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Secretary (OIA & CPV) participated in the High-level segment of the 114th session of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Council from 27-29 November. India's suggestions for the way forward to deal with 'social security portability of migrants' and 'identify global skill gaps' have been included in the IOM's "Programmes, Governance and Organisational Priorities for 2024."

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

India's Namami Gange Initiative was selected as one among the first ten World Restoration Flagships by the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration. According to UNEP, the initiative was found to be among the world's most promising, ambitious, and inspiring examples of large-scale restoration from more than 150 applications and over 70 government endorsements received so far.

India participated at the 3rd session of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC-3) to develop an international legally binding instrument on land and marine plastic pollution, held in Nairobi from 13-19 November.

India's candidate was elected as the Vice-Chair of Working Group-II of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) at the 59th session of the IPCC, held in Nairobi from 25-28 July.

UN-Habitat

The second session of the UN-Habitat Assembly was held from 05-09 June in Nairobi. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs delivered India's national statement. The Assembly decided to extend UN-Habitat's Strategic Plan for 2020-2023 until 2025 to align the UN-Habitat's planning cycle with the UN Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review Process. India, as a member of the 36-member UN-Habitat Executive board (EB), participated in the three sessions held in March, June and November.

UN Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The Permanent Representative led India's delegation at the 42nd session of the General Conference held at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 07-22 November 2023. The PR

delivered India's National Statement, highlighting the progress under India's G20 Presidency, at the 216th & 217th Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO. He also chaired the Finance and Administrative Commission (FA) of the Executive Board and co-chaired the Joint Commission of the (FA) and Programme and External Relations Commission (PX).

The World Heritage Committee, inscribed Santiniketan and the Sacred Ensembles of the Hoysalas, on the List of World Heritage during its 45th extended session held from 10-25 September in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. The number of World Heritage sites in India has now reached 42, since the inclusion of these new entries on the list.

The 19th Extraordinary session of the World Heritage Committee held on 23 November in UNESCO Paris, witnessed India's unopposed election as the Chair of the 46th Session of the Committee. The 46th Session is scheduled to be held in India in 2024.

India won the election to the 'Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its country of Origin or Restitution in case of illegal appropriation' (ICPRCP) for the term 2023-2027. In addition, an Indian candidate was elected as the Vice President of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission for 2023-2025. Director of the Gulf of Mannar won UNESCO's Michael Batisse Award 2023 for Biosphere Reserve.

"Garba of Gujarat" was nominated for Inscription on the Representative List of Humanity for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.

The 9th session of the Conference of Parties to the International Convention against Doping in Sport, was held from 25-26 October at the UNESCO Headquarters, Paris. India was elected as the unopposed Vice Chairperson of the Bureau of COP9, from the Asia-Pacific Group.

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Program (WFP)

The forty-third Session of the biennial Conference of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) was held from 01-07 July. During the session, India was re-elected as Member of the Council of FAO for the term- 07 July 2023 to 30 June 2026. India continues to serve as a member of various Committees of FAO such as Committee on Fisheries, Committee on Forestry, Committee on World Food Security, Committee on Commodity Problems and Committee on Agriculture. India was elected as a Member of the Finance Committee of FAO after a gap of 10 years.

On 25 October, India was elected as a Member of the Bureau of the Committee on World Food Security for a two-year tenure. In addition, India was re-elected as the Convenor of List-B

countries of World Food Program (WFP) comprising 54-member states, during the second regular WFP Executive Board meeting of 2023. India also became a Member of the WFP Executive Board Bureau.

India actively participated in the 174th Session of FAO Council from 04-08 December as well as the 197th and 198th Sessions of the Finance Committee of FAO held in October and November, respectively. India participated in the first ever FAO Global Conferences on 'Sustainable Livestock Transformation' and 'Sustainable Agricultural Mechanization' held in September.

India also participated in the UN Food System Summit+2 Stocktaking Moment (UNFSS+2) in Rome from 24-26 July, wherein a member of the NITI Aayog shared India's experience in agriculture and food security. Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution shared India's efforts, experiences and achievements towards realising the Right to Food at the 51st Session of the Committee on World Food Security held from 23-27 October.

The UNGA declared 2023 as the International Year of Millets (IYM). Since January 2023, India as the Chair of the Steering Committee of IYM, actively promoted several activities/events concerning IYM through FAO. The Closing Ceremony of the IYM is tentatively scheduled for 04 March 2024.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

The 76th Session of the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Executive Council was held at the WMO Headquarters in Geneva from 27 February to 03 March. The Council agreed to ensure that WMO's activities were aligned with the 'UN Early Warning for All initiative.' The Council also approved the roll-out of the 'Global Multi-Hazard Alert System' endorsed plans for a new Global Greenhouse Gas Monitoring Infrastructure and recommended the establishment of a Consortium of WMO Education and Training Collaboration Partners. In this regard, India has expressed its support for the WMO's 'Early Warning for All initiative.'

On 01 June, Director General of the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), who also serves as a Member of WMO Executive Council, won the election to the position of 3rd Vice President of WMO. DG, IMD secured 113 out of 148 votes and participated in the 77th Session of WMO Executive Council from 05-06 June as the newly elected the Vice President.

The 19th session of the World Meteorological Congress was held from 22 May- 02 June in Geneva, preceded by FINAC-43 held from 19-20 May. India will act as Peer Advisor for implementing

systematic observation and forecasting facilities in LDCs and SIDS to augment the meteorological observation network.

The IMD and WMO signed an MoU for the hosting of WMO Regional Training Centre. On 22 June, IMD also signed an MoU with the UNDP, to enhance India's climate resilience by using weather data to strengthen climate adaptation efforts.

International Maritime Organization (IMO)

On 01 December, India was re-elected to the IMO Council under Category B (countries with largest interest in international seaborne trade) for the biennium 2024-25. The re-election was conducted during the 33rd General Assembly of the IMO in London.

Arctic Matters

The Minister of Earth Sciences visited Norway from 11-17 June to enhance bilateral engagement in the field of Higher Education in Arctic and Polar research. In this regard he visited the Svalbard ground station where India will be setting up two ISRO antennas, interacted with scientists stationed at the Indian

research station Himadri at Ny-Alesund and inaugurated the Gruvebadet Indian Atmospheric Laboratory.

The Arctic Circle Assembly was held in Reykjavik, Iceland from 19-21 October. India was represented by a delegation comprising members of the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and Ministry of Earth Sciences.

UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

India participated in the 79th Commission Session of UNESCAP held from 15-19 May in Bangkok, on the theme "Accelerating climate action in Asia and the Pacific for sustainable development." India also participated at the Climate Solutions Fair organised by UNESCAP from 15-19 May and showcased its 'Mission LiFE - Lifestyle for Environment'.

UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs

In April, India was elected to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for the term 2024-2027.

CHAPTER

13

G 20

India's G20 Presidency was a historic moment in its foreign policy. The G20 group comprises the world's leading economies, and accounts for around 85% of the global GDP, 75% of world trade and two-thirds of world population. The

theme of India's G20 Presidency "One Earth, One Family, One Future", drawing upon India's age-old belief of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam", resonated across the world.



Prime Minister presiding over the G20 Leaders' Session at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, September 2023



Prime Minister welcomed President of the United States Joseph Biden at the G20 Summit held in New Delhi, September 2023

With over 200 meetings (at Annexure-I) in 60 Indian cities (at Annexure-II) in all 28 States and 8 Union Territories, across 40 different mechanisms (at Annexure-III), the size, scale and scope of India's G20 Presidency was unprecedented. Different Engagement Groups provided platforms for dialogue among the government, private sector, academia, civil society, youth and women, as well as institutions including the Parliaments, audit authorities and urban administrations.

In-person participation during India's G20 Presidency was among the largest ever. Over 100,000 participants, including 30,000 meeting delegates, from 135 nationalities attended the G20 and related meetings during India's G20 Presidency. This included participation from G20 Members, 9 invitee countries and 14 international organisations.

New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit

The G20 Leaders' Summit took place on 09-10 September 2023 in New Delhi and was attended by 27 Heads of States/Governments (including India), 04 representatives at Ministerial-level and 11 Heads of International Organisations (Annexure-IV).

The substantive centrepiece of the G20 Summit was the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Declaration (NDLD), adopted unanimously by all G20 countries on the first day of the Summit (09 September). As an action-oriented, decisive, inclusive and ambitious Declaration, the NDLD also uniquely reflects Indian perspectives of universal, equitable and inclusive solutions to contemporary

global challenges. Some of the highlights of the declaration are:

- i. Underlined the significance of the philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam for addressing global challenges;
- ii. Reiterated that states must adhere to the purposes and principles of the UN Charter with regard to Ukraine;
- iii. Resolved to strengthen the voice of Global South and better integrate the perspectives of developing countries into the future G20 agenda;
- iv. Paved the way for accession of the African Union as a permanent member of the G20;
- v. Committed to take collective action for effective and timely implementation of the G20 2023 Action Plan to Accelerate Progress on SDGs;
- vi. Committed to promote sustainable development, address climate challenges, and conserve biodiversity including forests and oceans;
- vii. Recognised the need to rapidly and substantially scale up investment and climate finance from billions to trillions of dollars globally from all sources;
- viii. Called on Parties to set an ambitious, transparent and trackable New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) of climate finance in 2024, from a floor of USD 100 billion a year;

- ix. Underscored the need for better, bigger, more effective, and more representative Multilateral Development Banks;
- x. Recognised the importance of secure and inclusive Digital Public Infrastructure for promoting resilience and enabling service delivery and innovation;
- xi. Committed to pursue and encourage efforts to triple renewable energy capacity globally through existing targets and policies;
- xii. Supported the development of transparent and resilient global markets for hydrogen produced from zero and low-emission technologies;
- xiii. Encouraged women-led development and participation of women as decision-makers for addressing global challenges;
- xiv. Committed to support developing countries' efforts and capacities to address their food security challenges;
- xv. Welcomed the establishment of the Global Initiative on Digital Health (GIDH) within a WHO-managed framework to build a comprehensive digital health ecosystem;
- xvi. Condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations;
- Xvii. On Artificial Intelligence (AI); emphasised a pro-innovation regulatory/governance approach that maximises the benefits of AI and takes into account the risks associated with it;
- xviii. Committed to work towards ensuring well-managed, regular and skills-based migration pathways.

Other Substantive Outcomes during India's G20 Presidency

Substantive deliberations during India's G20 Presidency revolved around priority areas for India and other developing countries of the Global South such as inclusive and resilient growth, progress on SDGs, green development and Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE), technological transformation and public digital infrastructure, reform of multilateral institutions, women led development, and international peace and harmony.

In this regard, some of the initiatives undertaken during India's G20 Presidency are:

- i. Institutionalisation of Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group;
- ii. Launch of Startup20 Engagement Group;
- iii. First meeting of G20-Chief Science Advisers Roundtable (G20-CSAR);
- iv. First ever G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the Age of Non-Fungible Token (NFT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Metaverse;
- v. WHO's first ever Global Summit for Traditional Medicine, co-hosted by the Ministry of Ayush at the G20 Health Ministers' Meeting;



Prime Minister congratulated President of Comoros and the African Union Azali Assoumani on the African Union becoming a full member of the G20 at the Leaders' Summit, September 2023

- vi. Creation of the Women Empowerment Working Group; and
- vii. Launch of G20 Millet and other Ancient Grains International Research Initiative (MAHARISHI).

India's Footprint in G20 Outcome Documents

India showcased its regional diversity by hosting G20 meetings in several cities across the country. The outcome documents of ministerial meetings carry the names of the cities and regions where they were agreed upon. This also reflects the participation of local governments in global policy making. One of the key outcomes of the G20 Agriculture Ministers' Meeting in Hyderabad was the Deccan High-Level Principles on Food Security and Nutrition. It is a collection of seven principles that deal with crafting an effective response to the global food security crisis. Similarly, the Chennai High-Level Principles for Blue/Ocean Economy were adopted at the Environment and Climate Ministers' Meeting in Chennai with the goal of protection, conservation, restoration and sustainable use of the marine environment.

The Goa Roadmap for Tourism was a key deliverable at the G20 Tourism Working Group Meeting and Ministerial Meeting. It aims to provide national governments in the G20 countries and other tourism players with voluntary tools and recommendations to leverage the sector's capability and achieve progress on SDGs. The Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting adopted the Gandhinagar Implementation Roadmap for land restoration with the aim of restoring 50 percent of degraded land by 2040 on a voluntary basis. The Jaipur Call for Action was issued at the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers Meeting to enhance access to information for MSMEs. The G20 Culture Ministers' Meeting held in Varanasi issued the Kashi Culture Pathway which focuses on harnessing the transformative power of culture to address multifaceted development challenges.

Initiatives on the Sidelines of the G20 Summit

- i. The Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) was launched at the G20 Summit with the aim of boosting supply and demand for biofuels. Besides India, the initiating members include Argentina, Brazil, Italy, Mauritius, South Africa, UAE and USA, while Canada, Bangladesh and Singapore are observer countries.
- ii. India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was launched. An MoU on IMEC was signed by India, Saudi Arabia, UAE, US, European Union, France, Italy and Germany. The IMEC consists of an Eastern Corridor connecting India to the Gulf

region and a Northern Corridor connecting the Gulf region to Europe.

- iii. A special event on Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) and IMEC was co-chaired by the Prime Minister and the US President Joe Biden. PGII is a G7 initiative that aims to mobilise USD 600 billion by 2027 in global infrastructure investments, including in partnership with the private sector, and inter-alia for achievement of SDGs. Leaders of the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, EU, Italy, France, Germany, Japan, Mauritius and World Bank participated in the event.

- iv. One Future Alliance (OFA) was launched as a voluntary initiative aimed towards building capacity, and providing technical assistance and adequate funding support for implementing DPI in LMICs.

Culture and People's G20 – 'Jan Bhagidari'

During G20 meetings across the country, unique experiences showcasing India's diversity, inclusive traditions and cultural richness were an integral part of the visiting delegates' programmes. 'Shree Anna' (Millets) based dishes were promoted throughout the G20. Over 300 cultural events, with the participation of over 18,000 artists, showcasing local and national art forms, were held during the G20 meetings all over India.

Many 'Jan Bhagidari' activities were also simultaneously held with active public participation in a whole-of-nation and whole-of-society approach, making India's G20 Presidency a "People's G20". These include G20 University Connect lecture series, Model G20 meetings, Special G20 sessions in schools/universities, G20 Pavilions in major festivals, quiz contests, selfie competitions, #G20India stories, workshops, marathons, awareness rallies, cleanliness drives, Yuva Samvaad and hundreds of other G20-theme events by the civil society and private sector. The 'Jan Bhagidari' activities touched more than 7 crore people.

Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit

A virtual G20 Leaders' Summit was held on 22 November under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. It was attended by 21 HoS/Gs (including India), 1 Vice President, 8 Ministers and 11 Heads of International Organisations (at Annexure-V).

The main objective of the Virtual Summit was to review and accelerate progress on the outcomes agreed during the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit held on 09-10 September. The deliberations held during the Summit also factored in the discussions of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit (17 November) and the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) meeting (12 and 13 October), including



Prime Minister addressed the G20 Virtual Summit from New Delhi, November 2023



Prime Minister handed over the G20 Presidency to President of Brazil Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva during the G20 Summit in New Delhi, September 2023

inter alia, Multilateral Development Banks (MDB) reforms, climate action, Digital Public Infrastructure and Women-led Development. In their interventions, several leaders also dwelt upon the recent development in West Asia.

India's Contribution to G20 and Way Forward

India's Presidency imparted a new dynamism and momentum to G20, and built consensus on a wide range of issues among developing countries and advanced economies. India brought multilateralism back to the centre stage and amplified the voice of the Global South.

It is India's constant endeavour to promote and further build upon the achievements of the New Delhi G20 Summit. The themes and achievements of India's G20 Presidency will continue to remain an integral part of India's policy priorities, nationally as well as on the international stage. These would include, inter-alia, a human-centric approach to development, food and health security, reform of global governance structures, climate and environmental action, transparent management of debt, women-led development, skilled migration, and promotion of SMEs – under India's overall vision of "One Earth, One Family, One Future".

India will continue to stay fully engaged in the G20 in future. As Brazil takes over the G20 Presidency, India will extend its full support to Brazil, including taking forward the work done during India's G20 Presidency.

CHAPTER

14

Multilateral Economic Relations

BRICS

15th BRICS Summit

Prime Minister led the Indian delegation to the 15th BRICS Summit held on 22-24 August 2023 in Johannesburg under South African Chairship. The theme for the Summit was “BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth,

Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism”. On 22 August, BRICS Leaders participated in the Presidential Dialogue session of the BRICS Business Forum. On 23 August, the BRICS Summit took place, and the leaders adopted the Johannesburg II Declaration. Invitation was extended to 6 countries- Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and UAE- to become full members of BRICS. On 24 August, the leaders participated in BRICS-Africa Outreach and BRICS Plus Dialogue with participation of guest countries and organisations.



Prime Minister participated in the 15th BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, August 2023



EAM participated in the 11th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting chaired by Brazil, on the sidelines of UNGA in New York, September 2023

Meetings of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relation

EAM participated in the Standalone Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs and International Relations (chaired by South Africa) on 01-02 June in Cape Town. The Ministers adopted a Joint Statement. EAM also participated in the Friends of BRICS Foreign Ministers Meeting held on 02 June.

A meeting of BRICS Foreign Ministers, chaired by Russia (as the incoming BRICS Chair from 01 January 2024), was held on the sidelines of UNGA in New York on 20 September. Secretary (ER) participated in it and the Ministers adopted a Media Statement at the end of the Meeting.

India-Brazil-South Africa Dialogue Forum (IBSA)

11th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission (ITMC) Meeting

EAM participated in the 11th IBSA Trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting chaired by Brazil, held on the sidelines of UNGA in New York on 22 September. The Ministers adopted a Joint Communique. IBSA Countries agreed to strengthen and

expand the IBSA Fund. The Ministers affirmed the strategic significance of IBSA in safeguarding and advancing the interests of the Global South on the global stage, including at the multilateral and plurilateral bodies.

Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)

Secretary (ER) in the Ministry participated in the 18th ACD Ministerial Meeting held on the sidelines of the UNGA in New York on 20 September. The Bahrain Declaration was adopted during the meeting and the ACD Chairship was transferred from the Kingdom of Bahrain to the Islamic Republic of Iran.

G7 Summit 2023

The G7 Summit 2023 was held from 19-21 May in Hiroshima, Japan. Along with the partner countries, the Prime Minister participated in three sessions- Working Together to Address Multiple Crises (including Food, Health, Development, and Gender); Common Endeavor for a Resilient and Sustainable Planet (including Climate, Energy, and Environment); and Towards a Peaceful, Stable and Prosperous World. The 'Hiroshima Action Statement for Resilient Global Food Security' was adopted by G7 and partner countries.

Under the G7 umbrella. A number of ministerial meetings were held:

The G7 Ministers' Meeting on Climate, Energy and Environment was held on 15-16 April 2023 in Sapporo, Japan. The Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change participated in the meeting.

The G7 Digital and Tech Ministers Meeting was held from 29-30 April, at Takasaki City, Gunma, Japan. The Minister for Electronics and Information Technology; Communication and Railways participated in the meeting.

The G7 Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting

was held on 11-13 May in Niigata, Japan. The Finance Minister of India participated in the meeting.

The G7 Health Ministers' Meeting was held on 13-14 May, in Nagasaki, Japan. The Minister of Health and Family Welfare of India participated in the meeting.

The Outreach Session of G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting was held on 28 October 2023, in Osaka City and Sakai City in Japan. The Minister of Commerce and Industry participated in the meeting.

CHAPTER

15

Disarmament & International Security Affairs

India actively participated in multilateral forums related to disarmament, non-proliferation and international security this year, taking into account its national security interests and priorities in the international security arena. India also held bilateral engagements and presented its perspectives on these issues across regional forums. India's contributions underlined its longstanding commitment to the goal of universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament and support for global peace and security in areas such as space, maritime regions and Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD), while responding to the evolving international security environment and initiatives undertaken by various countries.

In 2023, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Grossi, UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu and Secretary General of Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) Kairat Sarybay visited India and discussed issues of mutual interest, across several high-level meetings. India successfully held the Plenary Chairmanship of the Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) for the year 2023. India also worked with fellow WA members, towards furthering the arrangement's goal of contributing to regional

and international security and stability. In addition, India helped steer significant agreements on WA control lists, best practice guidelines/documents and policy proposals during the year.

First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)

India constructively participated and presented its principled positions and views on disarmament and international security matters at the 78th session of the First Committee of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in New York from 02 October-03 November.

The 78th UNGA First Committee adopted four annual resolutions tabled by India. Resolutions on "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction" and "Role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament" were re-adopted by the Committee by consensus. The other two resolutions raised in the First Committee, namely, "Convention on the Prohibition of the Use of Nuclear Weapons" - which calls for negotiations on an international Convention for prohibiting the use or threat of use

of nuclear weapons and “Reducing Nuclear Danger” - which calls for immediate steps to reduce the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, were also adopted by a broad support of the UN member States.

Conference on Disarmament (CD)

This year, India participated in the Conference on Disarmament (CD) session and presented its positions on all the core agenda items of the CD including- nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war and all related matters; prevention of an arms race in outer space, new types of weapons of mass destruction, transparency in armaments, to name a few. While the CD was unable to reach consensus on a ‘Programme of Work’ this year, the forum continued to engage in thematic debates on various agenda items and witnessed constructive participation from India.

India also participated in the sessions of the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV) during the year. In addition, India participated in meetings on disarmament-related issues in other forums, including those organised by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR) and other think tanks.

United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC)

The UNDC held its annual substantive session from 03-21 April, in New York. In accordance with the agenda adopted for its 2018-2023 cycle, the Commission deliberated on two agenda items related to nuclear disarmament and outer space security. The UNDC meetings successfully adopted consensus-based recommendations to prevent an arms race in the region and witnessed the active participation of India. The recommendations adopted by broad support, aimed to promote the practical implementation of transparency, and confidence-building measures in outer space activities.

Visit of UN Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

UN Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs Izumi Nakamitsu visited India from 06-08 December, to participate in the Global Technology Summit co-hosted by the Ministry of External Affairs and Carnegie India. She met with Foreign Secretary, Deputy National Security Adviser and Joint Secretary (D&ISA). The dignitaries discussed various issues of mutual interest, including global developments in arms control, disarmament, and recent initiatives launched at the UNGA First Committee.

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

India, at the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) engaged in the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), in terms of chemical weapons destruction, industry verification, national measures and international cooperation. India constructively participated in the 9th five-yearly Review Conference of the CWC held from 15-19 May at The Hague. This conference evaluated the Convention’s implementation status and set out future priorities for the OPCW. India also presented its perspectives on matters related to the Convention and its implementation especially on industry verification and the inspection regime.

In 2023, India fulfilled its obligations under the Convention and extended support to the OPCW for the smooth conduct of scheduled inspections of chemical facilities in India. India also contributed to the capacity-building activities of the OPCW through courses on developing analytical and laboratory skills conducted by the Indian Institute of Chemical Technology in Hyderabad, in collaboration with the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)

India actively participated in meetings of the Working Group on Strengthening the BTWC from 07-18 August and 04-08 December and annual Meeting of States Parties to the BTWC from 11-14 December. During these meetings, India outlined its priorities including- strengthening of the Convention, enhancing national implementation, reviewing international developments in the field of science and technology, international cooperation and assistance, and establishing a scientific review process under the BTWC. India continued its annual submissions to the BTWC and constructively engaged with other countries on specific issues.

Forums on Conventional Weapons

India actively participated in the meetings of the Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems (GGE on LAWS) from 06-10 March and 15-19 May, respectively. These meetings were organised under the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) and held in Geneva. In keeping with its commitment to international law, India emphasised the need for a shared and common understanding of LAWS and reiterated the importance of the CCW forum for further progress on the subject. India also participated in the 17th Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V, related to Explosive

Remnants of War, held on 08 November. India participated in the 25th Annual Conference of Amended Protocol II related to Mines, IEDs and Booby Traps held from 09-10 November and the Annual Conference of the CCW, held from 13-17 November.

India participated as an Observer at the 21st meeting of the State Parties for Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention held in Geneva from 20-24 November. Herein, India reiterated its respect for the provisions of international humanitarian law and outlined its contribution in the area; by offering training programmes in demining and undertaking capacity-building measures for various countries.

India participated in the 3rd and 4th substantive sessions of the Open-Ended Working Group on Conventional Ammunition held in New York from 13-17 February and 05-09 June, respectively. Herein, India actively contributed towards shaping the 'Global Framework' adopted by the UNGA at its 78th Session.

Non-Proliferation Matters and Strategic Export Control Regimes

India engaged with relevant committees of the UN on specific matters relating to the non-proliferation of WMDs and associated developments pertaining to Syria, Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and other UNSC Committees and Panels.

Various advisory committees under India's WMD Act 2005 and its Rules, held their review meetings during the year.

India, as a member of several multilateral export control regimes continued to engage with partner countries- towards the goals of non-proliferation of WMDs and their delivery systems, sharing best practices in the area of export controls, participating in the development of guidelines for export controls and lists of materials, equipment and technologies regulated under the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) and Australia Group (AG). This engagement helped harmonise India's national export control list- Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies (SCOMET) with international regimes and the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).

India assumed the Chairmanship of the WA Plenary for a period of one year, starting from 01 January. The WA is a multilateral export control regime which facilitates regular information exchange amongst members on transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies to prevent its destabilising accumulation and promote transparency. As the WA Plenary Chair in 2023, India worked in close cooperation with other members to address the core functions and other issues of the regime in an attempt to preserve the integrity, ensure effectiveness of the organisation and further its goal of contributing towards regional and international security and stability. The WA, under India's Plenary Chairmanship agreed

on a significantly higher number of proposals on 'control of dual-use and military items' in 2023 vis-à-vis the proposals tabled in 2022. The WA also updated several of its public documents regarding implementation of export controls, including the "List of Advisory Questions for Industry" with significant inputs from India. In addition, India co-hosted an enhanced technical briefing with the WA, in June 2023. The event witnessed participation by representatives from over 26 outreach partners/ non-member countries as well as WA-member states.

India participated in the AG Inter-sessional meeting held in Rome, in February, AG Plenary meeting held from 05-09 June in Paris, Experts General Working Group meetings of WA (April, May, September and October) in Vienna, MTCR Technical Experts meeting (June) in Oslo and Plenary (October-November) in Rio de Janeiro. These meetings helped facilitate information exchange on implementation experiences, technological developments, proliferation trends and hoped to address the issues of evolving control lists and best-practice guidelines as they emerge.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) continued to contribute to the export licensing processes of the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG), led by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) for export controlled dual-use items under India's SCOMET list, the Department of Defence Production (DDP) for export of Category 6 (Munitions List) military items of SCOMET, and the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) for exports of nuclear-related items. In addition, the Ministry engaged with enforcement mechanisms and organisations including the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), on issues pertaining to India's non-proliferation objectives.

The Ministry and its partners including the DGFT, DDP, CBIC, various industry chambers and other stakeholders participated in numerous outreach activities throughout the year; to enhance awareness of India's strategic export controls. This year witnessed an additional thrust towards expanding engagement with Start-ups, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), academic and research institutions among others, through relevant organisations. The outreach events on export controls organised during the year included: an event for the aerospace and IT sector (March, Bangalore), an event for specific industries (July, Pune) and an event with focus on India's Eastern region (September, Kolkata).

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

India participated in the 67th session of the IAEA General Conference held in Vienna from 25-29 September as well as the meetings of the Board of Governors held in March, June, September, October and November, respectively. These



Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi called on the Prime Minister in New Delhi during his official visit to India, October 2023

deliberations witnessed India's contribution on issues such as nuclear safeguards, peaceful uses of nuclear energy, technical cooperation, nuclear security and safety-related issues, among others.

India's Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) collaborates with IAEA for capacity building in areas such as advanced nuclear energy systems, nuclear security, and application of radioisotope and radiation technologies, radiological safety and nuclear material characterization, on a regular basis. In this regard, the GCNEP hosted an India-US workshop on 'Modelling and Simulation for Improved Nuclear Material Accountancy at Facilities' from 06-10 February.

Visit of Director General, IAEA to India

Director General (DG) of the IAEA Rafael Grossi visited India from 23-26 October on the invitation of the Government of India. During his visit, the DG called on the Prime Minister, met EAM and Secretary (East) in New Delhi. The deliberations held during these meetings covered the close cooperation between IAEA and India, India's progress in nuclear science and technology, particularly with regards to its indigenous Nuclear Power Plants, India's goals to enhance the share of environment-friendly nuclear power generation capacity in its energy mix, and India's leadership role in civil nuclear applications for societal benefits, among other issues.

The DG also delivered a keynote address on the subject of nuclear power for sustainable development, at the first edition of the 'Distinguished Lecture Series' organised by Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS).

In Mumbai, the Director General visited the DAE and met with the Chairman, Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) and Secretary (DAE). He also visited the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) and Advance Centre for Training, Research and Education in Cancer (ACTREC).

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

India engaged with various countries in the area of nuclear power generation and other peaceful uses of nuclear energy, such as radioisotope applications in the field of medicine. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board of India (AERB) and the Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic for the Exchange of Technical Information and Cooperation, signed an 'Arrangement for Cooperation' on 25 September, in the field of regulation of nuclear safety for peaceful purposes.

India also continued to contribute to mega science projects involving various partners, to foster the spirit of scientific research. India completed 6 years as an Associate Member of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN), in January and participated in sessions of the CERN Council and Committees. As a full partner of the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) since 2005, India participated in meetings of the ITER Council and continued to contribute towards its construction. Furthermore, India continued its cooperation with the Square Kilometre Array Observatory and expanded its engagement with the US on the Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) and Proton Improvement Plan-II projects. On 11 May, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for the LIGO-India project.

Outer Space Matters

India continued to actively participate and present its perspectives on matters related to outer space at the Conference on Disarmament, as well as meetings of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS) and its subsidiary bodies. As Chair of the 'Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities', India continued to closely engage with the UN member States; towards advancing the goal of safe and responsible use of outer space.

India participated in meetings of the Open-Ended Working Group on 'reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours' convened in Geneva. The working group held its 3rd and 4th sessions from 30 January-03 February and 28 August-01 September respectively, pursuant to UNGA Resolution 76/231 of 2021.

An Indian expert participated in the 25-member 'Group of Governmental Experts on further practical measures to prevent arms race in outer space', established by UNGA resolution 77/383 in 2022. The group held its first session in Geneva from 20 November-01 December.

In keeping with its commitment to the responsible use of outer space, India continued to implement related-provisions of the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC), such as 'pre-launch notifications of India's ballistic missile, space missions' and 'submission of annual declarations.' Furthermore, India participated in the 22nd Annual Regular Meeting of the HCoC, held in Vienna from 15-16 June.

Maritime Security Affairs

As an important stakeholder of global maritime security, India has maintained active engagement with like-minded countries and multilateral organisations. Furthermore, India expanded its engagement in the Indo-Pacific region through the Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean region (IFC-IOR). The IFC-IOR enables countries to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation amongst their respective liaison officers; in the maritime domain.

India participated in the Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities (CGIMA) meeting from 23-24 May in Nairobi, Kenya and actively contributed towards shaping its mandate. In addition, India facilitated the DCoC Information Sharing Network (ISN) Workshop in Jeddah from 01-04 August and provided active support at the Regional Workshop on development of SOPs for the ISN thereafter. A Maritime Information Sharing Workshop hosted from 14-16 September at IFC-IOR, Gurugram brought together participants from 31 countries of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the DCoC-JA. India participated in the High-Level meeting of Djibouti Code of Conduct – Jeddah

Amendment (DCoC-JA) in October, held in Cape Town, South Africa, where avenues for India's increased engagements with DCoC-JA member States were discussed. In addition, India also participated in the 2nd Friends of Chair meeting of CGIMA on 26 October held in Cape Town, South Africa.

In keeping with its first deployment to support the Yaoundé Architecture (YA) in August-September 2022; the Indian Navy sent another ship to the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) in 2023 to prevent illicit maritime activity in the region. India participated in the inaugural India-EU maritime collaboration in the GoG. India participated in the Plenary Meeting of the G7++ Friends of Gulf of Guinea (G7++ FoGG) from 05-07 December held in Dakar, Senegal.

In 2023, India upgraded its status in the Combined Maritime Forces from 'Associate Partner' to 'Member.' India also continued to engage with Singapore-based Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia (ReCAAP); Co-operative Mechanism on the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS); Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF) Committee in the Straits of Malacca, among others.

Dialogue with other countries

India held separate maritime security dialogues during the year with Vietnam (New Delhi, 31 May) and the EU (Brussels, 05 October) - to exchange assessments of maritime situations; collaborate on developing perspectives in areas of shared interest; and strengthen maritime security internationally.

ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus)

EAM led the Indian delegation at 30th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting held on 14 July in Jakarta, Indonesia. The 30th ARF exchanged views on international and regional issues, as well as the future direction of the ARF. India presented its perspectives on: the Indo-Pacific, the threat of terrorism, importance of UNCLOS in the maritime domain and cyber security. Furthermore, the ARF Ministers adopted an ASEAN Regional Forum Joint Statement to commemorate three decades of the ARF.

India continued to actively engage in the ARF's activities and initiatives on issues such as maritime security; counter terrorism and transnational crime; information and communication technologies, non-proliferation and disarmament, disaster relief, among others. During the ARF inter-sessional year 2022-2023, India, along with the US, the Philippines and Papua New



Secretary General of CICA Ambassador Kairat Sarybay met MoS (RRS) in New Delhi during his visit to India, May 2023

Guinea co-chaired two parts of the ARF Training Series and Best Practices Manual on Intentional Ship and Port Facility Security (ISPS) Code in London (September 2022) and Mumbai (April). India participated in the 11th Expanded ASEAN Maritime Forum on 02 August in Bali, Indonesia. The Forum tabled discussions on issues such as blue economy cooperation and maritime stability and cooperation, to name a few.

Raksha Mantri led India's participation at the ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting Plus (ADMM+) annual meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia on 16 November. India and Indonesia are the ADMM+ Co-Chairs of the 'Expert Working Group on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief' for the cycle 2021-2024.

Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)

Secretary (West) represented India at the Informal Meeting of the CICA Ministerial Council on 22 September in New York. Secretary General of CICA Ambassador Kairat Sarybay paid an official visit to India from 22-23 May and met with MoS (RRS), Secretary (West) and Joint Secretary (D&ISA). These meetings witnessed discussions on CICA's proposed gradual transformation into a regional international organisation, as well as India's engagement with various initiatives of CICA as an active member-state.

India, as a 'Coordinator' at CICA in the priority area of 'Combating Terrorism' Confidence Building Measure (CBM) hosted two virtual workshops during the year, namely: 'Counter Radicalization' on 02-03 February and the 'Misuse of Internet' on 25-26 May. These events witnessed wide participation from CICA member-states. India also attended and shared its perspectives at various CICA events such as Seminar on the Development of the Military-Political Dimension of CICA (August), Seminar on Digital Forensics (October), CICA Youth Council (October) and CICA Business Council and Business Forum (November).

Fellowship Programme on Disarmament and International Security Affairs

In keeping with India's commitment to promote disarmament, non-proliferation, arms control education and equip young diplomats with knowledge and skills in these fields, the SSIFS in collaboration with Disarmament and International Security Affairs (D&ISA) Division, organised the 3rd edition of the Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship for foreign diplomats from 09-27 January. The event witnessed the participation of 34 diplomats from 30 countries. The initiative fulfils the mandate of UNGA Resolution 'United Nations study on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Education' and is in-line with the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament titled 'Securing our Common Future' with a focus on 'Disarmament Education.'

CHAPTER

16

Economic Diplomacy

Economic Diplomacy Division (ED) is an economic arm of the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India that works in coordination with Indian Missions/posts abroad, territorial divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs, ministries/departments of the Government of India, state governments, and foreign Missions/posts in India to enable foreign investment flows and promote bilateral trade, tourism, education. It handles matters relating to healthcare, Energy Security, Food Security, International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), I2U2, and Social Security Agreement (SSA)

Trade and Investment

In order to focus on promotion of Trade, Tourism, and Technology (3Ts), ED Division has developed a dashboard to capture these three parameters. The Dashboard enables the Missions abroad to provide the data and progress related to trade, tourism, and technology as well as the activities undertaken by them in pursuance to these objectives. This provides an assessment on the performance of Missions on 3Ts. Further, access is being provided to all concerned ministries and departments including DOC, MeitY, and MOT. ED Division worked closely with DOC in coordinating with our Missions abroad to achieve the target of merchandise exports of USD 447 billion set by the Prime Minister. With concerted efforts of our Missions, this target was achieved before the deadline of 31 March.

I2U2 (India, Israel, the UAE and the USA)

I2U2, representing India, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and the United States, highlights the strategic alignment among these nations. This initiative focuses on fostering collaborative investments in six mutually identified sectors: water, energy, transportation, space, health, and food security. Its primary objective is to leverage private sector resources and expertise to enhance infrastructure, reduce industrial carbon emissions, enhance public health, and advance crucial emerging and green technologies. I2U2 seeks to maximise innovation, technology, skilled workforces, and entrepreneurial vigour in all four countries.

The I2U2 Sherpas meeting was held on 21 September 2023, on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting, attended by Secretary (ER), reviewed the progress of two projects concerning the Food Corridor and Wind-Solar Hybrid Renewable energy and discussed the proposed projects. I2U2 group also launched a new webpage on which project proposals under I2U2 may be submitted for evaluation and possibility to include under I2U2 projects.

Settlement of Payments in INR

RBI has permitted for opening of 99 Special rupee Vostro Accounts of partner banks from 22 countries. In addition, a

MoU for Local Currency Settlement (LCS) has been signed with the UAE. Similar arrangements are under consideration with Tanzania, Nigeria and Mauritius. LCS framework has a wider coverage and includes all current account and permissible capital account transactions between the partner countries. Entering into an LCS arrangements with would help in further internationalisation of the INR.

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

The International Solar Alliance aims to contribute to the implementation of the Paris Climate Agreement in bringing together countries to provide a collective response to the main common obstacles in the massive deployment of solar energy in terms of technology, finance and capacity.

India was re-elected as the President of the ISA General Assembly for the third consecutive term from 2022-2024. ED Division is the Depository of ISA and coordinated with the nodal Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the ISA Secretariat in organising the 6th General Assembly of the ISA in New Delhi on 31 October 2023. The Assembly took stock of the developments under key initiatives of ISA, including the Solar Technology and Application Research Centres (STAR-Cs) for capacity building in member countries, the Solar Finance Facility, and the Solar Grand Challenge for nurturing innovation in the solar sector, which are in the process of being operationalized over the next year.

With Romania signing the Framework Agreement on 03 December 2023, 118 countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA, as on 07 December 2023 while 96 of these countries have ratified the Framework Agreement.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)

CDRI functions as an inclusive multi-stakeholder partnership where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster resilience of infrastructure. The coordination efforts between ED Division and CDRI are intended towards engaging additional members, countries, and international organisations, representing varied geographic and socio-economic contexts, disaster risk profiles as well as capacities to mitigate and adapt to climate change and disasters. As of 07 December 2023, the Coalition consisted of 34 countries and 8 international organisations as members. Several countries have contributed financial resources, technical assistance/secondments, and the nomination of experts to various Programme Appraisal and Steering Committees in support of the mandate of CDRI.

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

The 2nd UNCITRAL South Asia Conference 2023 was successfully co-hosted by ED Division with the UNCITRAL and the UNCCI (UNCITRAL National Coordination Committee for India) from 14-16 September 2023. The Conference was the first in-person flagship event organised by UNCITRAL in the South Asian region since the pandemic. The Conference was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India, in the presence of MoS (RRS). The Conference saw the participation of UNCITRAL, the judges from the Supreme Court and High Courts, legal fraternity, bureaucracy, academia and brought together a number of international and regional legal and judicial experts to offer key insights into commercial law topics relating to UNCITRAL, such as - digital economy, MSMEs and access to credit, insolvency, reforms in investor-state dispute settlement, international commercial arbitration, mediation and more.



MoS (RRS) and Chief Justice of India inaugurated the 2nd UNCITRAL South Asia Conference in New Delhi, September 2023

ED Division represented India at the 56th Session of UNCITRAL Commission held in Vienna in July 2023. During the Session, the UNCITRAL Model Provisions on Mediation for International Investment Disputes, the UNCITRAL Guidelines on Mediation for International Investment Disputes, the UNCITRAL Code of Conduct for Arbitrators in International Investment Dispute Resolution, the UNCITRAL Code of Conduct for Judges in International Investment Dispute Resolution (in principle), and recommendations on access to credit for micro- small and medium-sized enterprises, and the guidance text on early dismissal and preliminary determination were adopted. The Division has also been participating and coordinating actively on the various working groups of UNCITRAL.

Energy Security

ED Division serves as the primary body facilitating engagements between the line ministries and energy agencies including IEA (International Energy Agency) and IRENA (International Renewable Energy Agency). Besides facilitating India's energy engagements at the multilateral forums, it is also a part of the group of line ministries, involved in pursuing the bilateral energy dialogues and improving institutional ties with various countries. The Division, in coordination with MOP organised Mission Innovation- Clean Energy Ministerial in India in July 2023, to spearhead the global clean energy transition, across various topics such as power, steel, road transport, and hydrogen. The Indian delegation led by MoS (Science and Technology), and officials from ED Division attended the 14th Clean Energy Ministerial and the 8th Mission Innovation Ministerial (CEM14/MI-8) in Goa, India from 19-22 July.

Market Expansion Activities

In pursuit of bolstering the objectives of 3Ts - Trade, Tourism, and Technology, and to promote Indian business and industry on the international stage, the Ministry of External Affairs, through its Missions/Posts abroad, designates financial resources under Budget Head 'Market Expansion Activities'. The ED Division has allocated INR 8 Crores for Market Expansion Activities across various missions/posts abroad.

Website and Global Mapping of Resources

The official website of the ED Division (www.indbiz.gov.in), encompasses a wide range of data, spanning from state-specific information to investment prospects, general facts and statistics, and insights into various sectors of the Indian economy. The principal objective of this website is to present 'Brand India' in a contemporary and all-encompassing manner, fostering a

two-way information exchange between Indian businesses and foreign enterprises.

The website features a dedicated section titled 'World Resource Endowments and Opportunities,' offering a comprehensive database encompassing global resource supply and demand dynamics, including minerals, trade, agricultural exports, and more. It also consistently updates trade-related information and market surveys conducted by our Missions abroad, facilitating businesses in identifying new trade prospects.

Industrial Outreach and Investment Promotion and Publicity

India-Serbia Business Event: During the State Visit of Hon'ble President to Serbia, ED Division sent a 15-member business delegation from diverse sectors, including defence, automobiles, food processing, energy, infrastructure and AYUSH, for the Business Event held on 8 June.

India-Guyana Business Event: On 12 January, during the visit of President of Guyana Mohamed Irfaan Ali, a Business Events was organised in association with FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM in New Delhi. The event was attended by business leaders from both countries, and MoS (RRS) delivered the special address.

India-Suriname Business Event: On 12 January, during the visit of President of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi, the India-Suriname Business Event was organised in association with FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM in Ahmedabad. The event was attended by business leaders from both countries, and the Minister of State for Textile and Railway delivered the special address.

India-Egypt Business Roundtable: On 25 January, ED Division in collaboration with FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM, organised India-Egypt Business Roundtable. President of Egypt Abdel Fattah El-Sisi addressed the gathering. The Minister of Commerce and Industry delivered the special address.

India-Tanzania Business Event: During the State Visit of the President of Tanzania, Samia Suluhu Hassan to India, ED Division in collaboration with FICCI, CII and ASSOCHAM, organised the India-Tanzania Business Event on 10 October in New Delhi. The Tanzanian President addressed the gathering and invited Indian investors to explore business opportunities in Tanzania. The Minister of Commerce and Industry delivered his special remarks. 9 MoUs signed by private enterprises of two countries across different sectors were also exchanged during the event.

India-Kenya Business Event: During the State Visit of President of Kenya William Ruto to India, ED Division in association with ASSOCHAM, FICCI and CII, organised India-Kenya Trade and Investment Forum in New Delhi on 05 December. The Minister



MoS (RRS) addressed the Energy Security Conference in New Delhi, November 2023

of Health and Family Welfare delivered the special address. At the Forum the Kenyan President invited Indian industries to invest in Kenya in key sectors such as agriculture, ICT, pharma, e-mobility and so forth.

Business Opportunities and Trade Facilitation in the BIMSTEC Region: ED Division collaboration with Millennial India International Chamber of Commerce Industry & Agriculture for organising the Business Opportunities and Trade Facilitation in the BIMSTEC Region held on 17 February. The event focused on the issue of trade facilitation in the BIMSTEC region as it provides an easy way to enhance intra-BIMSTEC trade in the short and medium-term.

3rd Edition of International SME Convention 2023: The ED Division in collaboration with India SME Forum organised the 3rd Edition of International SME Convention 2023 from 19-21 March. The convention focused on sectors including manufacturing, services, green energy, renewable energy, waste management, sanitation and food processing.

Energy Security Conference: The ED Division in collaboration with CII organised the Energy Security Conference on 24 November in New Delhi. The inaugural address was delivered by MoS (RRS). The key objective of the Conference was to facilitate wider discussion and consultation in order to identify the challenges and opportunities of India's energy security.

Civil Aviation

Economic Diplomacy Division is the nodal division in MEA for all matters relating to Air Services Agreements with foreign

countries/airlines and works closely with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on these matters. The Division also provides inputs on these issues and on requirements of flight operations or code share to promote tourism and to strengthen bilateral / multilateral relations. ED Division in association with the Ministry of Civil Aviation is also involved in designation of national and foreign carriers to operate between India and other countries which do not have direct flight connectivity. It shares global perspectives with the MoCA, on policies such as Draft National Aviation Hub Policy 2023, deployment of sky marshals on-board flights, declaration of airports like Surat, Ayodhya as international airports etc.

Engagements with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO): The Division coordinates with Permanent Mission of India to ICAO for advocacy efforts on global aviation issues like adoption of quantifiable goals for Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF), Long-term Global Aspirational Goal for international aviation (LTAG) of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050, so on. Due to intense diplomatic efforts, India managed to secure non-binding target of 5% SAF, LCAF (Low-Carbon Aviation Fuel) blending in Aviation Turbine Fuel by 2030 in the Third ICAO Conference on Aviation and Alternative Fuels (CAAF/3) conference, held in Dubai in November 2023. The Division is also coordinating with the Permanent Mission regarding Indian position on the proposals by Australia, Netherlands and the counter-proposal by Russia on the issue of MH17 aircraft.

Investment Treaties

ED Division actively participates in investment treaty negotiations and has been involved in coordinating these

negotiations and providing requisite inputs from a policy/political perspective and from an international law perspective. India is in the process of terminating its old generation investment treaties and is actively engaged with over 30 countries in negotiating investment treaties based on the new model BIT of 2015. These include negotiations with Russia, Switzerland, Kuwait, UK, UAE, EU, and Australia amongst others. Matters pertaining to investment treaties involve origin countries/foreign relations and also issues pertaining to international law. The correspondences about BIT with other countries are routed through ED Division. ED Division has also been providing requisite advice and assistance in the proceedings of Investment Treaty Arbitration Cases.

Arbitration Cell

The Arbitration Cell of the Ministry which is under the ED Division handles the legal work of the Division which involves the numerous arbitrations and litigations including the investment treaty disputes and related court proceedings, apart from the investment treaty negotiations, the work related to UNCITRAL and the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) and various cases before Courts in India.

The award in the GPIX v/s Republic of India case under the India-Mauritius BIT, was rendered where the tribunal ruled in favour of India. The Ministry, through ED Division, coordinated the case and participated in the final hearing that took place in London. The final hearing in the KOWEPO v/s Republic of India case under the India-Korea BIT concluded in January 2023 and the award is expected in due course. There are various disputes at different stages including challenge to Arbitral awards and enforcement of arbitration awards, which are being handled by the Arbitration Cell of the ED Division.

Inputs to Various Boards/Committees

As a member, the ED Division serves on various boards and committees, including the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), Invest India, the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), the Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), the Project Exports Promotion Council (PEPC), and the Export Promotion Council for EOUs and SEZs (EPCES) (Ministry of Commerce and Industry).

Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS)

The Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGoS) Groups 3 and 7- which deal with Resources and Commerce & Industry, and represented

by Secretary (East) and Secretary (ER), respectively- are handled by ED Division on behalf of MEA. The groups' overriding goal is to enhance India's investment climate by increased physical connectivity, competitive approvals, investor-friendly policies, enhanced exports, and lower import dependence.

Social Security Agreement (SSA)

Social Security Agreements (SSA), within their broad scope, are bilateral agreements between India and other countries which are designed to protect the interests of cross border workers, that is, Indians working abroad, as well as nationals of those contracting countries working in India. The main aim of the SSA is to provide for avoidance of 'no coverage' or 'double coverage' and equality of treatment of the workers of both countries. Bilateral social security agreements protect the interests of Indian professionals and skilled workers working abroad by providing three benefits. These are, avoiding making double social security contributions, easy remittance of benefits (Exportability), and aggregating the contribution periods (in two countries) to prevent loss of benefits (Totalisation).

The Ministry is the competent authority for negotiating the SSAs. EPFO has been designated as the Liaison Agency to operate the provisions of the SSAs and for issuing Certificates of Coverage (CoC) to the employees of establishments covered under the Act. India signed an SSA with Argentina in September 2023, bringing the total number of social security agreements with other countries to 20.

International Year of Millets (IYOM)

The United Nations designated 2023 as the International Year of Millets. ED Division is coordinating with our Missions abroad to promote International Years of Millet. Missions and Posts are making concerted efforts to promote IYoM 2023 by organising various events. Every Mission hosted a dedicated one-week event for celebration of IYOM throughout the year in 2023. Collaboration with supermarkets in Canada, Egypt, the UAE, and other nations facilitated the placement of millet products. Food festivals featuring millets were organised by our Missions in the USA, Morocco, Guatemala, Jordan, and a special campaign, "Millet in my Tiffin," was initiated by the Kuwait Mission. Missions also partnered with Indian Diaspora, International Organizations, Academia, Hotels, and Media to disseminate the message more widely. Food and Agriculture Ministers from countries, including Japan, Bangladesh, and Guatemala, participated in promotional events organised by the Missions.

CHAPTER

17

Counter Terrorism

India has always been at the forefront of global efforts to counter terrorism. The issue of countering terrorism was prominent in bilateral and multilateral meetings at all levels during the year 2023. During India's G-20 Presidency, high priority was accorded to the subject of counter terrorism. In March 2023, during the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting, a dedicated section on counter terrorism was included in the outcome document. The New Delhi Leaders' Declaration recognised terrorism as one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism (JWG-CT)

During 2023, India held bilateral counter terrorism consultations through the mechanism of JWG-CT with Canada (3 February), Egypt (16 February), Russia (3 May), Germany (17 May), Maldives (24-25 July) and Italy (6 October). During the JWG-CT meetings, the issues of shared interests in combating terrorism, capacity-building efforts, exchanges of good practices and information sharing were discussed.

Multilateral Engagements

India participated in the 21st Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF) Coordinating Committee meeting on 04 May 2023 in

Cairo, 2nd Meeting of the South Asian Network on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (SAN-PVE) Advisory Board (AB) on 18 January held in virtually, and two Financial Action Task Force (FATF) Plenary Meetings held in Paris, France from 20-24 February and from 19-23 June.

On 03 March, during their meeting at New Delhi, the Quad Foreign Ministers issued a Joint Statement announcing the formation of the Quad Working Group on Counter Terrorism. The QUAD consequence management table-top exercise was held on 20-23 June in Alaska, US.

Regional Engagements

India hosted the 10th meeting of the BIMSTEC Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime (JWG-CTTC) on 12 and 13 January 2023 in New Delhi. All BIMSTEC Member States participated in the meeting. India also hosted the 9th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement issues on 21-22 June in New Delhi.

India is a member of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). As Coordinator in CICA in the priority area of 'Combating Terrorism' under the 'New challenges and threats' dimension, India hosted virtual workshops titled 'Counter Radicalization' on 02 and 03 February 2023 and 'Misuse of Internet' on 25 and 26 May.



Quad Foreign Ministers in their Joint Statement announced the formation of the Quad Working Group on Counter Terrorism on the margins of Raisina Dialogue, New Delhi, March 2023

Under India's Chairship of SCO Council of Heads of State (CHS) for the year 2022-2023, the "Statement of the SCO Council of Heads of State on Countering Radicalization leading to Terrorism, Separatism and Extremism" was adopted on 04 July at the SCO Summit, which was held virtually.

India also participated in the 8th Meeting of the BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) and five subgroup meetings

were held from 11-15 June in Pretoria, South Africa, the 19th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Inter-Sessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime (ARF ISM on CTC) held on 24 May in virtual mode, the 10th ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Transnational Crime (SOMTC) + India Consultation held on 23 June in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. The consultation formally endorsed the ASEAN-India Work Plan on Cooperation to combat Transnational Crime between 2023 and 2027.

CHAPTER

18

Development Cooperation

DPA I

Development cooperation is a key instrument in India's foreign policy. The scope and reach of India's development cooperation has seen considerable expansion in the past few years which includes grant assistance, Lines of Credit (LoC), technical consultancy, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, educational scholarships and a range of capacity-building programmes including short-term civilian and military training courses have been growing consistently encompassing the geographical reach and sectoral coverage. Developmental cooperation with the partner countries is mainly being executed through instruments such as grant assistance, LoC and Concessional Financing Scheme.

India's development partnership is based on the needs of the partner countries and is geared towards responding to as many requests received from these countries as technically and financially feasible. The main instruments of India's development assistance include Lines-of-Credit, High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), Technical Consultancy, disaster relief and humanitarian aid, as well as capacity-building programmes for civilian and military training under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation Programme (ITEC). The focus of development assistance has been the countries in India's neighbourhood, CIS and Africa, though India is also expanding its development assistance reach to

South East Asia, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Pacific Island Countries.

Lines of Credit

LoCs are one of the main instruments of India's development cooperation. LoCs are governed by a set of guidelines jointly developed by the Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) in the Ministry of Finance. They are essentially concessional loans or a 'soft loan' provided at concessional interest rates to developing countries, which has to be repaid by the borrowing government. LoCs are offered to the partner countries for the projects as per the requirement of the partner country. The concessional loans are offered as per the IDEAS 2022 (Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme, 2022) guidelines.

Over the years, 308 LoCs aggregating more than USD 32.029 billion have been extended to different countries in various sectors, of which USD 12.15 billion has been extended for African countries, USD 17.06 billion has been extended for Asian countries and USD 2.81 billion for countries in Latin America, Oceania and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

Through LoC, India assists the partner countries throughout various stages of project implementation such as project formulation, technical studies and identifying suitable project

management consultants and execution companies as well as the maintenance. Under LoCs, the partner countries have a benefit of lower interest rates, long moratorium period of 5 years and extended repayment period of 20-25 years. Since our LoCs allow project contents from borrowing countries up to 25%, India's LoCs give a boost to small industry in the partner country in addition to generating employment.

The portfolio of LoCs has been diversified geographically as well as sectorally. Geographically, LoCs have now been extended to LAC region, Indo-Pacific, land related reclamation projects too. Sectorally, LoCs have been extended for financing projects in new sectors like connectivity, ICT, health, renewable energy, oil refinery, among others.

Infrastructure, hydroelectricity, power transmission, agriculture, industry, education, health, archaeological conservation and strengthening of cross-border connectivity are priority areas for LoC projects identified by partner governments. Projects in Neighbouring countries such as Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives are progressing satisfactorily. Beyond the neighbourhood, bilateral projects in sectors like energy, power plants, electricity transmission and distribution, roads, railways, ports, agriculture and irrigation, industrial units, Information and Computer Technology (ICT) and small and medium enterprises have been undertaken in South East Asia, Oceania, Central Asia, Africa and Latin America.

New LOCs extended in 2023

The total amount of new LoCs extended in 2023 is USD 971.5 million.

In 2023, in Asia, two new LoCs worth USD 599 million and USD 190 million were extended to Mongolia for financing construction of crude oil refinery plant (EPC-02) and financing construction of crude oil refinery plant (EPC-03) respectively. In Africa, one new LoC worth USD 180 million was extended to Democratic Republic of Congo for the completion of the Katende Hydro Electric Power Project. In Latin American Countries (LAC), LoC worth USD 2.5 million has been extended to Guyana for installation of Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant at Cheddi Jagan International Airport.

LoCs in the Neighbourhood

The focus of LoCs was on development initiatives undertaken in the borrowing countries, in the context of Neighbourhood First Policy. Out of the total LoCs of USD 32.029 billion, USD 17.062 billion have been extended to Asian countries, with the largest value of commitments having been made in India's immediate neighbourhood. LoCs worth USD 7.862 billion have been extended to Bangladesh, USD 2.684 billion to Sri Lanka,

USD 1.65 billion to Nepal, USD 1.029 million to Mauritius, USD 1.43 billion to Maldives, USD 745.57 million to Myanmar and USD 18 million to Seychelles.

Bangladesh is the largest development partner under India's LoC programme. India has extended 4 LoCs valued at USD 7.862 billion to Bangladesh. India extended 13 LoCs worth USD 2.68 billion to Sri Lanka, making it the second largest development partner under the LoC programme. For Nepal, 4 LoCs were extended worth USD 1.65 billion for various infrastructure development projects such as roads, power generation, transmission lines, rehabilitation, reconstruction and housing. Similarly, for Myanmar, India extended 11 LoCs worth USD 745.57 million for infrastructure projects across sectors including railways, power, telecommunications, oil refineries, irrigation and agriculture. Further, India also extended 6 LoCs worth USD 1.43 billion to Maldives for the Greater Male Connectivity Project.

Development Projects in Africa

India's partnership with Africa is based on a consultative model of cooperation and sharing of development experiences, and is focused on addressing the priorities and needs of the African countries. The engagement with African countries through various development partnership initiatives has witnessed a marked increase in the last decade. The three India-Africa Forum Summits [IAFS I, II & III] in 2008, 2011 and 2015 have further reinforced the development partnership with the continent.

A total of 196 LoCs amounting to USD 12.155 billion were extended by the Government of India to African countries in varied sectors such as power plants, hydroelectricity, power transmission and distribution networks, dams, roads, railways, ports, agriculture and irrigation, industrial units, skills development, and civil construction. Activities in the new sectors such as telecommunication and solar power have also been expanded and strengthened under the India LoCs to African countries in this year. Some large iconic projects by India include construction of Parliament building and hydro-electric projects. People oriented projects in the area of drinking water and sanitation and rural electrification are also being undertaken in African countries.

LoCs in Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

During the Second Meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue held on 28 October 2020, External Affairs Minister announced a India LoC offer/availability of USD 1 billion for 5 Central Asian Countries viz. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, for priority developmental projects in fields such as connectivity, energy, IT, healthcare, education, and agriculture. In 2023, India extended two LoCs worth USD



EAM addressed the Inaugural Session of the 9th CII-LAC Conclave in New Delhi, August 2023

488 million to Uzbekistan for social infrastructure and other development projects. LoC worth USD 100 million was extended to Armenia for defence, and USD 200 million to Kyrgyz Republic for financing development projects.

LoCs in LAC

Development partnership is an important facet of India-LAC relations. India has extended 34 lines of credit to LAC countries under which 22 projects have been completed so far.

In August 2023, EAM addressed the Inaugural Session of the 9th CII India-LAC Conclave, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and highlighted four key pillars of cooperation between the India and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region - supply chain diversification, resource partnerships, sharing developmental experiences, and addressing global challenges.

Under LAC, a project related to 'Procurement of Passenger-Cargo Ferry Vessel', worth USD 7.07 million in Guyana was completed.

LoCs in Oceania

3 LoCs, worth USD 155.78 million have been extended to two countries in the Oceania region so far. 2 LoCs worth USD 55.78 million and one LoC worth USD 100 million have been extended to Fiji and Papua New Guinea respectively.

Projects completed in 2023

Africa: Several projects have been completed in 2023 in different countries in Africa-

Mauritius: Phase-III of Mauritius Metro Project worth USD 80 million was completed. A project related to defence supplies from India worth USD 29.31 million also completed in 2023.

Kenya: Two projects for supply for installation and commissioning of dairy machinery and equipment for milk processing and HDPE Monofilament Extrusion Plant, worth USD 0.39 million and USD 0.17 million respectively, were completed successfully.

Gambia: Electrification Expansion Project for Greater Banjul Area in Gambia, worth USD 22.5 million was completed successfully and handed over to the Government of Gambia.

Asia: List of projects completed in Asia 2023 are-

Nepal: Modi-Lekhnath Transmission Line Project, worth USD 20.39 million and Lamosangu-Tamakoshi-Jiri Road Project, worth USD 21.25 million were completed successfully in 2023.

Sri Lanka: Two projects namely Supply of 500 buses, worth USD 13.33 million and Supply of Auto & Auto Components', worth USD 49.25 million were completed.

Myanmar: Project for YDM 4 Diesel Electric Locomotives', worth USD 1.78 million has also been completed successfully.

DPA II

During FY 2023-24, in-person courses of the MEA's flagship capacity building Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme were fully reinstated, and both menu-based courses and customised courses were offered. A total of 228 menu-based in-person courses and 110 customised country specific courses have been approved/conducted as of December 2023, offering nearly 9600 training slots. This was in addition to the 45 e-ITEC courses including 3 customised e-ITEC courses being conducted/offered as of December 2023. More than 3200 slots were offered to 79 partner countries for training in Defence courses of Army, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and Tri-Services.

Capacity Building through Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)

As the flagship capacity building programme of the Government of India, the ITEC programme has a footprint in about 160 countries and has contributed to the capacity enhancement of more than 225,000 professionals since its inception in 1964. Apart from being a powerful tool of India's soft power diplomacy, the ITEC programme has also assumed the mantle of leadership in capacity building initiatives in South-South Cooperation.

Apart from providing capacity building training programmes in the traditional areas of governance, ITEC has been expanded to include emerging areas like AI, NanoTechnology, Forensics and Cyber Security. ITEC enables participating professionals to access programmes and registrations using a dedicated online portal and provides its training content through reputed partner institutions like IITs, IIMs, NLUs and Indian Institute of Science

in the public sector as well as a few reputed institutions in the private sector. The Ministry continues to engage actively with professionals trained under ITEC through initiatives like ITEC Day celebrations and social media engagements.

Civilian training under ITEC

A total of 228 menu-based physical ITEC courses (offering nearly 6300 slots) have been approved and published for the current financial year. More than 3000 of these slots have been utilized till date.

In addition to menu-based courses, country specific special courses are also conducted from time to time based on requests received from foreign governments. These courses are for specific capacity building requirements like English Language (for various African and LAC countries), Yoga Trainers, Good Governance, Financial Fraud Investigation, Anti-Drug Trafficking, Cyber Security, Judicial Officers Training, Forensic investigation, journalist training, and training of chambers of commerce professionals. A total of 110 such customised physical courses are being conducted in the current financial year.

For the first time in the history of ITEC programme, a few courses with translation in French and Spanish were conducted in 2023. Two of these courses have already been completed and one course will be conducted in January 2024.

Giving impetus to our engagements with various regions, ITEC has also developed region-focussed packages of capacity building courses. The two most prominent packages are the SAGAR and AMRUT, developed for Pacific Island Countries and announced by the Prime Minister, in May 2023 at the FIPIC Summit to provide 1000 training slots in the course of next 5 years, in relevant domains.



Prime Minister announced region-focused packages at the 3rd FIPIC Summit in Papua New Guinea, May 2023

More than 35 high-quality courses at 20 eminent institutes in India would be offering around 1000 training opportunities for participants from these 14 countries over the next 5 years in hospitality and tourism, nursing and healthcare, election management, renewable and sustainable development, media and broadcasting, e-governance, IT and cyber security, agriculture and fisheries and other technical trainings. Similarly, India has committed to provide 500 training slots over the course of next 4 years for countries of the Indo-Pacific region as part of the Quad Infrastructure Fellowships (QIF) package focusing on infrastructure development related capacity building.

Apart from the in-person training, ITEC content for civilians is also delivered through three other broad channels. The e-ITEC channel provides online, real-time training delivered by Indian institutes to professionals located in partner countries. The ITEC Onsite channel provides customised content to our partner countries by shifting the training to the country itself by deputing training professionals for short duration. The content for these programmes focus on the requirements of our partner countries in sector-specific training like fertiliser technology, fisheries technology, agriculture and allied sectors, teachers' training and research, open education resources, securities markets, wind energy, rural electrification, South-South cooperation, so on and so forth. The ITEC Executive is the third channel, which is an exclusive programme for senior level functionaries and policy makers in our partner countries, with an aim to provide an understanding of best practices/governance innovations in India. It was instituted to further raise the level of interaction with policy makers and civil servants of partner countries and provides a platform for interaction among senior functionaries (DG level and above) of partner countries and their Indian counterparts. It also aims at a higher level of learning in cutting-edge areas of technology and policy areas.

The e-ITEC scheme launched after the comprehensive review of the ITEC programme was successfully scaled up since the onset of the pandemic in March 2020. In the current training year, 45 eITEC courses are being offered of which 15 courses have already been completed/online. More than 384 participants from 42 countries have availed these online trainings till date.

Since 2018-19, 3 ITEC Onsite assignments have been conducted. During the current financial year, 3 ITEC-Onsite assignments are being executed in which experts from Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd. are being deputed to Fiji in three phases in three different fields during November and December 2023, and the last phase is planned for February 2024.

During the current financial year, first ITEC Executive programme for senior officials of Iraq was conducted by the IIM, Indore in July 2023 and second Executive programme for Senior/Mid-Career level government officials in multi-country format was conducted on Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) by the IIM Indore, in October, in which several countries participated including countries of LAC region. In addition,

two ITEC Executive programmes have also been sanctioned by the Ministry, one for 30 Senior Civil Servants of Sri Lanka government, to be conducted by the NCGG and other for 30 Senior Officials of Indo-Pacific Countries on Global Trends in Building Infrastructure for Development to be conducted by IIM, Indore as part of Quad Infrastructure Fellowships package.

ITEC also supports mid-career training of civil servants from interested partner countries. Mid-career training for civil servants from Bangladesh and Myanmar are being carried out in partnership with NCGG currently. Nearly 500 officers from Bangladesh have already completed their training till date, and another 300 are likely to be trained by the end of this financial year. Apart from this, mid-career judicial officers from Bangladesh, Myanmar are being trained through customised ITEC courses. 150 judicial officers from Bangladesh have completed their training with NJA, Bhopal as of date. Thematic training on subjects like cyber-crime investigation and financial fraud investigation for mid-career police officers have been started at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy. Police officers from various countries such as Ethiopia and Nepal have been trained under customised ITEC courses.

India's capacity building programme provides assistance in the form of sending Indian experts on deputation to friendly foreign countries. As requested by the host country, the experts are deployed under ITEC Programme to the partner country in any specific area of interest for a period ranging from few months to years.

The capacity building assistance requested by the host Government in various domains such as defence, legislation drafting, medicine, archaeology, forensic sciences, agriculture, Ayurveda, disaster management, English language, information and communication technology, so on and so forth. The related ITEC experts are deputed to the host government and these engagements lead towards establishment of a long-lasting sustainable relationship between the two countries.

Since 2014, a total of 216 ITEC experts have been deployed by MEA in more than 20 countries comprising 178 defence personnel and 38 civilian experts. In addition, deputation formalities are under process to deploy Indian experts in few countries namely Kenya, Kazakhstan, Myanmar and Uzbekistan in near future.

Defence training under ITEC

Under ITEC Defence Programme, MEA offers capacity building programmes to FFCs, annually. Since 2014, nearly 23,500 defence training slots have been offered to more than 120 FFCs, against which around 12000 defence personnel and officers have been trained, so far. These personnel are being trained in 600 ITEC defence courses offered by 100+ defence training institutions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Defence.

The courses are aimed towards capacity building of defence personnel across multiple levels in various defence forces of FFCs- Army, Navy, Air Force and Coast Guard. These courses are of embedded nature where trainees from FFCs undergo training with their Indian counterparts and thus, share overall experience of Indian defence forces. In addition to the regular ITEC programme, customised courses are also offered on the request of FFCs.

For administrative purposes, FFCs are categorised into four categories (i) Category-I: All expenses are borne by MEA from ITEC budget head including return air fare; (ii) Category-II- similar to Category-I but excluding return air fare which is borne by the FFCs; (iii) Category- SAP (Special Aid Programme)- Expenses are borne by the budget head of the concerned Territorial Division of MEA; (iv) Category SFS (Self Finance Scheme)- Expenses are borne by the FFCs themselves.

During 2023-24, 3036 ITEC defence slots were allotted to 79 partner countries in Army, Navy and Air Force training courses. Additionally, 258 slots have been offered to 39 partner countries in Coast Guard training courses. Further, 41 NDC slots have been allotted to 30 partner countries offering a yearly course on "National Security and Strategic Studies" commencing in the month of January, every year at National Defence College, New Delhi. Defence courses offered to FFCs are related to security and strategic studies, defence management, electronics, mechanical, marine engineering, marine hydrography, counter-insurgency, jungle warfare, qualified flying instructor, ground duty, and flying training. Few courses have also been offered in Defence Services Staff College, Senior Defence Management Course, Higher Defence Management Course, Defence Management Course and National Defence Academy.

Grant Projects in other Developing Countries

Leveraging the global brand value of Indian IT, MEA has been providing IT-skills training through setting up of computer training labs called CEIT (Centres for Excellence in IT) as a focussed modality of capacity building partnership. Till date, India has executed 58 such CEIT projects in 47 countries, with nearly 200,000 trainees having successfully completed CDAC-certified courses in advanced subjects like high performance computing, Big Data, AI, machine language and computer languages.

CEITs have been established in several countries of Central Asia, West Asia, Africa, Latin America, SE Asia and Pacific Islands. These have earned enormous goodwill and are much sought after by our partner countries. Four projects currently under implementation include the CEIT in Vanuatu, CEIT at Solomon Islands, CEIT at Argentina and the upgradation of the Param supercomputing facility at Kazakhstan CEIT.

As part of skill training related capacity building, a vocational training centre in Belize was completed in September this year.

Artificial Limb Fitment Camps

The Division organises artificial limb fitment camps, popularly known as 'Jaipur Foot' in close coordination with Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS). A MoU between BMVSS and the Ministry was concluded in November 2017 and was renewed in March 2023 for an additional 3 years. Thereafter, since the 150th Birth Anniversary Celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, this programme is being implemented under the Ministry's 'India for Humanity' initiative which was formally launched on 09 October 2018.

Till March, a total of 25 camps in 21 countries were conducted, resulting in fitments of 12,722 limbs in all. In the current year, camps have been completed in Iraq, while preparations are underway for camps in Ethiopia (proposed for January 2024), Mongolia (proposed for February 2024) and Sri Lanka (proposed for March 2024).

DPA III

India's Development Partnerships

Inspired by the spirit of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam', India's international development cooperation has expanded significantly in recent years in its geographical reach as well as in the areas of cooperation. It is natural that most of India's significant development partnerships include the neighbouring countries, given the focus of India's external engagement on its immediate and extended neighbourhood supported by the 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East' policies. Another noteworthy feature of India's development partnerships has been its demand-based nature and the close alignment with the priorities of the partner countries.

As the Development Partnership Administration (DPA) arm of the Ministry of External Affairs has gained experience over the years, the sustainability of projects besides the project delivery and implementation have received increased attention. India's development partnership model has received a high degree of acceptance from its partners because of the focus on keeping the requirements and priorities of the partner country at the centre of the projects.

India's development assistance has been a major catalyst for creation of much needed infrastructure in the partner countries such as railway links, roads and bridges, waterways, border-related infrastructure, transmission lines, power generation, and hydropower.



Prime Minister of Nepal and Prime Minister inaugurated the railway link from Bathnaha in India, to the Nepal Custom Yard, June 2023

India continued to provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief across the world, including in Afghanistan, Myanmar, Ukraine, Gaza, Nepal, etc. In addition, in 2023, the Sittwe port in Myanmar, part of the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) Project, was inaugurated.

In Nepal, the Kurtha-Bijalpura railway line was completed and handed over to Nepal on 29 May. Consequently, train operations were inaugurated on 15 July. Under the Jogbani – Biratnagar Rail Link project, Bathnaha (India) to Nepal Custom Yard was inaugurated by Prime Ministers of India and Nepal, on 01 June. Final location survey for construction of a new electrified rail line connecting Raxaul to Kathmandu was completed by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) and handed over at the Prime Ministers' level in June.

In Bangladesh, India completed the construction of the Akhaura-Agartala Rail Link, which connects the existing station of Agartala in India to the Gangasagar station in Bangladesh. The Bangladesh portion of the project was jointly inaugurated by the Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Bangladesh, on 01 November.

In Mauritius, phase-II of the Metro Express Project was completed and jointly inaugurated by both the Prime Minister of India and Mauritius in October 2022. The line from Rose Hill to Reduit spanning 3.4 kms, under a combined LoC of USD 90 million and grant of USD 10 million, was inaugurated on 22 Jan 2023 by the Prime Minister of Mauritius.

Other significant infrastructure and capacity building projects completed by India in Mauritius are building an ENT Hospital, and the E-Tablet project to provide teaching aids for primary schools in Mauritius. India is also providing grant assistance for construction of a Civil Services College in Port Louis and a Forensic Science Lab project. Work on setting up of Renal

Transplant Unit at the Jawahar Lal Nehru Hospital in Mauritius under INDIA's grant assistance of USD 10 million is underway. Two Area Health Centres in New Grove and Cap Malheureux, apart from a Mediclinic at Grand Bois are also under construction.

Other noteworthy developments included the handing over of latest technology machines and equipment for identified trades, training of Senegalese personnel in India and deputed Indian experts for 'On-the-Job Training' of the Entrepreneurial Training and Development Centre in Dakar; completion of construction of Phase I of the 9.2 km eight Lane Bypass road from Dushanbe to Chortut in Tajikistan, so on.

Digital Public Infrastructure

India is also promoting digital public infrastructure incubated in India- the digital offerings of UPI, Aadhaar or the Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP), DigiLocker, eSanjeevani, among others, worldwide, especially among countries of the Global South. This has largely emanated from deliberations under the two Voice of the Global South Summits held in 2023. India's push for DPI is in furtherance of digital transformation in both India and foreign countries and to enhance cooperation in ecosystem-centric digital initiatives (such as India Stack). Governmental efforts to promote IndiaStack DPI with Foreign Governments has fructified into eight MoUs in 2023 alone with diverse countries such as Suriname, Armenia, Sierra Leone, Antigua & Barbuda, Papua New Guinea, Trinidad & Tobago, Tanzania, and Kenya. Separately, for the export of Unified Payments Interface (UPI), till date, six Letter of Intent have been signed between RBI and the Central Bank of host countries which are Guyana, Peru, Uruguay, Namibia, Fiji and Nigeria.



EAM addressed the Foreign Ministers' Session of the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit, November 2023

DPA IV

DPA IV Division is entrusted with the responsibility to deal with the projects for restoration and conservation of heritage sites, which define the cultural landscape of partners' countries in order to establish cultural linkage to promote soft diplomacy. Mainly, these projects are implemented by ASI, the designated technical agency under the Ministry of Culture and are funded by MEA. This Division also collaborates with other organisations to implement projects related to restoration and conservation of intangible heritage assets like murals and manuscripts.

Work is in progress in all three Indian restoration projects of heritage sites. These include projects in Cambodia (Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear) and Lao PDR (Vat Phou). Three new projects are being undertaken in Vietnam.

Ta Prohm Temple, Cambodia: This is the Ministry's oldest project, having commenced in February, 2004, it is currently in its third phase. The 10-year long third phase commenced in November 2016. During 2022-23, the vault and semi vault roof of the central portion of the hall of dancers was restored with pediments and coping stones. Further, western side gallery facade, east side porch floor and plinth were conserved with suitable archaeological materials.

Preah Vihear Temple, Cambodia: This is the latest project taken up by MEA and the second project in Cambodia. This project has been sanctioned in 2020-2021. It is likely to be completed in 10 years. During the 2022-23, excavation for removal of slits, deposited near the footings of buttress wall, was carried out to ensure safe manoeuvring and movement of cranes. 75% of

the construction of the yard has been completed. In 2023-24, construction of Gopura-V, Nagarja courtyard entrance step and office and residential building are being carried out.

Vat Phou Temple, Lao PDR: The project is currently in its second phase, after successful completion of the first phase (May 2007- May 2017). The 10-year long second phase commenced in November 2018. During the 2022-23, documentations for construction of the northern, southern and western gateway have been completed. Core drilling and mending of archaeological stones are being carried out. During 2023-24, conservations of galleries and pathways were carried out.

My Son group of Temples, Vietnam: Successful restoration of three groups of temples - H, K & A at My Son complex in Quang Nam Province of Vietnam was carried out as part of development partnership between the two Governments. The project was formally handed over to My Son Management Board on 20 December 2022.

Undertaking of New Projects: Eol Hanoi had recommended for execution of three additional projects namely, conservation of 'F' and 'E' group of temples at the My Son site, conservation of Dong Duong Buddhist Monastery and conservation of Nhan Tower. These projects were announced at PM level during the virtual summit held in December 2020. After completion in December 2022 of onIndiang work at the A, H, & K groups, ASI team conducted preliminary feasibility study in May 2023 on the new projects. A five-member ASI team is currently on a sixty two-day deputation in Vietnam for preparation of DPR for these three projects.

Apart from the conventional restoration of heritage sites, which are inscribed under World Heritage Council, DPA-IV also undertakes implementation of restoration and conservation of intangible cultural assets. Two separate MoUs have been entered into with the Royal Government of Cambodia for funding conservation of Ramayana mural paintings at the Wat Raja Bo pagoda and to collaborate in research, development and application of technology for digital documentation of heritage sites in Cambodia in November 2022. First instalment for restoration of Ramayana painting has been released in August 2023 and work is in progress.

An effort to promote restoration and revival of intangible

cultural heritage like language, rituals, practices, performing and other fine arts in an institutional manner, India International Centre, New Delhi was tasked with a pilot research project for cataloguing, survey, and digitization of Indic manuscripts held in various locations (University of Copenhagen, Wellcome Collection London, Tribhuvan University in Nepal, Akshesvar Mahabihara in Nepal and Indian Institute Library, Bodleian of Oxford University in UK) through an initiative called 'South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive', (SAMHITA). Consequently, 1100 Indic manuscripts were catalogued and digitised. A digital manuscript library, which can be accessed through www.samhita.iicdelhi.in, has been developed.

CHAPTER

19

Policy Planning & Research

Policy Planning and Research is the nodal division of the Ministry for initiatives relating to medium-term policy planning, research and outreach to the strategic, think-tank and academic community specialising in foreign policy, as well as engaging bilateral partner countries on policy planning dialogues. Policy Planning Division is also the nodal Division for the Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS) initiative of the Government and for coordinating India's Neighbourhood First Policy in the Ministry.

During the year, two editions of the VOGSS were held, first in

January and second in November 2023. The Summits had both Leadership and Ministerial segments. The Leadership summits were chaired by the Prime Minister. At the 2nd Voice of Global South Summit on 17 November, the Prime Minister inaugurated the Global South Center of Excellence, named DAKSHIN, established in New Delhi. DAKSHIN stands for Development and Knowledge Sharing Initiative and is aimed at facilitating the sharing of knowledge and best practices in human centric development and technology enabled transformation in Global South countries.



Prime Minister virtually addressed the inaugural session of 1st Voice of Global South Summit from New Delhi, January 2023

During the year, the Division held Policy Planning Dialogues with counterpart Policy Planning Divisions/bureaus of the Foreign Ministries of Germany, EU, Israel, Vietnam, Japan, Armenia and Republic of Korea, and jointly with QUAD Member-States of Australia, Japan and USA.

The Division produced a number of research papers and policy briefs, covering foreign policy trends and international developments. The research output is utilised by the Ministry and Indian Missions abroad. The focus of these papers ranged from immediate response options to emerging issues to medium and long-term trends and developments in the world and India's evolving role and interests over this strategic horizon. The Division produced a range of publications, including the Foreign Policy Daily Report, NITI series, ThinkTank Compendium, Global Conflict Monitor, Foreign Policy Crux, Monthly Summary of the Cabinet and Annual Report of the Ministry.

The Division organises, in collaboration with think-tanks and academic institutions, various strategic outreach dialogues such as the Raisina Dialogue, Asian Economic Dialogue, Global Technology Summit, Indian Ocean Conference, India-US Forum, India-Japan Forum and Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture, among others.

The 6th Indian US Forum was held on 13 and 14 January, organised in collaboration with Ananta Aspen Centre. The theme of this Conference was "Geopolitics, Security, Strategy, Economics, Energy, Technology".

The Asia Economic Dialogue was held from 23-25 February in Pune, organised in collaboration with Pune International Centre. The theme of the 7th edition of this Summit was "Asia and the Emerging World Order".

The 8th Raisina Dialogue, with the theme, "Provocation, Uncertainty, Turbulence: Lighthouse in the Tempest" was held from 02-05 March in New Delhi, organised in collaboration with the Observer Research Foundation. This year's edition saw participation of representatives from over 100 countries, including about 35 Ministers, making it one of the largest global gatherings of foreign policy practitioners and experts.

The 6th Indian Ocean Conference was held on 12 and 13 May, organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bangladesh and the S. Rajaratnam School on International Studies in Singapore. The theme of this Conference was "Peace, Prosperity and Partnership for a Resilient Future".

The India-Japan Forum was organised on 28 and 29 July in New Delhi, organised in collaboration with Ananta Aspen Centre. The theme of the 2nd edition of this Forum was "Indo-Pacific & Quad, Defence Security Cooperation, Technologies and supply chains, Investment and infrastructure, Semiconductors and critical minerals and economic engagement".



Prime Minister of Italy Giorgia Meloni with Prime Minister at the 8th Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, March 2023

The 6th India-Japan Indo-Pacific Forum was held on 15 and 16 November in Tokyo, organised in collaboration with Delhi Policy Group. The theme of this edition was "India and Japan: Shaping the Future of the Indo-Pacific".

The India-Korea Strategic Dialogue was held on 27 and 28 November, organised in collaboration with Ananta Aspen Centre. The theme of the 22nd edition was "Indo-Pacific Regional Security, Economic Cooperation, Defense-Space, Technology and cooperation.

The Global Technology Summit was held from 04-06 December in New Delhi, organised in collaboration with Carnegie India. The theme of the 8th edition of this Summit was "Geopolitics of Technology".

Further, in line with the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs, in its 24th report on "India's Policy Planning and Role of Think Tanks with Special Reference to ICWA and RIS", the Division expanded foreign policy outreach to various parts of the country and organised a number of Track 1.5/Track 2.0 dialogues in various states across the country.

During the year, the Division expanded institutional engagement with think-tanks across different Indian states through Track 1.5 collaborations. Northeast India and Bay of Bengal in the Indo-Pacific Dialogue was held in Tripura in



EAM participated in Ministries' flagship foreign policy outreach initiatives including the 3rd edition of NADI dialogue, Guwahati; 8th Global Technology Summit, New Delhi; 7th Asia Economic Dialogue, Pune; 2nd India-Japan Forum, New Delhi; 8th Raisina Dialogue, New Delhi; 6th Indian Ocean Conference, Dhaka (Clockwise from top left)

collaboration with Asian Confluence on 11 and 12 April; 9th International Relations Conference on India's Strategic Culture was organised by Symbiosis International University in Pune on 25 and 26 November on the theme "Revisiting Indian Strategic Thought and Culture" with funding support from the Division; 1st International Conference on Purvodaya Perspectives on the theme of "Future of Connectivity" was held in Bhubaneswar on 02-03 December and 2nd Edition of Maharana Pratap Annual Geopolitics Dialogue was organised from 23-25 March by Usanas Foundation in Udaipur on the theme of "India's role in the changing world order".

Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)

The Division is the administrative and nodal division in the Ministry for all matters relating to the Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). ICWA continued with its mandated activities of analysing geo-political and geo-strategic trends and developments. It contributed to shaping an Indian narrative on foreign policy and international relations through its various activities including research, publications, discussions, and foreign policy outreach. The Council published 155 research papers on topical issues. In addition, the Council also published 13 Sapru House Papers, 20 Books and Special Publications on issues ranging from India's G20 and SCO Presidencies to 75-years of India's foreign policy, India's UNSC tenure (2021-22). It continued its efforts to translate its publications in Hindi and other Indian languages. The Council organised a large number of related activities, including Track 2.0 dialogues, lectures, and conferences/discussions, with visiting foreign dignitaries and delegations.

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

The Division is the nodal division in the Ministry for all matters relating to Research and Information System (RIS) for Developing Countries. RIS is an autonomous policy research institute that specialises in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment, and technology. It fosters policy dialogue and capacity building among developing countries on global and regional economic issues. The primary focus is on promoting South-South Cooperation and collaborating with developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums.

Under the G20 University Connect initiative, RIS undertook lectures on G20 issues and engaged over 1 lakh students from 101 universities across India. RIS organised various conferences, webinars, and panel discussions.

Special Think 20 Programme on Global Governance with LiFE, Values and Wellbeing: Fostering Cooperation in Framework, Finance and Technology was organised on 16 and 17 January. RIS organised an interactive conversation on priorities and challenges of Indian G20 Presidency on 23 February. RIS organised a day long panel discussion for the T20 Side Event Women as Active Participants and Propellers of Economic Growth: Focusing on Livelihoods and Care Infrastructure, on 22 March at UN House in New Delhi. RIS, in collaboration with the Ministry, UN India, and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), organised a Development Working Group (DWG) programme on Towards a Green Transition: Lifestyle for Environment (LiFE) and Just Green Transitions on 06 April in Kerala. RIS in collaboration with A.N. Sinha Institute of Social Studies (ANSISS) and Ministry of Youth

Affairs and Sports organised a Youth 20 brainstorming workshop in Patna on 28 April. Further, Youth 20 brainstorming sessions titled Future of Work: Industry 4.0: Innovation and 21st Century Skills were organised at Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur and Guwahati.

A side-event on Economic and Systemic Transformations for LiFE and Wellbeing was organised at the Global Solutions Summit in Berlin on 15 May 2023 as part of Task Force 3 of T20. They released a policy brief on India's G20 Presidency and Sustainable Development in the Himalaya: Opportunities and Strategies at RIS on 28 June. RIS, in collaboration with Bharat Web3 Association (BWA), organised a Roundtable Discussion on the theme Virtual Digital Assets Industry: Evolving Policy and Regulatory Landscape from India and G20 Perspective on 11 July in New Delhi. On the sidelines of T20 Summit in Mysuru on 30 July, RIS and Asian Development Bank Institute (ADBI) organised a joint meeting of T7 and T20 leadership along with other academics and public policy experts to deliberate on the G7/G20 Joint Call to Action – Addressing the Poly-Crisis and Reigniting the 2030 Agenda.

They also organised a joint meeting of Co-chairs of Task Force 3 LiFE, Resilience, and Values for Well-being and Task Force 6 Accelerating SDGs: Exploring New Pathways to the 2030 Agenda, on 01 August. It also organised a hybrid Roundtable discussion on 09 September with the Fourth Sector Group on forthcoming LiFE Economy Strategy. A webinar on the G20 New Delhi Leaders' Declaration, titled Way Forward for LiFE and Infrastructure for Resilience was organised on 15

September. They also organised a Panel Discussion on Digital Technology, Finance, Inclusion and G20 Delhi Declaration on 18 September. RIS organised the G20 University Connect Finale on 26 September, which marked a grand culmination of all the lectures under the G20 University Connect Lecture Series.

Separately, under the T20 Task Force 3 a series of six seminars was held by the RIS. Seminar 1 was held on Wellbeing Measurement Approaches and Recalibrating International Institutions on 24 March. The second session on Sustainable Consumption and Production, Climate crisis and One Health was held on 31 March. Seminar 3 was on Infusing Ethics and Values in International Relations on 14 April. Seminar four of the T20 Task Force 3 series was themed on Mainstreaming community partnership and traditional approaches for LiFE and was held on 21 April. Seminar five on Urban-Rural Linkages for a New Development Model of the T20 Task Force 3 seminar was organised on 28 April. The last seminar of the T20 Task Force 3 seminar series, on Financing Sustainable, Resilient, and Inclusive Infrastructure was held on 05 May.

MEA Library

The Ministry's Library serves as the resource and information Centre for the use of officers and staff members at the headquarters in the Ministry as well as for Indian Missions and Posts abroad. The library is currently housed at the Patiala House and in Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan (JNB) in New Delhi.

CHAPTER

20

Legal & Treaties Division

The Legal and Treaties Division handles the legal matters of the Ministry, encompassing international law issues. In 2023, the Division offered legal advice on crucial matters, scrutinised various instruments of global relevance, and ratified bilateral and multilateral treaties that the Government of India signed with foreign countries.

Engagement with Nations and Other International Organisations

United Nations

Sixth Committee of the United Nations General Assembly

During the 78th UN General Assembly, India played a vital role in the Sixth Committee (Legal) from 02 October-17 November. Demonstrating a balanced and constructive approach, India emphasised inclusivity and representation, advocating for increased participation of developing nations in UN legal bodies. India actively contributed to discussions on crimes against humanity.

India presented national statements on various agenda items, notably addressing measures to eliminate international terrorism. The General Assembly adopted a resolution, reflecting

India's efforts to foster global cooperation in preventing and suppressing terrorist acts. Beyond terrorism, India engaged in discussions on strengthening the UN's role, international trade law, and fundamental legal principles, showcasing its commitment to shaping the global legal landscape during the 78th UNGA's Sixth Committee.

India's active participation covered crucial topics such as the criminal accountability of UN officials, the rule of law, crimes against humanity, universal jurisdiction, the work of the UN Commission on International Trade Law, and the protection of persons in disasters. India's involvement emphasised its commitment to making substantial contributions to global legal discussions and tackling a diverse range of challenges under international law.

International Law Week

The International Law Week, a significant event in the global legal calendar, was held in New York on 23 and 24 October under the chairmanship of India. Additional Secretary, Legal and Treaties Division, was the Chief Coordinator from India for the 33rd Informal Legal Advisor's Meeting and chaired the sessions and panel meetings. The thematic issues tabled for panel discussions were highly appreciated, underscoring the importance of dialogue and collaboration in addressing the complexities of international law. The panel discussion on 'Democratisation of sources of International Law' in particular enabled the members to revisit international law concepts and

foundational assumptions from the global south perspective, which is inclusive, and recognizes values emanating from various legal systems, rich diversity of cultures and legal traditions involved.

Various panel discussions covered topics such as Pacific Settlement of Disputes beyond Contentious Settlement, exploring Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) like Conciliation and Mediation. The discussions delved into the principle of "Prevention" across different international law regimes, focusing on issues like Deep seabed mining, the atmosphere, global pandemics, and health-related challenges. Additionally, shared natural resources were examined, highlighting challenges and opportunities in the development of international law, particularly in Outer Space, Cyber Law, and Marine Biological Diversity (BBNJ). Originating from a global south perspective, these discussions emphasised the significance of dialogue and collaboration in addressing the complexities of international law, earning appreciation and acknowledgment from the delegates.

India facilitated the participation of experts from the International Law Commission and academia in the discussions, enriching the deliberations and providing member countries with valuable insights and experiences.

Asian-African Legal Consultative Organisation (AALCO)

AALCO is an intergovernmental organisation head-quartered in New Delhi that is mandated to work towards the progressive development of International Law. As a founding Member, India actively contributes to realise the Organisation's mandate.

India assumed the presidency for the 60th Annual Session of AALCO for the period 2022-23. India's presidency provided an opportunity to reinvigorate our deep commitment and involvement with the organisation's mandate, facilitating

AALCO conducting several webinars, training programmes on international law issues of contemporary relevance.

After a successful tenure as president of the 60th session of AALCO, India handed over the baton to the incoming president of the 61st annual session held in Bali, Indonesia from 16-20 October.

In the 61st Annual Session, the Indian delegation demonstrated India's position on issues including the legislative enactments such as 'Nari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam', reflecting India's commitment to empower women. The delegation also tabled a new topic 'Legal issues in Outer Space' for discussion for enhancing the capacity building of AALCO Member States. The initiative reflects a growing recognition of the importance of addressing legal complexities associated with activities and developments in outer space within the framework of the AALCO.

The Indian delegation addressed key issues in statements across agenda items, including discussions on the international law commission's work, law of the sea, violations of international law in Palestine, international trade and investment laws, and environment and sustainable development.

UNIDROIT (Governing Council of the International Institute for the Unification of Private Law)

The Division organised a seminar and roundtable in New Delhi to further strengthen our engagement with the organisation. Stakeholders from the government and private sector actively participated in the discussions. The seminar was inaugurated by the MoS (ML) and Additional Secretary of the Division. The Secretary General and the Deputy Secretary General of (UNIDROIT) Ignacio Tirado travelled from Rome for this significant event as the chief co-ordinators and moderated the sessions.



MoS (ML) inaugurated the Seminar on UNIDROIT Projects commemorating India's Presidency of UNIDROIT General Assembly, July 2023

On 14 December, the Additional Secretary of the Division was elected to UNIDROIT. This is a significant achievement as it marks the first time a woman representative from India has been elected to this prestigious position.

India's presence opens new avenues to engage more deeply with UNIDROIT and its various projects. Notably, UNIDROIT has been currently working on several important projects, such as digital assets and bank insolvency. The project on digital assets, for instance, aims to develop a set of legislative principles relating to digital assets and private law.

With India on the Governing Council, it will have a direct role in shaping these international commercial law frameworks. This not only enhances India's influence in international legal matters but also allows it to contribute its unique Global South perspective to global discussions on private and commercial law.

During the UNIDROIT general assembly session, India presided over a side event focusing on soft law Instruments. The discussion centred on the complementary role of soft law alongside hard law in international legal frameworks. The discussion received widespread acknowledgment and appreciation from both participants and panellists.

SCO

In 2023, India held the SCO Presidency, hosting key meetings and facilitating discussions on various aspects of SCO. The Division has been proactively engaging in the examination of all legal matters related to the organisation. The Division facilitated signing of multiple instruments of the organisation. The Division is also part of the reformation process of the Organisation and provided its views and comments in this regard. The Division attended the first meeting of experts of SCO member states on the reform and modernisation of SCO in Astana on 31 March.

HCCH (Hague Conference on Private International Law)

The HCCH is an intergovernmental organisation, the mandate of which is "the progressive unification of the rules of private international law". The Division evaluated various projects under HCCH, encompassing critical aspects such as the tourists and visitors (ODR) Project, jurisdiction-project, cohabitation outside marriage, parentage and international surrogacy arrangements, family agreements involving children, and intellectual property.

The Division actively participated in the HCCH's work on parentage and international surrogacy which seeks to establish clear and consistent rules that govern the determination of legal parentage across borders. The first meeting of the working group on parentage/surrogacy, as mandated by the Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP), was held

from 13-17 November. The working group commenced its consideration of draft provisions for a new instrument on legal parentage generally, including legal parentage resulting from an international surrogacy agreement.

UNCITRAL

Since its inception, the Legal and Treaties Division has been representing India in the UNCITRAL Working Groups, participating in its sessions, and contributing significantly to the evolution of international trade law. In the year 2023, the Legal and Treaties Division of India participated and closely followed the work of the selected working group meetings, making valuable contributions to the discussions. Latest developments of UNCITRAL working groups in 2023 are:

- i. Working group I- Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME): Focused on measures to facilitate access to credit for MSMEs and facilitation of access to credit to them. The working group also discussed the sources of credit available to MSMEs.
- ii. Working group II- Dispute Settlement: The working group discussed technology related dispute resolutions and adjudications along with different model clauses.
- iii. Working group III- Investor-State Dispute Settlement Reform: Engaged in intense discussions on Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) reform, including draft provisions on mediation, the draft guidelines on investment mediation and the code of conduct for arbitrators in international investment dispute resolution; adopted in principle the code of conduct for judges in International Investment Dispute Resolution.
- iv. Working Group IV- Electronic Commerce: The working group discussed the draft provisions on automated contracting and default rules for data provision contracts.
- v. Working Group V- Insolvency Law: The working group discussed issues relating to civil assets tracing and recovery in insolvency proceedings along with applicable law in insolvency proceedings.
- vi. Working Group VI- Negotiable Cargo Documents: The working group deliberated upon the preliminary draft provisions for an instrument on negotiable cargo documents, focusing on draft articles concerning negotiability.

The Indian delegation participated in the 56th annual session of the United Nations Trade Law Commission from 03-21 July, Vienna. During the session's meeting, the Commission adopted a series of important guidelines and texts related to mediation, dispute resolution, and other international trade law topics with minor textual and language corrections suggested by the member states including India as well as the secretariat. The session resulted in the adoption of (i) UNCITRAL Model Provisions on Mediation, (ii)

UNCITRAL Guidelines on Mediation for International Investment Disputes, (iii) UNCITRAL Code of Conduct for Arbitrators and (iv) UNCITRAL Code of Conduct for Judges.

Law of the Sea

The Division's involvement in matters related to the Law of the Sea, during the year 2023, unfolded as follows:

- India took an active role in the 5th session of the intergovernmental conference on an international legally binding instrument under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This Session was held from 20 February-03 March and focused on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), with the goal of elaborating on the text of this crucial instrument.
- The agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ was adopted on 19 June, marking a significant milestone in the law of the sea. This agreement establishes a comprehensive framework for the management and protection of marine biodiversity in international waters. India played a key role in emphasising the concept of the common heritage of mankind beyond national jurisdiction, ensuring it received due attention from all participating countries.
- In addition to its pivotal role in the adoption of the agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of BBNJ, India demonstrated proactive engagement in various international maritime forums. Participating in the informal Consultations of State Parties to the UN Fish Stocks Agreement (ICSP16) in March, India showcased its commitment to collaborative efforts for sustainable fisheries management.
- India's commitment extended to the 28th session of the council and assembly meeting of the International Seabed Authority, where discussions centered on draft regulations for mineral resource exploitation. Playing a crucial role in the Finance Committee of the International Seabed Authority, India presented the committee's report to the assembly, emphasising responsible and sustainable marine resource management. Actively participating in the United Nations open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and the Law of the Sea, India engaged in discussions on new maritime technologies and opportunities during its 23rd meeting from 5-9 June.
- India played a crucial part in the 33rd Meeting of the states parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in June. India's participation in the ad hoc working group of the whole of the General Assembly, particularly in the 18th and 19th meetings, focused on taking stock of

the Regular Process for Global Reporting and Assessment of the State of the Marine Environment, including Socioeconomic Aspects. Furthermore, India made substantial contributions during informal consultations on oceans and the Law of the Sea, including its Omnibus resolution. Under the framework of the United Nations Agreement for the Implementation of the Provisions of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, India actively participated in informal consultations on the Omnibus Resolution on Sustainable Fisheries throughout September, October, and November.

Seminars and Events advancing International Law

During 2023, the Division actively promoted the dissemination of international law knowledge through the organisation of conferences, seminars, and deliberations focusing on contemporary topics.

Seminar on UNIDROIT Projects

A seminar on UNIDROIT projects on 03 and 04 July in New Delhi dealt with capacity building and fostering active participation with UNIDROIT, bringing together experts from UNIDROIT and stakeholders for collaborative discussions covering diverse topics from agriculture to banking insolvency.

This highlights India's commitment to staying abreast of contemporary legal challenges and actively contributing to the development of international legal standards across various fields. The meticulous evaluation of UNIDROIT initiatives by the Division underscores its dedication to enhancing legal frameworks and fostering international cooperation in diverse domains.

The Division also conducted two interactive sessions with the stakeholders (government officials, industry bodies and other stakeholders) in the month of June. MoS (ML) attended the sessions and provided useful insights and guidance in the discussions.

BIMSTEC

The 9th Meeting of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues was held under the chairmanship of India in New Delhi, India on 21 and 22 June. The meeting was organised by the Division and Additional Secretary (LandT) chaired the meeting.

Significant outcome of the meeting was the finalisation of the long pending BIMSTEC Convention against Trafficking in

Persons. The recommendation made during the 9th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Legal and Law Enforcement Issues suggests that the BIMSTEC Sub-Group on Anti- Money Laundering and Combating the Financing of Terrorism will play a role in reviewing a proposed 'Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Capacity Building to Combat Money-Laundering and Financing of Terrorism among BIMSTEC Member States.'

Other seminars organised by the division included a Seminar on "Seven Decades of the Constitution of India" on the occasion of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM), and a seminar on Asian African Treaty Law and Practice.

Mutual Legal Assistance in criminal matters and Extradition

The Division examines Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Treaties (MLAT) and Extradition Treaties and requests. As the central authority overseeing MLAT matters, the Ministry of Home Affairs forwarded a comprehensive text of the draft Treaties for scrutiny. The drafts were pertaining to several countries like the Philippines, Guyana, Turkmenistan, Brunei, Lithuania, Botswana, Nigeria, and Peru.

Additionally, the Division was actively involved in virtual negotiations for the extradition treaty between India and Italy. Although the negotiations were concluded, the formal signing of the treaty is pending.

Numerous MLAT and Extradition requests, both originating from India and foreign countries, underwent meticulous scrutiny, and comprehensive legal opinions were provided.

Information Technology Law

Representatives from the Division actively participated in the sessions of the UN Ad Hoc Committee dedicated to negotiating a comprehensive international convention addressing the misuse of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) for criminal purposes. In addition, the Division examined the Digital Personal Data Protection Bill in January 2023.

Trade and Investment

i. IPEF Negotiations: Legal and Treaties Division actively participated in the negotiation of the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF). The negotiations involved 14 countries with Agreements on four pillars such as trade, supply chain resilience, clean energy and decarbonisation; and a fair economy for combating anti-corruption measures. While negotiation of Agreement on Pillar II

has been successfully concluded, the negotiation of other Pillars Agreements are in the advanced stage.

- ii. The Division participated in the India and Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement as track lead for Institutional Provisions Chapters.
- iii. The Division participated in the negotiation of the India and Australia Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement which is to replace the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (IND-AUS ECTA) between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Australia.
- iv. The Division also participated in the negotiation of the India-UK Free Trade Agreement.
- v. The Division participated in Bilateral Investment Treaty negotiations between India and United Arab Emirates; Kuwait; UK; Canada and other countries.

National and International Court Cases

i. ITLOS

In December 2022, the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law petitioned the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) for an advisory opinion on states' duties under UNCLOS to protect the marine environment from climate change impacts. This landmark request seeks legal clarity on how existing laws apply to the complex challenges posed by rising sea levels, ocean acidification, and other climate- driven threats to ocean health.

The Division participated in the oral hearings on the advisory opinion on "Obligations of States under UNCLOS to protect marine environment from the impact of climate change" held at Hamburg, Germany and delivered a statement on behalf of India. While acknowledging UNCLOS environmental obligations, India in its ITLOS oral statement argued that attributing specific impacts to climate change is beyond UNCLOS, emphasised that existing provisions suffice, called for scientific evidence and equity, and advocated collaborative solutions beyond legal frameworks.

ii. Domestic Courts

The Division is the nodal point for the court's cases filed by or against the Ministry and provides legal assistance by way of vetting of Affidavits, replies of the petitions filed against the Divisions. It also coordinates with the panel advocate representing the Ministry in the courts and provides legal help in issues pertaining to international law. The Division handled many such cases in the year 2023.

Other Meetings or Treaty Negotiations

The Division actively participated in many bilateral and multilateral negotiations pertaining to various subject matters of national and global importance. Most notable among them are:

- i. 58th session of the UNFCCC Subsidiary Body for Scientific and Technological Advice (SBSTA) and Subsidiary Body on Implementation (SBI) held in Bonn, Germany.
- ii. Government to Government Meeting with US on Civil Nuclear Liability held in Mumbai.
- iii. India-France Government to Government meeting on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages issues held in Mumbai.
- iv. 3rd session of the Open-ended Working Group on Reducing space threats through norms, rules, and principles of responsible behaviours, (United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs) 30 January-03 February in Geneva, Switzerland.
- v. Inter-governmental Special Committee meeting concerning revision of UNESCO 1974 Recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, Co- operation, Peace and Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamentals Freedom from 30 May-02 June and from 10-13 July at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.
- vi. Expert Working Group Meeting on the India-Iran Chabahar Port Contracts, 10-13 June in Tehran.
- vii. 2nd meeting of the Neutral Expert proceedings concerning the resolution of differences between India and Pakistan with respect to Ratle and Kishenganga Hydroelectric Plants (Indus Water Treaty) at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Vienna on 20 and 21 September.
- viii. 15th Conference of Parties to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, convened under UN auspices, chaired by China, and hosted by Canada, adopted the "Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework" (GBF), including four overarching goals and 23 actionable targets for achievement by 2030.
- ix. Participation in the Standing Committee meetings, Council on General Affairs and Policy (CGAP) and Council of Diplomatic Representatives (CDR) of the HCCH. India also attended the first meeting of the Working Group on Parentage / Surrogacy in November 2023.
- x. 12th South Asia Regional IHL Conference focuses on "Protection of persons in contemporary armed conflicts" from 09-12 August in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- xi. 45th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, Helsinki, Finland 29 May-8 June.
- xii. Nuclear Law Protection Agreement between Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Westinghouse Electric Company.
- xiii. Transfer of Sentenced Persons negotiations with Philippines.
- xiv. Meeting of the Core Group of 'Group of Friends on International Law' (GoFIL), held in Manila on 11 December.
- xv. United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 28), held in Dubai from 30 November-12 December.

Treaty Practice and Online Treaty Database

The Division plays an important role in facilitating the signing and implementation of treaties on behalf of India. To formalise these engagements, the Division issued Instruments of Full Power, as detailed in Annex-VI for the year 2023. Similarly, the implementation of signed bilateral and multilateral treaties was achieved through the issuance of Instruments of Ratification, a process handled by the Legal and Treaties Division, with a list available in Annex-VII.

In its capacity as the depository of all treaties signed on behalf of India, the Division ensures accessibility and transparency. Annex-VIII provides a detailed list of non-classified Agreements/ Treaties signed by India during the year 2023. The Division further provides its service by indexing and uploading the text of these treaties into the Indian Treaties Database, which is consistently updated. This comprehensive database, accessible through the web link <https://www.mea.gov.in/TreatyList.htm?1>, encompasses treaties from 1950 to 2023, exceeding 3,700 agreements and is open to the public, emphasising the commitment to transparency and providing valuable historical and contemporary insights into India's international engagements.

Examination/Vetting of Legal Documents

The Division has undertaken examination of various international law instruments, including Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs), treaties/agreements, as well as Cabinet notes, covering a diverse array of subject matters. These instruments span a wide spectrum of areas, reflecting the multifaceted nature of India's international engagements. Noteworthy categories include treaties, agreements, MoUs, on culture, personnel management, employment and repatriation of workers, assistance in the field of investigation, gainful employment, knowledge partnership, customs and excise, petroleum infrastructure, micro, small and medium enterprises, investment and innovation relations, combating corruption, transfer of

health technologies, financial services, agriculture and forest, medicine, bilateral investment and innovation relations, air services, local currency settlement mechanism, protection of classified information, privileges and immunities, space, cross-border trades, migration mobility partnership, audio-visual cooperation, ozone-depleting substances, tourism, twinning/sister city agreements, protection of natural resources, solar alliance, projects to be implemented in foreign countries, and defence cooperation.

Cabinet Notes

The Division has scrutinised cabinet notes and notes to the cabinet committee on security. The list of such notes include:

- i. Cabinet note for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Law, Government of the Republic of Singapore, and the Ministry of Law and Justice of the Government of the Republic of India concerning cooperation in the sphere of law and dispute resolution.
- ii. Cabinet note for the signing and ratification of the Protocol to amend the agreement between India and Mauritius for the avoidance of double taxation and prevention of fiscal evasion to make it compliant with the Base Erosion and Profit Sharing (BEPS) minimum standards.
- iii. Cabinet note for conferring the status of Institute of National Importance (INI) on the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade.
- iv. Cabinet note on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2023.
- v. Cabinet note on the Telecommunication Bill 2023.
- vi. Cabinet note on the signing/ratification of the International Coffee Agreement, 2022, by the Government of India.
- vii. Cabinet note for the proposal for the Introduction of "The Livestock and Livestock Products (Importation and Exportation) Bill, 2023" into Parliament and the repeal of "The Livestock Importation Act, 1898."
- viii. Cabinet note for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Reserve Bank of India and the Central Bank of the United Arab Emirates.
- ix. Cabinet note for the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)/Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) between The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and (i) Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF) (ii) Qatar Financial Centre (QFC) (iii) The National Board of Accountants and Auditors (NBAA), Tanzania (iv) The Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CPA Ireland) (v) The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and (vi) The South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA).
- x. Cabinet note for the Establishment of the Nature and Land-Based Development Institute (NALANDI).
- xi. Cabinet note for the Signing of the International Legally Binding Instrument- Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) under the United Nations Convention on the Law of Seas 1943.
- xii. Cabinet note for the Indian Red Cross Society Bill 2023.
- xiii. Cabinet note on signing of IPEF Agreement.
- xiv. Cabinet note for the signing and ratification of the BIMSTEC Agreement on Maritime Transport Cooperation.
- xv. Cabinet note seeking ex-post facto approval for the Artemis Accord.
- xvi. Cabinet note regarding the review of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the space sector.
- xvii. Cabinet note on the Investment Incentive Agreement between the USA and India.
- xviii. Cabinet note for the Signing of the FIS between India and Mauritius.

Legal Opinions and Legal Research

The Division played a crucial role within the Ministry by offering legal opinions and conducting research on a wide array of subjects, spanning both international and domestic legal concerns. Notably, the Division actively participated in the ongoing discussions concerning the finalisation of the Emigration Bill 2023. It also provided its legal opinion on UN-related issues, the interpretation of treaties across different subjects, matters involving immunity and privilege, Civil Liability Nuclear Damage, the India-Bangladesh Joint Boundary Conference, Simplifications of Laws, proposals for the revival of the United Nations Trusteeship Council, and pre-Constitution/pre-Independence Acts related to the the Ministry.

Moreover, the Division offered legal opinions on Parliamentary Questions, issues related to the Montreal Protocol on Ozone-Depleting Substances. Its legal opinions extend to a broad spectrum of areas, encompassing local employee cases, human rights issues, humanitarian law matters, international criminal law, and legal assistance matters. Additionally, the division has provided insights on topics ranging from the transfer of sentenced persons to space and air law, including the application of international law in cases involving the return of space objects. The Division also contributed to addressing environmental matters, Indus Water Treaty issues, court cases, tender documents, and various other legal instruments of Government of India and State Governments.

CHAPTER

21

E Governance & IT

The e-Governance and Information Technology (eG&IT) Division has been primarily involved in the design, development, implementation, and maintenance of various e-Governance applications for the Ministry. The Division also provides end-to-end support for all Information Technology (IT) related matters to the Ministry and Missions/Posts abroad viz. procurement, maintenance, and upkeep of the entire IT infrastructure.

In 2023, the Division took several steps towards the implementation of various components of the Digital India Programme in the Ministry and all Missions/ Posts abroad to have a transparent, secure, accessible, and participative IT ecosystem. Automation and networks are being harnessed as tools to achieve synergy at all levels of functioning in the Ministry and render efficient IT services to Government officials.

During the year, the following portals/websites were designed, developed, and updated by the Division:

G20 India Presidency

The division was the nodal division of the IT vertical of the G20 secretariat during the G20 Presidency of India. The Division provided IT support for all the meetings of the G20. The Division monitored the design, development, operation and maintenance of the G20 Website and Mobile app.

The real-time translation feature of the mobile app was widely appreciated by all stakeholders and users.

Voice of Global South Summit (VOGSS)

The Division also provided technical backup for the conduct of a special virtual meeting of the India-led initiative VOGSS Summit comprising various ministerial and HoG/HoS sessions both during 2023. The 1st VOGSS Summit took place on 12 and 13 January and the 2nd VOGSS Summit was held on 17 November. Both the Summits were held virtually.

Ministry of External Affairs Online Working System (MEADOWS)

The MEADOWS platform, an in-house application developed by the Division as a basket comprising several utilities was updated and new features were added based on functional requirements.

QR Code Visa Note Module

The Division developed a QR-coded Visa Note as part of the digitisation process and incorporation of newer security features for the Visa Note issued by the division. This unique feature in Visa Note was made live on 01 November.

Vishwa Hindi Sammelan Website

The World Hindi Conference was organised in Fiji from 15-17 February by the Ministry in association with the Government of Fiji. The Division developed a portal to encapsulate and disseminate information about all the activities undertaken during the 12th World Hindi Conference.

Diplomatic Identity Card Issuance System (ID-Protocol) Portal

The Division had developed a web portal to generate Diplomatic Identity cards for nodal officers as well as related staff and family members of resident Embassies and High Commissions in New Delhi. In 2023, the Division introduced a dispatch ID card collection module. This feature facilitated collection by recording details of individuals collecting the diplomatic ID card. (Website: <http://idprotocolmea.gov.in/>).

AMC Portal

The Division also developed a portal for use by the GEM and Establishment Division of the Ministry for information on Annual Maintenance Contracts in various Missions/Posts and RPO's. This AMC web portal assisted Missions and Posts to upload its existing AMC's. In addition, the website also provides various features like sending reminders on important dates. (Website: <https://www.amcmea.gov.in/>).

Od'A Cell Portal

Designed and developed by the Division's technical cell, this portal is developed for stock keeping and maintenance of art stores held in charge of the Ministry including the ones held at various missions. This portal facilitated carrying out the annual stock-taking of the inventory.

In addition, the Division continues to maintain the previously developed 60 portals/websites which have become indispensable for the efficient day-to-day functioning of the Ministry.

Training and Cyber Security Awareness

The Division organised several classes/lectures/seminars on the Fundamentals of Cyber Security and implementation of Cyber Security Policy for the purpose of spreading awareness among

the officials and staff of the Ministry and Missions/Posts abroad about the basic concepts of cyber security which enables them to manage and mitigate cyber threats. 'Cyber Jagrookta Diwas' is observed on the first Wednesday of every month. Special cyber awareness sessions as part of "Cyber Swachhta Kendra" were organised during October 2023. The Ministry complied with the Cyber Security Guidelines/policies as promulgated by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) and the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

Integrated Mission Accounting System Ver 2.0 (IMAS 2.0)

The IMAS 2.0 was rolled out with effect from 05 April 2021 and in 2023, a total of 185 Indian Missions/Posts are now live on IMAS 2.0.

Video Conferencing

The Ministry has been effectively engaging with stakeholders concerned around the world virtually. The Division geared up the Ministry with state-of-the-art hardware and applications for running seamless Video Conferences (VCs) using cloud-based as well as on-premises video conferencing infrastructure. These platforms and infrastructure are being effectively utilised to conduct prestigious multilateral events and Summits, viz, G20 events and VOGSS. A total of 900 VCs were conducted by the division in 2023.

e- Office Implementation

e-Office was launched in the Ministry by the Foreign Secretary on 03 July 2014. Migration of existing e-Office users to the latest version of e-Office in the Ministry was completed on 25 January 2023 and e-file version 7.3.4 was updated in MEA on 24 May. During the year, a total of 27312 files have been forwarded by using e-Office.

e-Waste Management

In July, the Division disposed of 7078 units of unserviceable IT e-waste items of the Ministry of External Affairs through e-auction on the GeM portal. Another 2595 units of unserviceable e-waste are in the active bidding process.

CHAPTER

22

Consular, Passport & Visa Services

Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division is the nodal Division to provide consular and visa services to Indian nationals and foreigners including Indian Diaspora in India and abroad as well.

During the year 2023, CPV Division has performed consular and visa operations with public-private partnership in a fast, efficient, transparent and user- friendly manner. As part of 'Ease of Doing Business and Ease of Living for Citizens', the Division has been focusing on enhancing the public service delivery in an efficient manner through digital platforms to provide seamless benefit to Indian citizens and Indian diaspora.

In addition, under good governance initiatives to resolve consular grievances of Indians abroad, the MADAD online portal has led to qualitative improvement in delivery of consular assistance and handling of consular grievances, with an impressive success rate of resolution of cases by over 95 percent.

Visa- Exemption Agreements

India has so far signed 'Visa Exemption/Waiver Agreements' for the holders of diplomatic and official/service passports with 133

countries. During 2023, Visa Exemption/Waiver Agreements for holders of diplomatic and/or official/service passport were signed/operationalised with the Governments of Fiji, Madagascar, Palau, Angola, and Austria.

eVisa scheme

The eVisa scheme, which was suspended in March 2020 in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, was restored to 156 countries in 2022 and further extended to 166 countries in 2023. The eVisa Scheme has become more popular over the years and at present over 50 percent of the total Indian Visas issued are e-Visas.

Consular Dialogue Mechanism

The Consular Dialogue mechanism is aimed at discussing outstanding Consular, Visa and diaspora related matters with a view to engage in discussing and resolving issues faced by the Indian Diaspora/NRIs abroad. India has so far established a bilateral Consular Dialogue mechanism with over 30 countries.

During 2023, Consular Dialogues/Consultations were held with Nigeria, Switzerland, USA, Czech Republic, Austria, and Iran.

Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) card Scheme

The Ministry strives to connect the Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) with their roots in India and to encourage them to visit India as a tourist/ invest in India, and to strengthen their ties with India. To this end, CPV Division in consultation and coordination with the Ministry of Home Affairs continuously works on facilitating easier issuance of OCI cards, including lifting jurisdictional restrictions for applications in the USA. This year the OCI card facility beyond the 4th generation of PIO has been extended to the Indian diaspora of Suriname, which is already available to our Diaspora in Mauritius and Surinamese living in St. Denis, Reunion Island. Since its launch in 2005, around 47 lakhs OCI cards have been issued so far.

Extradition

MEA is the Central Authority for extradition matters in India. The Ministry has been actively pursuing negotiations with various countries for bilateral extradition treaties to broaden the legal framework to bring back accused persons involved in international terrorism, money laundering, financial frauds, drug-trafficking and other criminal offences. Extradition requests are also made on the assurance of reciprocity, where there is no bilateral Extradition Treaty/Arrangement. To facilitate extradition of fugitive criminals, 48 Extradition Treaties are currently in force. India also has Extradition Arrangements with 12 countries. The Ministry also facilitates negotiations for Agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and in Civil and Commercial Matters and Agreements on Transfer of Sentenced Persons. The CPV Division is also negotiating with the concerned countries to replace the pre-independence Extradition Treaties.

Consular Services

As part of welfare measures, the Ministry assigns top priority to the death cases of Indian nationals abroad including transportation of mortal remains of deceased Indian nationals to their next of kin in India and facilitate their death compensation cases in a timely manner. Beside this, safety of NRIs including Indian students studying abroad, welfare of Indian immigrants, matters of Indian nationals in prisons or under detention abroad, issues of employment of Indians abroad, legalisation of documents, comprises the major chunk of consular work.

In addition, CPV Division, in consultation with the line Ministries/ Departments in Government of India, States Governments and

foreign Diplomatic Missions in India, also deals with the consular matters of foreign nationals in India, mainly concerning their safety and security related issues in India.

eSEWA

eSEWA is a digital Portal launched in July 2020 to render miscellaneous consular services by Indian Missions and Posts abroad through an online platform by our Missions/Posts abroad. The project, which was started initially with 7 Missions/ Posts abroad has now become fully operational in almost all Indian Missions/Posts abroad in 2023, except a few Missions and Posts abroad, where CPV services have not been outsourced.

Attestation/Apostille Services

CPV Division in MEA is nodal Division to perform legalisation of documents, which are required mainly for their use abroad for educational, business, employment, and immigration visas. In 2022-23 more than 14 lakh documents have been legalised through attestation or apostille process. During 2023, from 01 January-30 November, 51,391 documents have been attested and 2,23,810 documents have been apostilled in the online mode, whereas, 4,73,107 documents have been attested and 7,09,415 documents have been apostilled in the offline mode.

eSanad is the online digital platform to provide attestation/apostille services to legalise the documents. Consistent efforts are being made to put on board more and more new Document Issuing Authorities (DIAs) in India on this digital platform. In 2023, another 500 DIAs have been integrated to eSanad portal to certify documents, with 655 DIAs now available on eSanad digital portal. The process for integration of more than 500 such academic Institutions/Boards, which are registered with National Academic Depository (NAD) and on board with DigiLocker to eSanad is presently underway.

Public Grievance Redressal and Consular Assistance Management

In pursuance of the "good governance" initiatives, the online digital platform Consular Assistance Management System known as "MADAD" addresses and monitors the registration and resolution of grievances and provides consular services in an efficient, transparent and trusted manner. During 2023, out of around 5500 registered grievances, nearly 5200 grievances have been successfully resolved/responded. So far, since its launch, around 87000 registered grievances in the MADAD portal, over 84000 (95%) grievances have been resolved/responded. In addition, Open Houses and Consular Camps are regularly organised by most Indian Missions/Posts abroad to provide consular services at different locations.

Passport Seva Programme

The Passport Seva Programme (PSP) Division provides passport-related services in India and abroad. The issuance of Passports has emerged as one of the most noticeable statutory and citizen-centric services rendered by the Ministry. The Ministry has been making quantitative and qualitative changes so that passports can be delivered to the citizens in a timely, transparent, more accessible, reliable manner and in a comfortable environment through streamlined processes and by a committed, trained and motivated workforce.

Indian Passports (together with other travel documents such as Certificate of Identity to Stateless persons, Emergency Certificates for returnees to India, Police Clearance Certificates, Surrender Certificates, Line of Control Travel Permits in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir) are issued by the Ministry through the PSP Division, the Central Passport Organization (CPO) and its all-India network of 37 Passport Offices, the CPV Division (Diplomatic and Official passports) and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration.

This network has been vastly expanded by adding 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) in Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode and 434 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) (in association with the Department of Posts) as extended arms of these 37 Passport Offices. The total number of Passport Seva Kendras functioning in the country is 527 as of 10 December including PSK and POPSKs. For Indians living abroad, Passports and Emergency Certificates are being rendered through 181 Indian Missions/Posts abroad which are connected to the PSP system.

Passport Seva Programme (PSP V 2.0)

The Division is currently working on the upcoming PSP V2.0, which would further enhance and improve the ease of Passport services to the citizens in the country and also to the Diaspora availing passport-related services through Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

A state-of-the-art secure digital ecosystem will be connected to all Passport Issuance Authorities and PSKs/POPSKs and other stakeholders (Police, Department of Posts, and India Security Press Nasik) for end-to-end processing of passport-related services in a paperless and cashless environment. The applicants will be provided with an interactive portal for online filing of applications, document upload, payment of requisite fees, guided by Artificial Intelligence (AI) enabled "bot" and Robotic Process Automation (RPA). PSP V2.0 would leverage advanced, high-end and emerging technologies to deliver the next level of citizen experiences.

Passport services in India and Missions/Posts abroad

The Ministry processed nearly 1.39 crore applications and rendered 1.35 crore Passport-related services in India up to November 2023, as compared to 1.33 crore applications were processed and 1.29 crore passport-related services were rendered in the year 2022.

The Indian Missions/Posts abroad received 16.46 lakh Passport-related applications and issued 15.51 lakh Passport-related services up to November 2023.

mPassportSeva Mobile App

The mPassport Seva Mobile App with additional facilities to apply, pay and schedule appointments for passport services is available both on Android and iOS platforms. Citizens do not require access to a computer and printer to apply for passport services. The mPassport Seva App now supports an enhanced set of passport services such as:

1. New User Registration
2. Sign In to Registered User Account
3. Application form filing to apply for Passport and Police Clearance Certificate
4. Pay for Passport Services
5. Appointment Scheduling
6. Application Availability Status
7. Document Advisor
8. Fee Calculator

Applying from anywhere in India

An applicant can now apply for a passport from anywhere in India. This initiative enables applicants to choose the Passport Office (PO) and thus the desired Passport Seva Kendra (PSK)/Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) under the PO where they wish to submit their application irrespective of whether the present residential address specified in the application form lies within the jurisdiction of the selected PO or not. Police verification would be conducted by the Police Station in whose jurisdiction the address mentioned in the form falls and the passport will also be printed and dispatched at the same address by the PO selected for application submission by the applicant. Nearly 11.97 lakh applications were submitted under this scheme during the calendar year 2022.

Appointments

The Ministry released nearly 85,000 appointments per day, including nearly 22,000 appointments at the 434 POPSKs. Securing online appointments for submission of passport applications at PSK has been simplified. The current provision

allows applicants to choose any appointment date from the earliest five available dates (working days) for scheduling/ rescheduling an appointment for passport-related services. It has made the process of issuing passports easy and quick.

Outreach of Passport Services

The main objective has been to cater to the growing demand for passports and to reach out to the people located far away from the Passport Offices.

a. Passport Office

(Annexure: The list of the 37 passport offices in India is at Annexure-IX)

b. Passport Seva Kendras (PSK)

The Ministry has opened 16 PSKs since May 2014 which includes all the States in the Northeast of India. There are 93 PSKs functioning in the country as of 31 December. (Annexure- X)

c. Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK)

The Ministry, in association with the Department of Posts (DOP), announced an innovative initiative on 24 January 2017 to open Passport Seva Kendras at the Head Post Offices (HPO)/ Post Offices (PO) in the country called 'Post Office Passport Seva Kendra' (POPSK). The Ministry has functionalised 434 POPSKs till 25 November. (Annexure-XI)

The POPSK are functioning like the PSKs. Applicants, who apply for their passports online through the passport portal, can schedule an appointment and then visit the designated POPSK to complete the formalities similar to those at the PSK.

d. Integration of Indian Missions/ Posts abroad into the Passport Seva Programme (PSP)

The process of integrating the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad into the PSP commenced in October 2018 and is continuing today. The aim is to provide a uniform centralized passport issuance application process working on a single centralized database for Indian citizens living abroad and seeking Passport-related services. The Ministry has successfully integrated the passport issuance systems in 181 Indian Missions/Posts into the Global PSP (GPSP) system. The Ministry is working to complete the integration of all Indian Missions/ Posts abroad at the earliest.

Simplification of Procedures

The Ministry has taken steps to simplify the procedure for getting passports by the general public. These involve simplification of the passport rules and outreach to the people in the delivery of passport-related services.

1. Issuance of Passport to Inter-Country Adopted Children.

For the issuance of a passport to inter-country adopted children, the adoption order issued from the office of the District Magistrate, or the Additional District Magistrate will now be considered a valid supporting document. Such applications also will have an option to submit either a Court order or an Adoption order from the District Magistrate/ Additional District Magistrate for obtaining a passport.

2. Issuance of Passport to Transgender Persons

The policy has been streamlined for processing passport applications w.r.t change of gender from transgender to male/female or vice versa. The applicant shall submit a Certificate of Identity along with Transgender Identity Card issued under the Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, 2019 read with Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Rules, 2020.

3. Mandatory Provision of Submission of Birth Certificate

Consequent to the passing of the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment Bill, 2023) for persons born on or after 01 October, submission of a Birth Certificate has been made mandatory as proof of Date of Birth at the time of passport application.

E-Passport

E-Passport is a combined paper and electronic passport with a Radio Frequency Identification Chip and an antenna embedded as an inlay. The main benefit of the ePassport will be its enhanced ability to maintain the integrity of its data, thereby increasing the level of confidence in the Indian Passport. E-Passports would also facilitate the ease of travel for Indian citizens, making their interface with immigration authorities much smoother.

e-Passport project involves setting up a complex technical ecosystem, including Public Key Infrastructure (PKI), Key Management System (KMS), Inter-operability testbed, Project

Management Unit (PMU), e-Personalization, as also creation of e-Passport verification set-up at the Immigration Check Points by Bureau of Immigration. This technical eco-system and infrastructure are being set up, and the project is nearly complete.

Production and Personalisation of Travel Documents

Indian travel documents are produced by India Security Press, Nashik, which is a unit under the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL). All Regional Passport Offices in India and select Missions/Posts abroad have been provided with machine-readable passport printers. All Passport Issuing Authorities issue machine-readable passports (MRPs) as per the guidelines laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

At 24 Indian Missions/Posts, the Passport/OCI printing is done locally. For the majority of Indian Missions/Posts (157) abroad (wherever passport printing facility is not available), Machine Readable Passports and OCI are printed at the Central Indian Passport Printing System (CIPPS) of PSP Division in the Ministry, New Delhi.

Certificate of Identity (Col)

Passports Act 1967 provides for the issuance of Col 'for the purpose of establishing the identity of a Stateless person residing in India'. During the period January-December, a total number of 3,262 Cols were issued.

Appeals under Section 11 of the Passports Act 1967

Under Section 11 of the Passports Act, an appeal against the decisions of Passport Issuing Authorities (PIAs) is a statutory right conferred upon the affected persons. Joint Secretary (PSP) and Chief Passport Officer is the Appellate Authority for such cases. During the period January-November, a total of 19 appeals have been heard and disposed of.

Inspection of Regional Passport Offices

PSP Division coordinates the Study Tours of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and Inspections of Regional Passport Offices by the First Sub-Committee of Parliament on Official Language on the Progressive Use of Official Language in RPOs.

During the year, the PSP Division coordinated the Study Tour of the Standing Committee on External Affairs at Jodhpur, Pali and Udaipur from 20-22 January in Jodhpur, 23-24 January at Pali and 25 January at Udaipur.

During the year, the First Sub-Committee of Parliament on Official Language inspected the RPOs at Dehradun (8 May), Bhopal (24 August), Bengaluru (19 October), Kolkata (07 November)

Regional Passport Officers' Conference 2023

Secretary (CPV and OIA) conducted the Regional Passport Officers' Conference which was held by the Ministry, New Delhi on 08 October. All the 37 Regional Passport Officers and stakeholders of the Passport Seva Programme (PSP) deliberated upon, in detail, the functioning of the Passport Issuance system, its achievements as well as challenges faced, and future initiatives to make the process smoother and more effective for the citizens of India.

International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)

Since February 2009, India has been a participating member of the 'Public Key Directory (PKD) on ePassport' of ICAO, which has been implementing the guidelines on Machine Readable Travel Documents. India participated in the 30th PKD Board Meeting of PKD Board during 07-09 November at Willemstad, Curacao.

Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Under the Passport Seva Programme, MEA has put in place a robust Grievance Redressal system, whereby a multilingual National Call Centre with a toll-free number (1800-258-1800), operating in 17 languages and on a 24 x 7 basis, has been set up to disseminate information about various passport related services, including handling of grievances and citizens feedback. The Passport portal also has an email-based helpdesk, where suggestions and grievances can be logged in. Citizens can also monitor the status of their passport applications/grievances online through this portal.

A Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) has been set up in the PSP Division under the supervision of the Joint Secretary (PSP) and CPO, who is also designated as the Officer in charge of Public Grievances of the Ministry for Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). It deals

with grievances received through telephone, e-mail and post, directly from the general public and also references from various Government offices, such as the President's Secretariat, Prime Minister's Office, Cabinet Secretariat and Central Vigilance Commissions. The names and contact details of the Public Grievance Officer are also displayed in the RPOs/PSKs and on the website of the RPOs.

During the period January-November, 19,047 grievances were received at CPGRAMS, of which 18,026 grievances (87%) were disposed of.

Central Passport Organization

The Central Passport Organisation (CPO) was created in 1959 as a subordinate office of the Ministry and is headed by Joint Secretary and Chief Passport Officer, who also acts as Appellate Authority under the Passports Act 1967 and the Head of Department under the Delegation of Financial Powers Rules 1978.

As on 10 December 2023, passport applications are processed through a network of 37 Passport Offices, 93 PSKs and 434 POPSKs. The Sanctioned Strength of CPO is 2741 and the

working strength is 1765. In addition, there are 16 Technical and 5 Supporting Staff to manage the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Passport Seva Project. There are presently 29 vacancies at Group 'A' level, 236 vacancies at Group 'B' (Gazetted) level and 711 vacancies at Group 'B' (Non-Gazetted) and Group 'C' level, totalling 976 vacancies. (i) Group 'A' vacancies are filled up through promotion and deputation, (ii) Group 'B' (Gazetted) vacancies are filled up through promotion from feeder grade and (iii) Group 'B' (Non-Gazetted) and Group 'C' vacancies are filled up through promotion from feeder grade, direct recruitment and Limited Departmental Competitive Examination (LDCE) through Staff Selection Commission (SSC). The vacancies for direct recruitment and LDCE have been indented to SSC up to the vacancy year 2023.

The Ministry has also deployed 413 Data Entry Operators and 27 Office Assistants against the vacant non-gazetted posts for smooth functioning of the Passport Offices through an Outsourced Agency to bridge the gap between the sanctioned strength and the working strength of the non-gazetted posts.

The indents have been sent to SSC to fill the vacancies for direct recruitment posts of Assistant Superintendents, Junior Passport Assistants (JPAs), Office Assistants (OAs), Stenographers (Grade-II) and Junior Translation Officers.

C H A P T E R

23

Emigration Policy, Welfare & Diaspora Engagement

Emigration Policy and Welfare Division

In recent times, international migration has assumed a pivotal role, shaped by demographic shifts and technological progress, significantly impacting labour markets worldwide. India is a leading country in the international migration dynamics and is advantageously poised due to its demographic potential. By 2030, India's working-age population is set to peak at 68.9%, reaching 1.04 billion persons. India's diaspora is over 32 million strong and it is the top remittance receiving country in the world with inward flow of remittance to the tune of USD 125 billion in the year 2023. The Government of India recognises this potential of its citizens and its objective to promote safe and legal migration to provide employment opportunities abroad for both workers and professionals.

Mobility Arrangements

The Emigration Policy and Welfare Division has been working towards establishing institutional mechanisms to foster the global mobility of Indian workers, students, academicians,

researchers, business persons and so on. The Ministry has been proactively furthering the mobility for the Indian workforce through diverse Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) and agreements such as Migration and Mobility Partnerships and Labour Mobility and Labour Welfare Agreements with destination countries, which establish a robust framework for legal migration. These agreements/MoUs seek to achieve fostering people-to-people ties, streamlining visa procedures, preventing irregular migration, strengthening bilateral relations, and supporting skill development. This year agreements/MoUs on Migration and Mobility Partnership were signed with Austria, Australia and Italy and Labour Mobility Agreements with Mauritius and Israel.

Major developments related to the Migration and Mobility Partnerships Agreements (MMPAs) and Labour Mobility Agreements (LMAs) signed with various countries during the current year are as below:

Mauritius

India and Mauritius signed the MoU on Employment of Workers from India on 10 May. The first meeting of the Joint



EAM with the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy Antonio Tajani after the signing of the Mobility and Migration Partnership Agreement, November 2023

Working Group (JWG) on the MoU was held from 28-29 June in Mauritius. The MoU establishes an institutional framework to facilitate the recruitment, employment and repatriation of qualified Indian workers across various sectors. The MoU has been made operational with effect from 01 October.

Austria

India and Austria signed the MMPA on 13 May. The agreement includes provisions for students, post-study and also to facilitate the mobility of skilled professionals, business persons including through the Red-White-Red Card scheme.

Australia

India and Australia signed the MMPA on 23 May. The first JWG meeting took place in Canberra on 13 October. Discussions included the adoption of Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-Professionals Scheme (MATES) protocol, supporting Indian professionals' mobility to Australia and expanding cooperation beyond MATES to new sectors.

Italy

India and Italy signed the MMPA on 02 November, during EAM's visit to Rome. The agreement will provide a major milestone towards enhancing mobility of business people, students, and skilled workers in a safe and legal manner and promote people to people ties.

Israel

An agreement between India and Israel on the facilitation of the temporary employment of Indian workers in specific labour market sectors such as construction and healthcare in Israel

was signed on 03 November at New Delhi. The recruitment of Indian workers will be in accordance with the implementation protocols. The cooperating authorities for this are PIBA from the Israeli side and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) from the Indian side.

UK

India-UK Young Professionals Scheme (YPS), under India-UK MMPA, was launched on 01 March at New Delhi. The initiative permits up to 3000 degree-holding citizens aged between 18-30 from both sides to live and work for a period of two years in their respective host countries.

Other countries

Negotiations for concluding similar agreements with many other countries such as Switzerland, Denmark, Russia, Finland, Malaysia, and Greece had made significant progress during the year.

Joint Working Group meetings with various countries under the MMPAs/LMAs :

1. The 4th JWG Meeting with Japan was held in Tokyo on 03 October to review the implementation of India-Japan Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) on operation of Specified Skilled Workers (SSW) program of Japan. Progress of the implementation of the MoC was reviewed and steps to be taken for increasing the number of Indian workers in Japan under SSW were discussed in the meeting.

2. A Joint Coordination Committee meeting was held with Portugal officials on 27 October. Issues related to a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on implementation of the agreement on recruitment of Indian workers in Portugal were discussed in the meeting.
3. The inaugural JWG meeting between India and Germany under the auspices of Comprehensive Migration and Mobility signed between the two countries was held in New Delhi on 22 November. Issues related to implementation of the MMPA were discussed in the meeting.
4. The first India-Austria JWG meeting was held in Vienna on 01 December,, to ensure smooth implementation of the MoU.

Collaboration with International/ Multilateral Organisations

Apart from bilateral arrangements on migration and mobility and labour migration, the Division is also deeply engaged with international and multilateral organisations for enhancing the horizon of India's initiatives in fostering safe, orderly, and regular migration pathways.

India-EU High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility (HLDMM)

Seventh India-EU HLDMM was held on 20 October, in New Delhi. The 2nd phase of Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (Camm) was launched and a joint press statement containing elements of skilled mobility and visa facilitation was also issued.

International Organisation for Migration

Secretary (CPV and OIA) participated at the 114th Session of International Organisation for Migration (IOM) on 27-29 November at Geneva, Switzerland. Engagement at senior official level will aid in strengthening the existing cooperation with IOM and help identify further initiatives with IOM.

Welfare Schemes for Indians Overseas

The government accords high priority to safety and welfare of Indian citizens living abroad. Welfare schemes like Indian Community Welfare Fund, Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana, Pre Departure Orientation Training, and so on and so forth. proved to be critical tools towards this objective.

Pre-departure Orientation Training Program (PDOT)

Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) is a one-day training

programme on soft skills imparted by the MEA in collaboration with NSDC, state governments and other stakeholders. As on 31 October, 1,34,227 prospective migrant workers have benefited from the training programs both in physical and online formats through 30 PDOT centres. The program has been very useful in sensitising them about pathways to safe and legal migration and various government programmes for their welfare and protection. It also familiarises them about culture, language, tradition and local rules and regulations of the respective destination country. The initiative has been appreciated by all stakeholders and is being expanded further. Under the PDOT Expansion Plan, the Ministry has approved the opening of 62 new PDOT centres recently. A Training of Trainers (ToT) Workshop on PDOT was organised by the Ministry in collaboration with ICWA and the Government of Punjab on 03-04 August, 2023 at Chandigarh to train the Master Trainers for imparting PDO training to prospective emigrant workers from Punjab. Another ToT workshop was held on 12 and 13 September 2023 at New Delhi to train the Master Trainers from Assam Skill Development Mission (ASDM) for imparting PDO training to prospective emigrant workers from Assam.

Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY)

The Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana (PBBY) is a mandatory insurance scheme for all Emigration Check Required (ECR) category workers going to ECR countries. The scheme provides an insurance cover of INR 10 Lakhs in case of accidental death or permanent disability and other benefits at a nominal insurance premium of INR 275/- for two years or INR 375/- for three years validity. The scheme was revised from 01 August 2017, to include ECNR category workers on a voluntary basis and to make settlement of claims simpler for the benefit of our workers and to ensure expeditious settlement of claims. The PBBY scheme has so far provided insurance cover to 76,20,878 Indian migrant workers till October.

Diaspora Engagement Division

The Diaspora Engagement Division implements several diaspora engagement schemes, including Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences, Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award, Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Know India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz, Pravasi Rishta Portal and Promotion of Cultural ties with Diaspora. The Division also deals with marital disputes and child custody cases involving Overseas Indians, issues related to Indian students abroad, and miscellaneous grievances received from diaspora.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is the flagship event of the government to connect with the diaspora. Since 2015, the PBD Convention



Prime Minister at the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention in Indore with President of Cooperative Republic of Guyana Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi, EAM, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, and other dignitaries, January 2023

has been organised biennially as a three-day celebration around 09 January to mark the contribution of the Overseas Indian community in the development of India. The 17th PBD Convention was organised in Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 08-10 January 2023 in partnership with the Government of Madhya Pradesh. The theme of the 17th PBD Convention was "Diaspora: Reliable Partners for India's progress in Amrit Kaal." About 3,500 diaspora members from 70 countries attended the Convention, which was organised as a physical event after a gap of four years due to the pandemic.

The 17th PBD Convention was inaugurated by the Prime Minister, in the presence of the President of Cooperative Republic of Guyana, Dr. Mohamed Irfaan Ali, and the President of the Republic of Suriname Chandrikapersad Santokhi, chief guest and special guest of honour, respectively, for the event.

The Prime Minister also inaugurated a digital PBD Exhibition on theme "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav - Contribution of Diaspora in Indian Freedom Struggle", to highlight the contribution of our diaspora freedom fighters in India's independence and released a commemorative postal stamp 'Surakshit Jaayen, Prashikshit Jaayen' underlining the importance of safe, legal, orderly and skilled migration.

Hon'ble President presided over the valedictory session and conferred Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards 2023 to 27 diaspora members recognising their achievements and honouring their contributions to various fields, both in India and abroad. Other key elements of the 17th PBD Convention included a Youth segment and a state segment organised on 08 January 2023. Member of Parliament of Australia, Zaneta



Prime Minister released a commemorative postal stamp on 'Surakshit Jayen, Prashikshit Jayen' during 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Indore, January 2023

Mascarenhas, was the Guest of Honour at the Youth PBD convention. Five thematic Plenary sessions, chaired at Ministerial level and featuring panel discussions involving eminent diaspora experts were also conducted as a part of the PBD Convention.

Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC)

The SPDC was introduced in 2006-07 for the children of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) and those of Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to enable them to pursue undergraduate courses in Indian Universities/Institutions and promote India as a centre of higher studies. The Ministry offers 150 scholarships every year under the scheme, out of which, 50 are reserved for PIOs, 50 for NRIs and 50 are reserved for children of Indian workers in ECR countries. Since 2022-23, the SPDC Scheme has been opened for the youth diaspora participants from all countries, with a preference for female applicants up to 50% seats in all categories. Since the inception of SPDC, a total of 1537 scholarships have been awarded until 2023.

Know India Programme (KIP)

KIP is the flagship initiative to engage the diaspora youth and aims to strengthen the connection of PIO youth aged 21-35 years with India by giving them exposure to various facets of life in contemporary India as well as India's art, heritage and culture. The programme was revamped for the year due to the increase in the number of participants as well as expansion in the scope of the programme. This year five editions of KIP were conducted (66th to 70th edition), with participation of 256 diaspora youth. The participants visited various places in Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh covering different elements of the Programme.

Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD)

Under the PCTD scheme, the Ministry provides grants to Indian Missions/Posts abroad to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the overseas Indian community, and to preserve, maintain and showcase their Indian heritage and culture. The scheme aims to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its diaspora. The grants are also provided to think-tanks and organisations in India which organise events pertaining to the overseas Indian community. The scheme has been expanded over the years to include events felicitating retired veterans, recognition of Indian teaching community abroad, and engagement with Indian students abroad. The financial assistance of about INR 3.85 crore have been sanctioned to 52 Missions/Posts abroad to conduct diaspora events under this scheme.

Videsh Sampark Programme

MEA organises state outreach programmes under the "Videsh Sampark Programme", which is an in-depth dialogue between

the Ministry and the State governments. These state outreach events are organised in partnership with the State Governments to seek cooperation in addressing issues pertaining to welfare and protection of our citizens abroad and to brief the State officials on Ministry's initiatives on engagement and welfare of the overseas Indian community and curbing illegal migration. Videsh Sampark Programmes were conducted with the states of Punjab and Haryana this year.

Global Pravasi Rishta Portal

Global Pravasi Rishta portal is an online digital portal launched to connect Diaspora (NRI, PIO, and OCI) with Government of India through Missions/Posts abroad. The portal facilitates three-way communication between the Ministry, Missions/Posts abroad, and the diaspora, which is used for dissemination of information and creation of a database of overseas Indians based on voluntary registration. As of December, a total of 45,718 diaspora members have registered themselves on the Portal.

Assistance to Distressed Women affected by Marital Disputes

The Ministry receives a large number of complaints regarding marital issues, including abandonment, desertion, harassment, and child custody cases, involving distressed women married to overseas Indians. The aggrieved women are provided appropriate counselling, guidance, and information about legal procedures and mechanisms in such cases. The Ministry, including Missions/Posts abroad, has addressed 1187 such complaints from 01 January to 31 October.

Student Issues

There are about 9 lakh Indian students pursuing higher education abroad. Several issues related to Indian students enrolled in foreign educational institutions are addressed by the Division, in consultation with the territorial division and Missions/Posts abroad, such as refund of fees, problems in admissions and fraud cases and so on. The Ministry also facilitated ease of travel restrictions after the pandemic or resolving the visa issuance issues concerning the Indian students by taking up the matter with respective foreign governments.

OE and PGE Division

A large number of Indians go abroad for employment. The process of emigration of Indian workers, with Emigration Clearance Required (ECR) category passports, is regulated under the Emigration Act, 1983, which is administered by the

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The Protector General of Emigrants (PGE) enforces the Emigration act with the help of 14 offices of the Protector of Emigrants (POEs) located at Mumbai, Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Raebareli, Patna, Bengaluru, Guwahati and Ranchi. In order to expand the outreach of the PoEs, the ministry has established additional PoE offices in Patna, Bengaluru and Guwahati, which are fully functional. As of now, setting up of 3 new PoE offices in Tripura, Bhubaneswar, and Ahmedabad is underway and the offices are expected to be fully operational in the year 2024.

Recruiting Agents (RA) are required to obtain Registration Certificate (RC) from the PGE before they can engage in recruitment of Indian workers for overseas employment. Emigration of ECR category passport holders is regulated by way of grant of Emigration Clearance by any of the 14 POEs. This is for employment in any of the 18 notified ECR countries, namely, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen. Presently, granting of Emigration Clearance has been suspended for Iraq, Libya, Syria and Yemen due to prevailing conditions there.

The e-Migrate Project

E-Migrate is a comprehensive e-Governance portal developed to facilitate safe and legal migration of Indian workers abroad. This initiative was taken to make the emigration process fast and transparent and to address various complaints. The project was operationalised in a phased manner from 26 May 2014 onwards for various POE offices and the process of granting of Emigration Clearance (EC) through all POE offices was made completely online with effect from 25 September 2014.

At present, approximately 1000 Emigration Clearance applications are processed daily through 14 POE offices. The e-Migrate portal has been a huge success since its launch and has registered more than 42 lakh Indian migrant workers employed with more than two lakh registered Foreign Employers worldwide through around two thousand registered Recruitment Agents in India. The e-Migrate online portal (<https://emigrate.gov.in>) has been integrated with Passport Seva Project (PSP) of the MEA for validation of passport details of all emigrant workers registering on the eMigrate portal. The system is also integrated with the portal of the Bureau of Immigration (BoI) of the Ministry of Home Affairs that is being used at Immigration Check Posts (ICPs) and international airports across India for online validation of the Emigration Clearance granted by the POEs.

The Government has taken several steps to safeguard the interests of Indian emigrants. These include:

- (i) The on-line MADAD portal enables the emigrant workers and their family members to register their consular grievances on-line and track their redressal.
- (ii) Grievances related to Overseas Employment in notified Emigration Check Required (ECR) countries can also be lodged on e-Migrate portal directly by emigrants/relatives or through the Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras (PBSK). These grievances are settled by respective jurisdictional Protectors of Emigrants (PoEs) as per laid down procedures. PBSKs have been set up in New Delhi and at Dubai (UAE), Sharjah (UAE), Riyadh, Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia) and Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), to provide guidance and counselling on all matters pertaining to overseas Indian workers. Kshetriya Pravasi Sahayata Kendras (KPSK) have also been set up in Delhi, Kochi, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow and Patna to assist emigrants or their relatives to redress their problems/complaints regarding overseas employment.
- (iii) Missions/Posts have also established 24x7 Helplines and Toll Free Helplines for the benefit of Indian workers to seek help.
- (iv) Grievances brought to the notice of the Ministry and the Missions through social media, including twitter, are promptly addressed.
- (v) The Government of India has set up Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) for use by Indian Missions/Posts abroad to provide necessary assistance, on means tested basis, to Indian citizens abroad and their dependents in times of distress including in the process of transportation of mortal remains to India or local cremation with consent of the family and settlement of death claims. The ICWF was set up in 2009 to assist overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency. During the period from 2014 to 2023, an amount of INR 626 crores of ICWF fund has been utilised for assisting 3,42,543 Indians in distress in foreign countries. Since the year 2014 till 2023, legal assistance by Indian Missions/Posts abroad was extended to 3321 Indian nationals, Boarding and Lodging assistance was provided to 1,70,402 Indian nationals, Emergency medical care provided to 10,515 distressed Indian nationals, air passage to 37,459 stranded Indians, and 3,461 mortal remains of Indian nationals were airlifted.
- (vi) To protect female domestic workers from exploitation or harassment in the destination country, the Ministry has made the issue of Emigration Clearance, for female workers

going for employment in 18 ECR countries, mandatory only through 11 state-run recruiting agencies which are as follows:

- (a) NORKA Roots;
- (b) ODEPC of Kerala;
- (c) OMCL of Tamil Nadu;
- (d) UPFC of Uttar Pradesh;
- (e) OMCAP of Andhra Pradesh;
- (f) TOMCOM of Telangana;
- (g) RSLDC of Rajasthan;
- (h) KUWSSB of Karnataka;
- (i) KVTSDC of Karnataka;
- (j) M/s Pan IIT alumni Reach for Jharkhand Foundation of Jharkhand and
- (k) Bihar State Overseas Placement Bureau of Bihar.

CHAPTER

24

States Division

States Division as per its mandate facilitated external outreach of States and Union Territories through the network of Indian Missions and Posts abroad and through MEA Branch Secretariats. This mandate was pursued proactively, and events to facilitate diplomatic outreach of States/UTs, and promotion of economic diplomacy at the state level were organised.

The States Division is the main agency for the MEA to liaise with States and Union Territories through their Resident Commissioners in New Delhi. Signing of several MoUs between State Governments and their entities with foreign counterparts was facilitated on trade/investment promotion, skill development, agriculture research, among other things. The Division also processed and facilitated Sister City/State agreements to establish friendly and cooperative relations between Indian States and Cities with foreign provinces and cities. Details of important events held/facilitated are given below.

Events Organised/Facilitated by the States Division

The Division facilitated the 7th edition of Madhya Pradesh Global Investors Summit held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh from 10-13 January 2023.

The Division facilitated the International Diplomatic Event in

New Delhi on 31 January. This was the Curtain Raiser event for Andhra Pradesh's Global Investors Summit.

The Division facilitated the 5th Progressive Punjab Investors Summit on 23 and 24 February at the Indian School of Business (ISB), Mohali, Punjab.

The Division facilitated the Andhra Pradesh's Global Investors Summit from 03-04 March held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh, encouraging international partners to invest in the state.

Two Webinars on 31 May and 02 June were hosted to promote Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show (UPITS) in which representatives from MEA Headquarters, from Indian Missions/Posts in select partner countries and from Uttar Pradesh Government participated. This trade show will now be the flagship event at the same venue, as an annual fixture around the same time every year.

The Division facilitated participation of Foreign Diplomats in New Delhi for interaction on Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit 2024 on 06 October in New Delhi, graced by EAM and Chief Minister of Gujarat.

States Division provided orientation training/ briefing about the working of States Division in the promotion of States/ Union Territories to Officer Trainees and other officials, including Assistant Secretaries.

Funds Disbursed Under States Facilitation Abroad

An amount of Rs. 6.94 Crore was sanctioned under “State Facilitation Funds” to Indian Mission/Posts abroad. Allocation of additional funds from this budget head is under process. These funds were utilised by our Missions/Posts to promote States and Union Territories abroad.

Funds Disbursed Under States Facilitation and Knowledge Support

States Division sanctioned funds to the Branch Secretariats of the Ministry. The Guwahati Branch Secretariat organised the 2nd North East Buyer Seller Meet while the Kolkata Branch Secretariat and the Thiruvananthapuram Regional Passport Office (RPO) organised various State Promotion Activities.

Twinning of Cities/States/UTs, MoUs Between States/UTs and Foreign Entities

S .No.	Subject	Parties	MEA's NOC Date/signed
1.	Memorandum of Agreement	Punjab Agricultural University, Ludhiana Punjab and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Vienna, Austria.	18 January
2.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between Handlooms, Handicrafts, Textiles and Khadi Department of the Government of Tamilnadu and Danish Water Forum.	06 February
3.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the Government of Uttar Pradesh (Invest UP) and SIPO, Singapore.	09 February
4.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the Government of Maharashtra, Republic of India and Wakayama Prefectural, Government of Japan.	10 February
5.	Twinning Agreement	Agreement between Fukuoka Prefectural Government (FPG), Japan and Govt. of NCT of Delhi.	29 March
6.	Memorandum of Understanding	MoU among Olympic Foundation for Culture and Heritage, Government of Madhya Pradesh and Abhinav Bindra Foundation Trust.	20 April
7.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the Economic Development Board (EDB) of Mauritius and Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDB), Government of Maharashtra, India.	04 May
8.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIPCOT) and the Singapore-India Partnership Office (SIPO), Ministry of Trade and Industry, Republic of Singapore on Cooperation in Economic Activities and Development.	26 May
9.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the Board of Trustees of the Royal Botanic Gardens Kew and Tamil Nadu Green Climate Company.	26 July
10.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the State Government of Uttar Pradesh and the Government of Nuevo Leon, Mexico on Mutual Cooperation.	05 August
11.	Memorandum of Understanding	Between the State of Rajasthan and Australia India Water Centre (AIWC)	06 November
12.	Memorandum of Understanding	Delhi Board of School Education, Department of Education, Delhi and the Fukuoka Prefectural Board of Education, Japan	20 November
13.	Memorandum of Understanding	Fukuoka Institute of Technology and Delhi Board of School Education, Department of Education, Delhi	20 November
14.	Memorandum of Understanding	Industries, Investment Promotion & Commerce Department Guidance Tamil Nadu and Commerce, Industries and Labor Bureau, Government of Hiroshima Prefecture	01 December

Facilitation of Visit of Foreign Dignitaries

Visits of several foreign Delegations/ Ambassadors based in New Delhi to various States/Union Territories of India during the period 01 January to 30 November were facilitated.

Clearance to North Eastern State Projects, Funded by External Agencies

During the period of January till November MEA's approval to 18 Externally Aided Projects to be undertaken in North Eastern States (Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur and Nagaland), funded by multilateral and bilateral agencies such as WB, ADB, JICA, NDB, AIIB, among others was processed.

For systemic ease of processing, the States Division facilitated inclusion of additional rows/information in Preliminary Project Report (PPR) for information regarding border districts and inter-boundary rivers involved in the projects.

CHAPTER

25

New Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) & Cyber Diplomacy

NEST

New Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) Division was set up in January 2020. The mandate of the Division is to assess the strategic and foreign policy implications of new, emerging, and strategic technologies for India. Additionally, the Division functions as a nodal point to coordinate Indian positions on governance norms, standards, and rules in emerging technologies in multilateral fora, including at the UN and relevant international organisations. Furthermore, NEST helps build policy interfaces with key partner countries and assists internal stakeholders in India to pursue demand driven technological pathways.

The Emerging Technologies Initiative was launched in August 2020 by NEST Division in partnership with the Office of the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India and the Science Policy Forum. The Initiative aims to crowd-source Expressions of Intent (Eols) on emerging technologies. The Division was instrumental in helping India join the Global

Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI) as a founding member, in June 2020. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) is a nodal point of contact that represents India at the GPAI proceedings. The election for the three government seats at the GPAI council, comprising one Incoming Council Chair and 2 government seats was held in October 2022. India won the election and will continue to serve as the Council Chair until 2025. In its capacity as the incoming Chair for 2023, India hosted the GAPI Ministerial Summit from 12-14 December in New Delhi.

During the past one year, India has taken forward-looking positions on language regarding collaboration in emerging technologies which has been deliberated in statements in a plurilateral or regional context and examined by NEST. The Division and Indian Missions have contributed to the knowledge database for the National Mission on AI, National Hydrogen Energy Mission, National Deep Ocean Mission, amongst others. Several other papers and analysis briefs have also been circulated to line Ministries and Departments of the Government of India, which handled initiatives such as Quantum Mission,

National Education Policy 2020, National Programme on Advanced Chemistry Cell (ACC) Battery Storage, and National Semiconductor Mission.

During the year, the Division also provided its inputs on various policy documents forwarded by line Ministries on various new and emerging technologies. Issue briefs on critical and strategic minerals, emerging technology application in healthcare, life sciences research, data security, agriculture, border management, have also been circulated, receiving positive feedback from line Ministries. As a part of a wider outreach strategy, the Division has been circulating a monthly NEST Newsletter, detailing and tracking various developments related to new and emerging technologies within India.

The Division organised several discussions and briefing sessions on new, emerging, strategic and critical technologies such as semiconductors, green hydrogen, artificial intelligence, and Geo-spatial technology, with various stakeholders which included concerned ministries, industry representatives, Indian Missions abroad and the Ministry. The discussions helped the stakeholders develop an understanding of various policy initiatives of the Government regarding these technologies and explore cooperation in these areas with foreign countries.

During the year, the Division officials also participated in the "Cyber and Tech Retreat" organised by the Government of Denmark and Australia in San Francisco on 15-17 May; the "Global DPI Summit" held in Pune on 13 and 14 June; "Semicon India 2023" in Gandhinagar on 28-30 July; "Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipation (GESDA) Summit" in Geneva on 11-13 October; "Geo Smart India" organised by Geospatial World Chamber of Commerce on 17-19 October; "Energy Security Conference" organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs on 24 November; and "Bengaluru Tech Summit (BTS)" held in Bengaluru on 29 November-01 December.

Cyber Diplomacy

Cyber Diplomacy (CD) Division of the Ministry is a specialised division dealing with international cyber governance issues and is engaged with countries at bilateral, regional, and multilateral fora, including the United Nations. India has been actively participating in and contributing to Cyber Dialogues/Conferences and Conventions to voice its views, shape global cyber policies and strengthen its cyber security. In keeping with its commitment to a multi-stakeholder model of cyber governance, India has engaged in activities with the private sector, civil society, and academia to shape and strategize cyber policy. The Division engaged in bilateral cyber consultations with strategic countries. They were done in consultation with other Government of India stakeholders viz. National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS), Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), Ministry of Electronics and information technology (MeitY),

Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre (NCIIPC), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), and Department of Telecommunication (DoT).

(i) Bilateral relations with Individual countries:

In 2023, Joint Secretary level cyber dialogues were held including the Second India-Netherlands Cyber Dialogue in New Delhi on 03 February, the 5th India-Japan Cyber Dialogue held in Tokyo on 14 September and the 7th India-EU Cyber Dialogue held in Brussels on 05 October.

ii) Regional and Multilateral cooperation in the area of cyber issues:

Various dialogues were hosted including the G20 Cyber Security Exercise and Drill for more than 400 Domestic and international participants under India's G 20 Presidency (31 January), the G20 Cyber Security Exercise for Banking Sector under India's G 20 Presidency in Mumbai (05 June), the G20 Conference on Crime and Security in the age of NFTs, AI and Metaverse in Gurugram (13 and 14 July). Additionally, the CD Division with G20 Secretariat successfully negotiated a Chair's Summary as an outcome document. India also facilitated Asia-regional Multi-Stakeholder Consultations to elaborate on the United Nations Global Digital Compact (GDC), which was organised in partnership with Germany Foreign Office, GIZ and the UN Tech Envoy Ambassador in New Delhi with strong Indian and international participation (21 and 22 March). CD Division successfully negotiated a draft statement for Heads of State of SCO Member Statement on Cooperation in Digital Transformation which was finalised for the SCO Summit.

India also participated in the Fourth (09-20 January), Fifth (11-21 April) and Sixth (21 August-1 September) meetings of the UN Ad Hoc Committee to Elaborate a Comprehensive International Convention on Countering the Use of Information and Communications Technologies for Criminal Purposes, established by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 74/247. Also participated in the Fourth (6 - 10 March) and Fifth (24-28 July) substantive sessions meeting of the UN Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on the security of and in the use of ICTs 2021-2025, established pursuant to General Assembly resolution 75/240. India played a key role in negotiations to adopt an outcome document Annual Progress Report (APR) of the OEWG during the fifth substantive session and India's proposed Global Cyber Security Cooperation Portal (GCSCP) as a capacity building initiative in the United Nations found mention in the APR.

India also participated in the “Diplomatic and Capacity Building” track of the ‘Counter Ransomware Initiative’ to prevent and combat ransomware attacks on the critical information infrastructure of India. The 11th ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Open-Ended Study Group (OESG) on Confidence Building Measures (CBM) to reduce the risk of conflict stemming from ICT and 5th Inter-sessional meeting on security of and in the use of ICTs were held in Moscow, Russia in hybrid mode (27 and 28 April).

The 9th Meeting of the BRICS Working Group on Security in the use of ICTs held at Johannesburg, South Africa (16-19 May), the ARF Workshop on Fostering Professionals in the field of Security of and in the use of ICTs held in Ha Noi, Vietnam (13 June), the second ARF Workshop on Terminology in the field of

Security of and in the use of ICTs in the context of Confidence Building held in virtual mode (21 June), the BRICS Incident Management Workshop (06 September), the Cyber Maitree 2023, a cyber-security training and exercise program held in Dhaka, Bangladesh (02-04 October), the ASEAN Cert Incident Drill (ACID) cyber-security drill and virtual TTX (18 and 19 October), the Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (APCERT) AGM held virtually (08 November) and Asia Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team Conference held virtually (09 November), the Third edition of the Africa Cyber Drill in Maputo, Mozambique (09 and 10 November) and the Expert Group Meeting of the SCO Member States on International Information Security held in Beijing, China in virtual mode (15-17 November) also saw participation from India.

CHAPTER

26

Protocol Division

The Protocol Division of the Ministry is responsible for handling high-level foreign visits of Indian dignitaries abroad and visits to India by foreign counterparts. The Division also provides support for the organisation of international conferences and meetings held in India and is responsible for the welfare of the Resident Diplomatic Corps including matters of their privileges and immunity.

During the year, the Division successfully supported the organisation of the G20 Summit on 09 and 10 September in New Delhi which saw participation of 43 Heads of Delegation and was the largest diplomatic event hosted by India. The Division also facilitated 9 State visits, 9 official visits at the HoG/HoS level and 41 Vice President/Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister level visits to India. The Division provided support to organise important events such as the G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting, G20 Development Ministers' Meeting, SCO Foreign Ministers' Meeting, and International Olympic Committee Meeting. It was also instrumental in supporting the organisation of 9 virtual (Annexure XII) International Conferences including the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and 1st and 2nd Voice of Global South Summit in 2023.

The Division helped organise the visit of the Hon'ble President to two countries, the Vice-President to one country and the Prime Minister to 11 countries. It also organised a Credentials Presentation (Annexure XV) Ceremony for 38 new Heads of Mission. During the period, two new Resident Foreign Missions

were opened in New Delhi taking the total of such foreign Missions to 156. In the same period, 2 new Consulates General and 6 new honorary Consulates were opened. The year saw an addition of 106 new diplomatic posts in the Foreign Diplomatic Corps in India.

The Division coordinates the establishment of property-related issues of foreign diplomatic Missions and International Organisations. It is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the historic Hyderabad House. The Division helped organize the excursion trips for Resident Heads of Mission, including to Ayodhya and Varanasi during the year. The Division facilitated more than six thousand five hundred requests for facilitation at the airport and helped organise 498 entertainment events at the level of HoS/HoG/Ministers/Secretaries. Additionally, the Division worked with the Air Force for the upgradation and expansion of VIP handling capacity at AFS Palam with three additional receptoriums being added, enhancing the capacity to handle four international arrivals simultaneously.

Protocol – I Section

India assumed the presidency of the G20 Forum on 01 December 2022. G20 meetings were held in 60 Indian cities. The Division successfully coordinated the G20 Summit on 09 and 10 September in New Delhi. Under the G20, it also coordinated the Foreign Ministers' Meeting from 01-02 March in New Delhi

and the Development Ministers' Meeting from 11-13 June in Varanasi. The Summit witnessed the participation of 43 Heads of Delegation, the most ever in the history of G20. It was the largest diplomatic event ever hosted by India.

Protocol-I section is mandated to handle incoming visits of Heads of State/Heads of Government/Vice-President and Foreign Minister (Annexure XIV), outgoing visits of the Hon'ble President, Vice President and Prime Minister (Annexure XIII) entertainment (official lunches, dinners and receptions on behalf of the Ministry) and ceremonial functions, airport passes, access to ceremonial and reserve lounge. Protocol-I Section facilitated around 6500 requests for airport passes, lounges (ceremonial and reserved) and exemption from frisking during the period. Also, 498 entertainment events at the level of HoG/Minister/Secretaries were handled during the period.

Protocol – III Section

Protocol-III Section has carried out various duties during the period from 01 January - 31 October), which are as follows:

- (i) Providing Protocol facilities to Heads of Missions on their first arrival and final departure (Annexure XVI).
- (ii) Arranging the Credential Ceremony online and in Rashtrapati Bhawan, where incoming Heads of Missions hand over their Credential papers to the Hon'ble President of India.
- (iii) Facilitating Heads of and diplomats (wherever applicable) during Republic Day, Independence Day, Joint Session of Parliament, Swearing-in Ceremony of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, and Yoga Day.
- (iv) Processing permanent Airport Entry passes every year with respect to foreign diplomatic missions/posts in India subject to reciprocity, which is determined after obtaining and scrutinizing inputs from all our missions/posts abroad.
- (v) Approval for establishing new Consulates General, Deputy High Commissions, Trade Offices, and Cultural Centers.
- (vi) Appointment of Honorary Consuls, Consuls General, Deputy High Commissions (Head of Posts for Commonwealth countries) of foreign countries and preparing Exequaturs/ Gazette Notification thereafter.
- (vii) Processing approval of installation of Satellite Earth Stations in foreign mission premises.
- (viii) Processing approval regarding awards given by foreign countries to Indian Officials.
- (ix) Appointment of Defense Attaches and defense personnel in foreign diplomatic missions. Processing for approval of creation of new diplomatic or official posts in foreign diplomatic missions.
- (x) Arranging Chief Guest for National Days of foreign countries celebrated by foreign missions in India and ensuring maintenance of protocol guidelines in the venue.
- (xi) Forwarding messages from VVIP (Hon'ble President, Vice President, Prime Minister, EAM) to Heads of State and Heads of Government of foreign countries. Onward transmission of Messages from Heads of State and Heads of Government of foreign countries to Hon'ble President, Vice President, Prime Minister, EAM and Government of India Officials.
- (xii) Handling court cases pertaining to payment-related disputes between foreign diplomatic missions and Indian local staff.
- (xiii) Courtesy requests by HOM/HOPs and other official work entrusted.
- (xiv) Extending protocol facilitation to Heads of Mission and other diplomats during Independence Day and managing the concerned enclosures in tandem with the Ministry of Defence.

List of Resident Missions/ Trade offices/ Consulate Generals/Deputy High Commissions/ Honorary Consuls approved from 01 January to 31 October 2023:

- **Resident Missions:** Cameroon, Moldova
- **Trade Offices:** Nil
- **Cultural Centres:** Nil
- **Consulate Generals/ Deputy High Commissions:**
 1. Spain- Bengaluru
 2. Czech Republic- Mumbai
- **Honorary Consulate Generals/ Honorary Consulates:**
 1. Albania – New Delhi
 2. Romania- Kolkata
 3. Djibouti – Mumbai
 4. Hungary – Ahmedabad
 5. Tunisia – Mumbai
 6. Romania - Mumbai

Month-wise list of newly created posts in Foreign Diplomatic Missions in India from 01 January to 31 October 2023

Annual Report for Creation of New Posts from 01 January to 31 October	
January	11
February	20
March	11
April	4
May	11
June	18
July	7
August	4
September	9
October	11
TOTAL	106

Protocol Housing Section

The Protocol Housing section looks after establishment-related matters of foreign diplomatic Missions and International

Organizations in India. These include clearances for the purchase, sale or lease of property and allotment or lease of land in the diplomatic enclave. The section acted as liaison between Foreign Missions and International Organisations (Ios) with Housing Departments, Municipal and Civic bodies like the Land and Development Office (L&DO), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), Delhi Development Authority (DDA), Jal Board, Electricity Board, Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) in Delhi and with the Governments in other states. It also liaised in matters of disputes and court cases between foreign Missions and Indian property owners.

The Section is also responsible inter alia, for the maintenance and upkeep of Hyderabad House, and it carried this out in coordination with the civil, electrical and horticulture departments of the Central Public Works Department (CPWD). In addition, the section also effectively managed ITDC's contract for operations and catering at Hyderabad House as well as contractual obligations of maintenance of the VIP Receptorium at Air Force Station Palam, New Delhi.

With the resolution of a legal case in 2023, the Protocol Housing Section has also resumed coordination with various stakeholders on the second Diplomatic Enclave Project in Dwarka, New Delhi.

CHAPTER

27

External Publicity & Public Diplomacy

External Publicity and Public Diplomacy (XPD) Division continued with its efforts to effectively articulate India's position on key foreign policy issues in accordance with its mandate. Simultaneously, proactive efforts to project the 'India Story' and other notable achievements of the country to an international audience continued apace.

Engagement with the Media

Press Coverage

G20 Summit: The Division handled the media vertical of India's G20 Presidency. G20 media vertical facilitated press and media coverage, information dissemination and other media-related information and communication outreach for more than 200 G20 meetings held in over 60 cities across the country. G20 Media Vertical also handled social media outreach through social media platforms, G20 Website, and the Mobile App.

The Division also provided media facilitation and coverage for the G20 Summit and the Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit. It designed and operated a state-of-the-art International Media

Centre at the Bharat Mandapam Complex for the G20 Summit. More than 3000 media persons from India and abroad attended the G20 Summit. The Division also organised G20 Presidency press briefings and facilitated press conferences and media interactions with the visiting dignitaries, besides facilitating media coverage of various bilateral and side events during the G20 Summit.

The Division also provided support to the Lok Sabha Secretariat in media facilitation and social media outreach for the P20 Summit.

Engagement with Foreign Media

Familiarisation Visits

To enhance awareness about India abroad and to encourage media exchanges, the Division organises familiarisation visits of foreign journalists to India. During the financial year 2023-24, a total of 11 such visits are planned that include journalists from Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles, Nepal, Bangladesh, Israel, ASEAN, Gulf, Latin America & Caribbean countries (LAC), African

countries, G-20 member countries, and Central European (CE) countries.

Since January 2023, a total of 158 journalists/editors from Gulf countries (Bahrain, Oman, Saudi Arabia & Egypt), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries, LAC, Maldives, G-20 countries (including permanent invitees) and Bangladesh visited India under this programme. Additionally, 8 Indian media persons also visited Indonesia and Malaysia under the ASEAN-India Media Exchange Programme. A visit of 32 journalists from 16 African countries to India was organised from 09 to 16 December. During the visit, media delegations had interactions/meetings with our leadership and various government and private organisations/institutes in Delhi and other major cities across the country.

Digital Outreach

Social Media Platforms

The Ministry has been at the forefront in involving different platforms of social media and digital diplomacy for the dissemination of information on the Ministry's and Missions'/Posts' activities within the country as well as across the world. The Ministry has made significant growth in followers across multiple social media platforms including Twitter (X), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Flickr, Soundcloud and LinkedIn.

1. In terms of presence on social media, 198 Indian Missions/Posts have a presence on Twitter (X), 194 Missions/Posts have a presence on Facebook and 138 Missions have a presence on Instagram. Missions and Posts continue to remain engaged with the Indian community and diaspora and also the local population in respective countries with the increased use of social media platforms. Missions and Posts have also increased their presence and engagements on social media platforms compared to the previous year.
2. Twitter (X) is one of the most vital media for providing important information about the Ministry to the general public. For this purpose, the Division maintains two Twitter (X) handles, viz. Official Spokesperson's handle (@MEAIndia) and the Public Diplomacy handle (@IndianDiplomacy). @MEAIndia has around 2.3 million followers and @IndianDiplomacy has around 1.5 million followers.
3. @MEAIndia continues to be one of the most followed Twitter (X) handles among all Foreign Ministries across the world. The Twitter (X) handle is used to provide updates on India's foreign policy which also includes information on important decisions taken during an incoming or outgoing visit by a dignitary or delegation. Information is disseminated on a real-time basis whenever there is a bilateral or multilateral meeting. Moreover, the content has

been creative and audio-visual rich so that the information could reach quicker and in an efficient way to the targeted audience.

4. The Division maintains two YouTube channels – MEA India and Indian Diplomacy to engage with the audience. There are approximately 2.15 lakh subscribers on MEA India channel and 1.53 lakh subscribers on the Indian Diplomacy channel, making the total subscribers count as 3.68 lakh. Both channels have a combined count of around 39.5 million views.
5. Acknowledging the increased enthusiasm for Instagram among the youth, the Division has actively been engaged on the platform with approximately 9.26 lakh followers. Like on Twitter (X), the content has been creative and audio-visual rich so that it could reach the youth quickly.
6. Flickr (MEAphtogallery) and SoundCloud (MEAIndia) accounts maintained by the Division continue to serve as photos and audio clip repositories for MEA's major events, including the events abroad. MEAphtogallery has a database of about 46700 High-quality photos. MEAIndia SoundCloud account continues to remain a rich repository to access audio and video clips of all media briefings which are uploaded on YouTube.

During the previous year, information on various Operations carried out by the Government of India like Operation Dost, Operation Kaveri and Operation Ajay has also been shared through digital media platforms to the general public.

During the periods of India's G20 and SCO Presidencies, information on a number of G20 and SCO meetings and related events were also proactively shared with the general public through social media platforms. The Ministry along with the Missions abroad has also been engaged in various Government campaigns through digital media platforms such as Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and observation/celebrations of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, International Day of Yoga, Constitution Day, Republic Day, Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti Parakram Diwas, Janjatiya Gaurav Diwas, Good Governance Day.

Visual Outreach – Films and Documentaries

The Division commissions documentaries aimed at the projection of India's image abroad. Links to the documentaries/publicity films commissioned by the division were shared with Indian Missions/Posts abroad for local publicity. Bollywood/Regional Movies with non-commercial screening rights were procured and supplied/shared with Indian Missions/Posts abroad through FTP links/DVDs in order to organise film festivals. In addition, non-commercial screening rights of films were also shared with Missions by directly contacting film-makers.

The Division also assisted Missions in organising exhibitions and other publicity activities. A customised set of popular Indian Classical/Bollywood Music Cards were procured for sending to Missions/Posts abroad for gifting purposes.

High-resolution photographs of national leaders, patriots, historic places, pilgrimage sites, tourist places, world heritage sites, Indian art and architecture are made available to our Missions in digital format as per their request.

A File Transfer Protocol was also developed to facilitate Missions with various film screenings of regional films procured by the division to propagate regional languages of India through our Missions abroad. A dedicated website is used for this purpose.

Documentary/short films completed this year:

1. Short film 'What MEA does'
2. Short film on the life and contribution of Bharat Ratna Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee
3. Short film on India - Pacific Island Countries Relations
4. Short film on Agartala- Akhaura Rail link & Maitri Power Plant in Bangladesh
5. Short film on Operation Dost

Commissioned Documentaries and short films

The Division is currently working on the commissioning of short films on the following topics, many of which are in various stages of production/completion:

1. India – Africa relations
2. India- Central Asia relations
3. India- ASEAN Partnership
4. India- Latin America relations
5. India- BRICS Cooperation
6. India-BIMSTEC Cooperation

Financial assistance to Missions

- Financial Assistance for subtitling/dubbing of 6 Bollywood

and regional movies into Spanish language.

- Financial Assistance for Radio Program in Spanish language to promote Indian culture.

Voice Over/Dubbing/Subtitling works

- Voice over video on Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) in English language.
- Subtitling 6 Bollywood and regional films in the Korean language for the Indian Film Festival in the Republic of Korea.

Public Outreach

On the occasion of the 76th Independence Day and 73rd Republic Day, the Division commissioned articles for publication, authored by various retired Indian diplomats and eminent authors. The division also organised a distinguished Lecture Series in which a series of lectures were delivered by retired Ambassadors in different universities, institutes and centres of excellence located in different parts of the country.

The Division also produced a 10-minute video medley on Indian cultural heritage, landscape, diversity, vibrancy, and uniqueness of India for dissemination by Indian Missions abroad on various occasions. It also produced a shorter 2-minute version of the same.

It also produced booklets on the Prime Minister's visit to the USA, a coffee table book on India's G20 Presidency, and other booklets on G20 (G20 University Connect, The Grand Success of G20 Bharat Presidency) for distribution to delegates and media.

Books and Periodicals

Book Committee

The Book Committee was established in 2003 as a public diplomacy tool to select books for supplying to Missions/posts abroad as well as for presentation purposes.

The 44th Book Committee meeting was organised in November. Approximately 400 titles were selected from several categories namely Indian Classics, Foreign Policy and Strategic Affairs, Technology and Popular Science, Hindi and Sanskrit, Art and culture, Religion and Spirituality, Children's Books and Politics and Economy.

CHAPTER

28

Administration, Establishment, Global Estate Management & Right to Information

Administration

The Administration Division in the Ministry plays a crucial role in managing human resources at its headquarters and in Indian Missions/Posts abroad. This involves overseeing cadre management exercises including recruitment, training, postings/transfers, deputations, and career progression. The division is also responsible for formulating and amending rules and regulations about Indian personnel posted abroad and local employees serving in Indian missions and posts.

As of December 2023, the current sanctioned strength of the Ministry stands at 4628 (Annexure XVII). Out of this, 53.1 percent are located in Missions and Posts abroad. These positions spanned various cadres within the Ministry, such as the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), IFS General Cadre, Branch B, Stenographers Cadre, Interpreters Cadre, Legal and Treaties Cadre.

The Ministry also periodically reorganised its divisions and their responsibilities to adapt to new developments and functional

priorities. Presently, there are 58 divisions within the Ministry, reflecting its diverse operational requirements.

The Ministry received the approval of the Union Cabinet for the 5th Cadre Review of the Indian Foreign Service and the opening of 09 new Missions to be implemented between 2023-27. These were aimed at keeping the Ministry's personnel requirements in line with India's expanding diplomatic footprint, enabling the growth of bilateral trade, investment, and economic engagements, bolstering political outreach in multilateral fora, and helping garner support for India's foreign policy objectives. Further, the Cabinet had approved the opening of a new Mission in Timor Leste, as well as consulates in Marseilles and Brisbane. These initiatives are part of the ongoing endeavours to enhance India's diplomatic footprint globally.

Additionally, the division had actively deployed technological tools such as the MEA e-Samiksha portal, Ministry of External Affairs Digital Online Working System (MEADOWS) and e-Office to provide an online interface between Headquarters and the Missions/Posts, for streamlining applications for postings to

Mission/Posts and to move towards paperless office respectively. The division used the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) portal to hire its manpower and vehicle suppliers.

The Ministry continued with the MEA Internships Programme, aimed at bringing foreign policy closer to the people and encouraging youth to participate and contribute to decision-making in Indian foreign policy. In 2023, the MEA Internship Programme received an enthusiastic response, and sixty students were offered internships over two terms, which helped showcase the commitment to nurture future talent in foreign policy and diplomacy.

The efficient management of human resources, the strategic expansion of diplomatic presence, a people-centric approach, and the adoption of modern technological tools all underscore the dynamic and forward-thinking approach of the Division in fulfilling its critical responsibilities within the Ministry.

Establishment

The Ministry observed a special campaign for Swachhta from 01-15 January and 15 September - 31 October wherein all MEA offices, RPOs/POEs/Branch Secretariat, Missions/Posts abroad and local community participated with 'Shramdaan' and 'Jan Bhagidaari'. Under these campaigns, special emphasis was given to weeding out of old files (approximately 4 lakhs), disposal of scrap and cleanliness.

The Division played a very active role in G20-related activities and the Summit during 2023 wherein Sushma Swaraj Bhawan (SSB) was transformed into G20 Secretariat. Apart from maintaining the SSB and its conference halls/meeting rooms/equipment, all requirements of the G20 Secretariat viz. office equipment, telecommunication including DVC, and stationery items were also supplied for smooth functioning. It also furnished and readied 20 transit flats at Thyagraj Nagar Complex for the officers deputed to G20 Summit. The flats are now being used as a transit facility for Ministry officers coming to Delhi on official visits, transfer, transit, and home leave.

The Division provided assistance in establishing MEA Control Rooms in Jawaharlal Nehru Bhawan (JNB) for assisting Indian nationals regarding their repatriation from Sudan and Israel in April and October respectively.

The Division was the nodal point for the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign' from 08-14 August at all the Ministry's offices in New Delhi and motivated its officials to participate in the campaign and make it a grand success.

During 2023, the Division dealt with over 500 proposals from Missions/Posts abroad for various requirements including purchase/replacement of official vehicles, procurement of carpets/curtains, Annual Maintenance Contracts for house-keeping, liveries etc. The Division also dealt with over 60

proposals from RPOs/PSKs for housekeeping services. A total of 586 gifts were received by Toshakhana till 30 November out of which 500 gifts have been evaluated by the Customs Appraiser.

The Division ensured over 90 percent of official procurements through the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Portal. In association with the officials of Government e Marketplace (GeM), a training programme on 'GeM' was organised by the Division on 12 October. The sessions along with presentations on establishment matters were also held by officers of the division during the training programmes organised by the SSIFS in 2023.

Global Estate Management (GEM)

The Global Estate Management Division actively pursued the acquisition, construction, redevelopment and renovation of properties for Indian Missions/Posts abroad and RPOs/ICCR/POEs/Branch Secretariats within India. The initiative to augment the available residential accommodation in New Delhi for officers of the Ministry was taken ahead to effectively address the existing shortfall in the availability of such accommodation and to meet housing requirements in the long term.

Acquisition of plots of land in Washington DC (for Chancery), Paramaribo (for Chancery, Cultural Facilities & Residences) and Port Louis (to develop as a 'green area' adjacent to Chancery) were accomplished successfully. Significant progress was made towards the acquisition of built-up properties at Brussels (additional office space), Rome (Chancery), Milan (CG's Residence), Zagreb (Ambassador's Residence) and Tel Aviv (Chancery and Ambassador's Residence).

Construction projects were completed in Bangkok (Ambassador's Residence and Residences), Brunei (Chancery, Embassy Residence and Residences), Geneva (Chancery), Luoyang Temple in China (Renovation and Installation of Artwork), Kabul (Residences), Port of Spain (Cultural Centre) and Wellington (Chancery and Residences). Besides, considerable progress has been made in the projects of Khartoum (Chancery and Staff Residences), and Phuentsholing (Chancery and Residences). The projects in Islamabad (Residential Complex) and Kathmandu (Chancery and Residential Complex) are nearing completion. New projects were taken up in Amman (Redevelopment of Old Chancery and Residences), Kuala Lumpur (Redevelopment of Chancery and residences), Mahe, Seychelles (Redevelopment of Chancery, Culture Centre and Residences) and Jakarta (Redevelopment of Chancery). The resumption of the long pending Embassy Complex (Embassy Residence, Chancery & Staff Residences) in Tashkent was achieved.

Major repairs/renovation projects in Warsaw (Embassy Residence), Washington (Embassy Residence and Chancery-I building) and Yangon (Chancery) have been completed successfully. The major repairs/renovation projects have been initiated and are in progress in Abu Dhabi (Chancery), Beijing

(Chancery residential complex), Jeddah (Embassy Residence), Kuwait (HVAC replacement in Chancery and residences, refurbishment of auditorium and replacement of floor tiles in Chancery), Lagos (Chancery), Moscow (DCM residence, Chancery and Embassy Residence), New York (Chancery-cum-CG's residence), New York (PMI building facade repair), Port of Spain (Embassy Residence and Staff residences), Prague (Embassy Residence), Vienna (Embassy Residence) and Jakarta (Renovation of Embassy Residence).

The construction of new RPO Bhopal premises was completed in June 2023. The major renovations of RPOs in Bangalore and Bhubaneswar are near completion. A web portal for processing and monitoring of Annual Maintenance Contracts in India and Missions abroad was also launched to enhance efficiency and quick disposal of cases.

Right to Information

The RTI Cell for the Ministry leads processing of applications received under Right to Information Act, 2005. In accordance

with section 4(b) of RTI Act 2005, the Ministry has been uploading maximum information in public domain and regularly updates the information. The Ministry and its 202 Missions/Posts abroad have been accepting online and physical RTI applications and disposing of them in a time-bound manner.

A total of 2937 RTI applications and 132 First Appeals under the RTI Act 2005 were processed in the Ministry during 2023. The applications varied in subjects such as foreign relations, administrative issues, bilateral visits, and other relevant topics.

During the period, a total of 127 Central Information Commission (CIC) hearings were attended by the concerned Central Public Information Officers (CPIOs) and a representative of the Division. All the hearing matters were disposed of satisfactorily. The quarterly returns have been filed with CIC within the prescribed time period.

In collaboration with SSIFS, the Ministry and Missions/Posts abroad participated in a third-party audit (suo motu disclosure) in a time-bound manner.

C H A P T E R

29

Implementation of Official Language Policy

Implementation of the Official Language Policy of the Government of India has always been a priority for the Ministry which it follows through a comprehensive scheme for the promotion and propagation of Hindi in India as well

as abroad. For the promotion of Hindi worldwide, the Ministry organised the 12th World Hindi Conference (WHC) in February in Fiji in collaboration with the Government of Fiji.



President of Fiji, Rato Wiliame Katonivere and EAM jointly inaugurated 12th World Hindi Conference in Fiji, February 2023

Various regional Hindi conferences were also organized on a regular basis along with the celebrations of World Hindi Day on 10 January 2023 and Hindi Divas on 14 September 2023. The Ministry has instituted Atal Bhashantar Yojna (ABY) for recruiting and training language experts and creating a pool of specialized interpreters.

A detailed network involving Indian Missions/posts abroad, PIOs and NRIs bodies, local NGOs, Cultural Organisations and Associations have been co-opted for the promotion and propagation of Hindi Language abroad. The Division supplied teaching materials to Missions and Posts abroad for the promotion of Hindi. The Ministry extended financial support of approximately INR 86.93 lakhs to Missions/Posts abroad to engage teachers to conduct Hindi classes during the period.

The Division also coordinates work related to the grant of scholarships to foreign students to study Hindi at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra. The responsibility for monitoring the use of the Hindi language in the Regional Passport Offices is also entrusted to the Division of the Ministry. During the year, five RPO inspections, namely, Dehradun 09 May, Kolkata 17 and 18 May, Bhubaneswar 09 June, Raipur 21 and 22 November and Goa 28 and 29 December were successfully laid out by the Division.

During the year, the 1st Sub-Committee of the Committee of Parliament on Official Language carried out an inspection of the Ministry's autonomous/subordinate offices, ICWA and 3 RPOs on the progressive use of Hindi in official work of the Ministry/subordinate offices and suggested various ways to further maximise the use of official language.

Regional Hindi Conferences are organised by our Missions abroad in association with local institutions engaged in the promotion and propagation of Hindi and Indian culture. World Hindi Day was celebrated by all our Missions and Posts abroad as well as in Headquarters on 10 January. Hindi Pakhwada was organised to mark Hindi Diwas 2023, which saw enthusiastic

participation by Regional Passport Offices as well as our Missions and Posts abroad. An amount of INR 2.06 crores was granted to Missions/Posts for World Hindi Day and Rs.1.54 crores for Hindi Diwas/Hindi Pakhwada celebrations. Various competitions and activities, including Hindi Essay Writing, Hindi Noting and drafting, Hindi Poetry Competition, Official Language Quiz Competition and Hindi Vakyansh Translation Competition were organised on this occasion.

The 12th WHC was successfully organised by the Ministry in collaboration with the Government of Fiji from 15-17 February in Nadi, Fiji. The main theme of the Conference was "Hindi: From Traditional Knowledge to Artificial Intelligence". EAM led the Indian delegation comprising MOS (VM); Minister of State for Home Affairs, Members of Parliament, senior officials and well-known Hindi Scholars. The Government of Fiji was represented at the highest levels at the Conference, which saw the participation of the President of Fiji, H.E Ratu Wiliame Maivalili Katonivere, Prime Minister of Fiji, H.E Sitiveni Rabuka, all three Deputy Prime Ministers viz. Biman Prasad, Manoa Kamikamica, Viliame Gavoka, Minister of Education, Aseri Radrodro, Minister for Multi-ethnic Affairs and Sugar, Charan Jeath Singh, Minister for Employment, Productivity and Industrial Relations, Agni Deo Singh and other senior government officials. President of Fiji, Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and EAM jointly inaugurated the Conference on 15 February. About 1000 participants from over 31 countries attended the Conference, including about 500 from India and 300 from Fiji. A total of 12 Hindi scholars from India and 19 scholars from abroad as well as 2 institutions each from India and abroad were selected for receiving Vishwa Hindi Samman. Several books and periodicals were also launched on the sidelines of the Conference. The Chairperson of the Organising Committee of the Conference, MOS (VM) read out the outcome statement of the Conference during the Closing Ceremony. The conference met with the desired success in popularising Hindi as a global language at this International Conference.

CHAPTER

30

Finance & Budget

The total budget allocated to the Ministry for the Financial Year (FY) 2023-24 was INR 18050 Cr at the Budget Estimates (BE) stage.

The sectoral distribution of budget for major allocations is as mentioned below:

Sector		Allocation (In INR Cr)
Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) with foreign countries	Grants	5080.24
	Loans	768.34
	Total TEC	5848.58
Indian Missions and Posts Abroad		3528.85
Special Diplomatic Expenditure		4162.01
Passport and Emigration		1002.78
International Cooperation		762.56
Capital Outlay on Public Works and Housing		661.00
MEA Secretariat		1518.29
Assistance to Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions		380.50
Others		185.43
Total BE for FY2023-24		18050

Development Partnership portfolio (or the Technical and Economic Cooperation) which constitutes India's Aid to various countries, continues to be the focus and priority with the largest allocation in the Ministry's budget. In FY 2023-24, of the total budget of INR 18050 Cr, the Technical and Economic

Cooperation Heads (TEC) outlay is 32.40% or INR 5848.58 Cr, of which INR 5080.24 Cr (28.15%) is for grant programmes and INR 768.34 Cr (4.26%) is for loans. The head-wise distribution of the TEC outlay in FY 2023-24 is given below:

Head-wise distribution of the TEC outlay in FY 2023-24

Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) Heads		Allocation (In INR Crore)	% of Total TEC Allocation
Aid to Bangladesh		200.00	3.42%
Bhutan	Grant	1632.24	41.05%
	Loan	768.34	
	Total Bhutan	2400.58	
Aid to Nepal		550.00	9.40%
Aid to Mauritius		460.79	7.88%
Aid to Afghanistan		200.00	3.42%
Aid to Seychelles		10.00	0.17%
Aid to Myanmar		400.00	6.84%
ITEC Programme		150.00	2.56%
Aid to African Countries		250.00	4.27%
Aid to Sri Lanka		150.00	2.56%
Chahbahar Port, Iran		100.00	1.71%
Aid to Maldives		400.00	6.84%
Aid to Other Developing Countries		150.00	2.56%
Investment Publicity & Promotion Programme		229.21	3.92%
Indo-Pacific Cooperation		40.00	0.68%
Aid to Eurasian Countries		75.00	1.28%
Multilateral Economic Relations Programme		10.00	0.17%
Aid to Latin American Countries		50.00	0.85%
Aid for Disaster Relief		5.00	0.09%
SAARC Programmes		6.00	0.10%
Aid to Mongolia		7.00	0.12%
Aid for Cultural and Heritage Projects		5.00	0.09%
QUAD Co-operation		0.00	0.00%
Total			5848.58

Pie chart showing the distribution of budget for Development Partnership

The bulk of the Ministry's Development Partnership budget, comprising about 74%, is allocated to the neighbouring countries under the Government's "Neighbourhood First" Policy, followed closely by allocation to the extended Indian Ocean Region (8%), extended neighbourhood (3.7%), Africa (4.27%), Latin American countries (0.85%), with the remainder going towards other regions or region agnostic programs.

Of the total budget for FY 2023-24 of INR 18050 Cr, the bifurcation of allocations between establishment heads and non-establishment heads is 27% (INR 4786.48 Cr) and 73% (INR 13263.52 Cr) respectively. The Ministry has consistently maintained its expenditure on Establishment heads within 30% of its total budget.

The Ministry has been optimally utilising the funds allocated to it in the Revised Estimates (RE) stage of a financial year, as given below for the past ten FYs:

Revised Estimates for the past ten Financial Years

FY	BE Allocation	RE Allocation	Actual Expenditure	Utilization as % of BE	Utilization as % of RE
	In Rupees Cr; Rounded Off				
2013-14	11719	11794	11807	101%	100%
2014-15	14730	12620	12149	82%	96%
2015-16	14967	14967	14541	97%	97%
2016-17	14663	13426	12772	87%	95%
2017-18	14798	13690	13750	93%	100%
2018-19	15011	15582	15526	103%	99%
2019-20	17885	17372	17272	97%	99%
2020-21	17347	15000	14362	83%	96%
2021-22	18155	16000	14174	78%	89%
2022-23	17250	16973	16685	97%	98%

The Ministry has revenue receipts of INR 3746 Cr till 30 November 2023 in FY 2023-24, from passport services (INR 2317.44 Cr), visa fees (INR 842.24 Cr) and other receipts (INR

586.32 Cr). The revenue receipt for the last five financial years from FY 2019-2020 to FY 2023-2024 is given below:

Revenue receipt from Financial Years 2019-2020 to 2023-2024

Year	Heads	Amount	Percentage
2019-20	Passport	2522.71	49%
	Visa	1792.11	35%
	Others	856.16	17%
	Total	5170.98	
2020-21	Passport	583.56	77%
	Visa	24.85	3%
	Others	149.73	20%
	Total	758.14	
2021-22	Passport	2332.50	66%
	Visa	316.93	9%
	Others	874.18	25%
	Total	3523.61	
2022-23	Passport	3360.03	59%
	Visa	1440.10	25%
	Others	937.89	16%
	Total	5738.02	

During the year 2022-23, five Comptroller & Auditor General (CAG) Paras against the MEA were included in the C&AG Report

No. 24 of 2022. The status of submission of Action Taken Notes (ATNs) since 2018 in respect of CAG Paras is as follows:

Year	C&AG Report	Total No. of Paras	Final ATNs Submitted	ATNs Under Process
2018	Report No 4.of2018	5	5	Nil
2019	No Report generated by C&AG for MEA	-	-	-
2020	Report No 6.of2020	4	4	Nil
2021	Report No 2.of2021	5	3	2
2022	Report No 24 .of2022	5	4	1
Total		19	16	3

The details and status of these CAG Paras are as below:

C& AG Report No.	Para No.	Subject	Status
2 of 2021	5.1	Incorrect application of rate of service charges led to excess payment	Final ATN submitted on 14.1.2022by the Ministry
	5.2	Loss of Revenue due to irregular tax exemption by the South Asian University	Final ATN submitted on 26.7.2021by the Ministry
	5.3	Irregularities in receipt and utilisation of compensation by the HCI London	The final ATN is under preparation by the Ministry
	5.4	Grossly irregular and manipulated award and execution of work relating to the renovation of the basement at India House, London, leading to undue benefits being extended to the contractor by the HCI London	The final ATN is under preparation by the Ministry
	5.5	Undue benefit extended to the contractor by Nalanda University ,Rajgir	Final ATN submitted on 13.9.2023 by the Ministry.
24 of 2022	2.1	Short collection of fees due to the application of incorrect exchange rate in fixing the fees for Overseas Citizenship of India Card scheme	Final ATN submitted on 14.7.2023 by the Ministry
	2.2	Irregularities in the setting up of Indian Cultural Centres by Indian Missions at Washington and Paris	The revised ATN is under preparation by the Ministry
	2.3	Avoidable payment of cost escalation and interest	Final ATN submitted on 6.11.2023 by the Ministry
	2.4	Adoption of improper tendering process led to cost overrun besides arbitrarily deviating from the identified items of work under the tender	Final ATN submitted on 15.11.2023 by the Ministry
	2.5	Excess fee charged for passport renunciation	Final ATN submitted on 26.5.2023 by the Ministry

Note: (i) The Oral Evidence was presented to PAC (2021-22) on Para 5.2 of CAG Report No. 2 of 2021 on 6/4/2022 by Secretary (East). The PAC report is awaited.

Note (ii): The Oral Evidence was presented to PAC (2022-23) on Paras 5.3 and 5.4 of C&AG Report No. 2 of 2021 on 10/2/2023 by the Foreign Secretary. The PAC Report is awaited.

CHAPTER

31

Parliament & Coordination Division

The responsibility of the Parliament & Coordination Division broadly consists of parliamentary work, coordination within and outside the Ministry, coordination of activities carried out by the Ministry/Missions under 'Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsava' or similar activities, and participation in nation-wide campaigns carried out by other Ministries. The Division also reviewed Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) signed by India with other countries, admission of certain categories of foreign students in Indian educational institutions, and uploading of the Ministry's inputs on various digital portals to facilitate digital monitoring of work.

Parliament Section

The Parliament Section is the Ministry's interface with Parliament and the nodal point for Parliament-related work of the Ministry. The Section ensured a timely response to the issues raised by Parliament in compliance with the guidelines laid down for Parliamentary work.

During the Calendar year 2023, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs was held 10 meetings on the following 6 subjects:

- Countering Global Terrorism at Regional and International Level
- India's Position in the Ongoing Climate Change Negotiations
- QUAD in Indo-Pacific Region: Impact thereof and India's Role and Strategies for Engagement and Cooperation.
- India's Engagement with G20 Countries
- India and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) – Contours of Cooperation.
- India's Policy Planning and Role of Think Tanks with Special Reference to ICWA and RIS

In 2023, three Consultative Committee Meetings were held on the subjects 'India's G20 Presidency', 'India-US relationship' and 'G20 Summit' on 3 March, 18 June, and 7 October respectively under the Chairmanship of the EAM.

During the year, a total of 17 matters were raised under Special Mention, Rule 377 and Zero Hour in the Parliament, which have already been replied to. Parliament Questions were also replied to.

During the year, Annual Reports and Annual Accounts of the Indian Council of World Affairs, Indian Council for Cultural



The EAM chaired three Meetings on Parliamentary Consultative Committee, March, June and October 2023

Relations, Research and Information System for Developing Countries, Nalanda University and South Asian University were laid in the Parliament.

Coordination Section

As the designated Nodal Point of the Ministry for commemorating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) at Headquarters and Missions/Posts abroad, the Division effectively ensured that AKAM celebrations were carried out worldwide. Around 15000 events have been organised by Missions/Posts till date. AKAM celebrations by ICCR/Missions/Posts have seen enthusiastic participation by the Indian Diaspora, Friends of India, and local Governments. In a ceremony presided over by the Prime Minister, the Ministry was awarded as the "Best Performing Ministry for the commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav."

The Ministry, through Missions/Posts abroad, played a key role in the celebration of signature events of the Government of India abroad such as Har Ghar Tiranga, Rashtriya Ekta Diwas/Week, Constitution Day, Ayurveda Day, 'Meri Maati Mera Desh' campaign, Ambedkar Mahaparinirvana Diwas, and Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, among others.

The Coordination Section effectively managed the Ministry's interaction with other Government of India Ministries/Departments, State Governments/Union Territories, autonomous bodies and private institutions. The Section processed political clearances for visits abroad, sports events, conferences/seminars/exhibitions and diplomatic military flights.

A total number of six proposals for clearance of names under the Emblems and Names Act 1950 were processed. Approximately 250 Action Points were monitored and updated on the e-Samiksha Portal on Cabinet Decisions, Observations of the Cabinet, Recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries, Vision Document of the Ministry (SGoS-10), progress made on the implementation of Projects funded/administered by the Ministry.



The Prime Minister awarded the Ministry 'Best Performing Ministry' for the Commemoration of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, October 2023

The Ministry actively participated in the Special Campaign 3.0 on Swachhata through the offices of the Ministry located all over

the World. The Campaign started on 02 October and continued up to 31 October. The main focus areas of the Campaign included effective disposal of public grievances, references from Members of Parliament, Parliament Assurances, Cleanliness drive, disposal of scrap and weeding out of files.

During the campaign period, the Ministry conducted 785 cleanliness campaigns. 3,97,852 physical files were weeded out. A total of 668 e-files were closed. Space of about 21,823 sq. ft. was freed by removing junk/obsolete items. Further, a total of 1118 public grievances were resolved and 112 PMO references and 43 MP References were disposed of.

Monitoring Cell

The Monitoring Cell coordinated the review of the MoUs/Agreements signed with foreign countries by various Ministries/Departments of the Government of India from the angle of their continued relevance and status. The Ministry liaised and followed up with the line Ministries and Divisions within the Ministry and the Government of India's Missions/Posts abroad on a regular basis.

In 2023, out of a total of 3329 MoUs/Agreements, 522 MoUs/

Agreements were reviewed: 473 MoUs were extended while 49 MoUs were identified for discontinuation.

Education Section

The Education Section of the Ministry dealt with the selection, nomination and admission of foreign students from 57 friendly neighbouring and developing countries for MBBS, BDS, B. Arch., BE, B. Tech, B. Pharmacy and Diploma in Engineering and Pharmacy in various Government institutions in India under the Self-Financing Scheme against seats allocated to this Ministry by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and Ministry of Education. Persecuted religious minority migrants from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan based in India were also offered seats under this scheme.

During the academic year 2023-24, 28 eligible applicants were allotted seats to B.E./ B.Tech/B.Arch. /B. Pharmacy courses. For the academic year 2023-24, a total of 275 applications were received for MBBS and BDS courses from various foreign nationals and persecuted minority migrants based in India. All 41 medical seats allotted to the Ministry by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare were utilised.

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Conference Division

Summits/ Conference Division provides logistic support to various Divisions of the Ministry in organising meetings/ events/seminars/conferences including international and multilateral involvement of foreign Ministers/delegates in India and abroad.

On 01 December 2022, India assumed the G20 Presidency. During the G20 Presidency in 2023, India held over 200 meetings, including the Leaders' Summit in New Delhi at 60 locations across the country. G-20 Leaders' Summit was organized in Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi on 9 and 10 September. The Division has provided end-to-end logistical support i.e. venue mapping, branding, security, conceptualisation, transportation, accommodation and catering arrangements for all G20 meetings. The endeavour also involved regular and integrated coordination with concerned municipal bodies, district administrations, state governments and various central and state security agencies.

India assumed the SCO presidency in September 2022. During

the SCO presidency, six meetings were held, including one meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Goa and one virtual summit of Heads of State. The Division also played a key role in making logistics arrangements for these meetings.

The Division also provided logistics assistance for other events organized by the Ministry, including the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas 2023 held in Indore, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial lecture, BIMSTEC Counter Terrorism event, etc. In addition, the Division also acts as a nodal agency for Sushma Swaraj Bhawan (SSB).

The G20 Secretariat was set up in SSB and more than 300 officers/officials/consultants were deployed in the G20 Secretariat during India's presidency. The Division handled all the establishment work of the G20 Secretariat during the presidency. Further, around 1150 internal/external meetings in respect of various stakeholders of G20 were held. Around 20 meetings pertaining to other ministries/departments were held in SSB, including one meeting of the Council of Ministers chaired by the Prime Minister.

CHAPTER

33

Rapid Response Cell

The Rapid Response Cell (RRC) was created in July 2021 in the Ministry to take responsibility initially for COVID-19 matters, vaccines and related issues, including liaison with other Ministries. This Cell also subsumed the COVID Cell and Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Cell.

In continuation of India's role as a 'First Responder' in the region and beyond, in 2023, India has undertaken four major operations namely Operation Dost, Operation Kaveri, Operation Karuna, Operation Ajay besides sending HADR materials to several countries in the world.



A 99-member Indian medical team was deployed for assistance in quake-hit Türkiye under Operation Dost, February 2023

Operation Dost

On 06 February, a 7.7 magnitude tremor struck southern Türkiye and Syria. To assist the People of Türkiye and Syria, Operation Dost was launched by the Indian Government. Three self-sustained Search and Rescue (SAR) teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), comprising more than 250 personnel were deployed, along with dog squads and specialized equipment, vehicles and supplies. The SAR teams were able to rescue 02 young girls alive and retrieved 85 bodies from the debris.

A thirty bed self-sustained field hospital of the Indian Army was set up by a team of 99 specially trained personnel, with essential medicines, advanced equipment, vehicles and ambulances. The hospital provided a fully functional operation theatre, and facilities such as X-ray, ventilators, cardiac monitors, and oxygen generation plants around the clock. Around 3600 patients were provided medical treatment.

India also provided 8.8 tons of HADR comprising medical equipment and disaster relief material to Türkiye and 28.8 tons of HADR comprising emergency medicines, and disaster relief material including baby food, and gensets to Syria. Operation Dost was among the earliest foreign help to arrive in Türkiye in difficult times as a mark of solidarity with the people of Türkiye and Syria.

Conference on Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)

The Ministry in collaboration with the Department of Pharmaceuticals, organized a Conference on 'Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana' (PMBJP) on 24 February. Resident Head of Missions of 91 Global South countries participated in the conference and more than 110 Indian Heads of Missions abroad joined virtually. The conference was graced by EAM and the Minister of Health & Family Welfare and Chemicals & Fertilizers. PMBJP is a flagship public health care programme in India, offering wide-ranging generic medicines at affordable prices to the masses. The event aimed to highlight the benefits of this welfare scheme to the participants from the Global South, who could then consider emulating it within their respective countries, with the support of the Government of India.

Operation Kaveri

A crisis erupted in Sudan on 15 April, following which a Sudan Crisis Management Group was created with key stakeholders

from the Ministry, Missions and the Headquarters of Integrated Defence Staff (HQIDS) to assess and monitor the ground situation and formulate an evacuation plan. Operation Kaveri was launched to bring back Indian nationals from Sudan. A 24x7 Control Room was established in the Ministry for assistance to Indian nationals in Sudan on 17 April. The Indian Mission in Khartoum shifted its base to Port Sudan and a Control Centre was established in Port Sudan, where necessary arrangements for lodging evacuees were also made. Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), water purification tablets and solar lamps were sent to the Control Centre in Port Sudan.

Operation Kaveri was successfully concluded under which India safely evacuated 3961 Indians, 124 Sudanese, 9 Nepalese and 3 British citizens from a civil war-hit Sudan. Evacuees were brought back to India with the help of 18 Indian Air Force (IAF) sorties, 5 trips of Indian Navy ships up to Jeddah from Port Sudan and onward travel to India via Indian Air Force, chartered and commercial flights from Port Sudan/Jeddah. Some evacuees were moved through Sudan's land borders with Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia and South Sudan. India also provided 23 tonnes of medical aid to Sudan as part of HADR.

Operation Karuna

In keeping with its reputation as a first responder and Neighbourhood First policy, India under Operation Karuna provided 40 tonnes of medical supplies and relief materials for the people of Myanmar affected by Cyclone Mocha in May 2023. The humanitarian assistance delivered via INS Shivalik, INS Kamorta, INS Savitri and INS Gharial included food items, tents, portable generators, clothes, water pumps, medicines, tarpaulins, hygiene and sanitary items, wheelchairs, and face masks.

Operation Ajay

The ongoing crisis between Israel and Palestine began on 7 October. On 11 October, India launched Operation Ajay to facilitate the return from Israel of Indian citizens who wish to return by special charter flights. A 24x7 Control Room was set up on 11 October in the Ministry to monitor the situation and provide information and assistance to the Indian citizens in Israel. In addition, the Embassy of India, Tel Aviv and the Representative Office of India in Ramallah also set up a 24x7 Emergency Helpline to provide information and assistance to Indian citizens. A total of 1309 Indians, 14 OCI card holders and 20 Nepalese have been brought back to India from Israel by 6 charter flights under Operation Ajay. MoS (RRS) welcomed the citizens who arrived at New Delhi Airport under Operation Ajay from Israel.

Humanitarian Assistance Provided by India

A strong earthquake struck several districts in western Nepal on 03 November. The Prime Minister expressed anguish at the loss of lives and damage due to the earthquake and offered all possible assistance to Nepal. As a first responder and as part of India's 'neighbourhood first' policy, India delivered the first tranche comprising 1.01 tonnes of medicines and 10.5 tonnes of relief material on 05 November. A total of 4.14 tonnes of medicines and 31 tonnes of relief materials including food items, tents, tarpaulins, and hygiene and sanitary items were delivered to Nepal in four tranches.

Following the Israel-Hamas conflict, India sent 16.5 tonnes of medical aid and 54 tonnes of humanitarian aid in two tranches by IAF C-17 flights for the people of Palestine in October and November. The material includes essential life-saving medicines, surgical items, ECG machines, tents, sleeping bags, tarpaulins, sanitary utilities, and water purification tablets among other necessary items.

On 21 December, India sent HADR supplies comprising disaster relief and medical aid, to the volcanic eruption-affected Papua New Guinea (PNG). The supplies included six tonnes of essential medicines, surgical items, sanitary pads, rapid antigen test kits, mosquito repellents & baby foods and eleven tonnes of disaster relief material such as tents, sleeping mats/bags, sanitary utilities/ hygiene kits, meals ready to eat, water storage among other items.

In addition, in 2023, India supplied general and emergency medical aid to Fiji, Malawi, Palau, Peru, Sao Tome & Principe, Suriname and Ukraine and 10,000 MT of wheat to Afghanistan.

Vaccine Maitri

India has supplied a total of 30.12 crore doses made in India vaccines to 99 countries and 02 UN entities since January 2021 across the world under Vaccine Maitri. The details are available at the Ministry website: <https://mea.gov.in/vaccine-supply.htm>

CHAPTER

34

Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service

In 2023, the Sushma Swaraj Institute of the Foreign Service (SSIFS) carried out a range of activities including Mid-Career Training Programmes at various levels such as training programmes for Defense Attache designates, special courses for members of other Civil Services and other courses for Ministry's officials. In addition, the SSIFS conducted special training for diplomats from our partner countries in line with the Government's approach of building bridges of friendship with countries around the world, particularly in the Global South. The courses and programmes for foreign diplomats are designed to serve as an introduction to the principles and practices of diplomacy, current and emerging issues in international relations, as well as provide an exposure to India.

The SSIFS is also one of the 25 central training institutes of the Government of India. It also contributed to finalising the Annual Capacity Building Plan as mandated by the Capacity Building Commission. SSIFS has also added self-paced online learning courses from the Integrated Government Online Training (iGoT) platform into its training modules for Ministry's officials and officers.

Induction training programmes for IFS officer trainees

The six-month Induction Training Programme (ITP) of IFS officer trainees of the 2022 batch along with two diplomats from Bhutan commenced in December 2022 and concluded in June 2023. Pedagogical approaches adopted to train the IFS Officer Trainees included interactive lectures, simulation and role play, workshops, and case studies. Exposure to the functioning of other government organs was done through a combination of field visits and attachments, inter alia, to the armed forces, the Commerce Ministry, Science & Tech institutions, state attachments, and Indian Missions. The Officer Trainees also made the traditional call-on on the Hon'ble President, Vice President, Prime Minister, and Speaker of Lok Sabha.

The ITP concluded with a valediction ceremony on 14 June, chaired by the EAM. The ITP for the 2023 batch of IFS officer trainees and two Bhutanese diplomats commenced on 06 November. A two-day "commencement talk" module was organised with addresses by eminent personalities from diverse fields. This was concluded with an address by the Foreign Secretary.



The Prime Minister interacted with Officer Trainees of the 2022 Batch of the Indian Foreign Service, July 2023

Mid-Career Training Programmes for IFS Officers

The SSIFS conducted Mid-Career Training Programme-1 (MCTP-1) for 31 Deputy Secretary level officers of the Ministry from 12-30 June. During the training programme, the officers attended the Foreign Policy module at SSIFS and underwent a week-long attachment with their allotted States, which included a visit to an aspirational district. Training for MCTP- II for 27 Director-level officers of the Ministry was conducted from 06-31 March. The training programme included a week-long attachment with the States allotted to them, a Management module at IIM (Ahmedabad), a Foreign Policy module held at SSIFS, a briefing session at New York organised by the Consulate General of India in New York and a Diplomacy Module at The Fletcher School, Tufts University, Boston, USA. In addition, MCTP-III for 24 officers of the Ministry at the level of Joint Secretary was conducted from 04-22 December consisting of a week-long attachment with the States allotted to them, Management module at ISB, Hyderabad, and Foreign Policy module in SSIFS.

Training Programmes for Other MEA Officials

Various training courses for Non-Representational Grade (NRG) officials (Section Officer/Private Secretaries and below) were organised during the year. These include the Accounts Training Programme, IMAS (Integrated Mission Accounting System) Training Programme, IVFRT (Immigration, Visa and Foreigners' Registration & Tracking) Training Programme, Induction

Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers. Promotion-related Training Programmes were also held for Section Officers, Assistant Section Officers, Senior Secretariat Assistants, Principal Private Secretaries, Private Secretaries, Personal Assistants and Stenographers.

Special training programmes for other services, states etc.

A special training module for fifty five Protocol Officers from 22 States /Union Territories for the G20 Summit was organised in coordination with the Protocol Division of the Ministry on 17 January. A three-day Special Course for Indian Trade Service Officers was conducted for twenty two Indian Trade Service Officers on 'Economic & Commercial Diplomacy' from 02-04 May. A 'Pre-deployment Training Programme for sixteen Defence Attachés posted to Indian Missions Abroad' was conducted from 07-09 August. The SSIFS, in partnership with the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) organised the third training module on 'India and its neighbourhood' for the latest entrants to India's Civil Services, as part of the 98th Foundation Course in October. A similar neighbourhood module was organised for the Special Foundation Course in RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration and Management, Bhopal in October. A training programme for international negotiations for the Government of India delegation to the Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC (COP-28) was organised with the participation of twenty one officials from nine Ministries on 10 November. Orientation sessions for various editions of Know India Programmes were also organised in collaboration with the Diaspora Engagement Division throughout the year.



The EAM chaired the valedictory ceremony of the IFS Officer Trainees of the 2022 batch and Bhutanese Diplomats, June 2023

Foreign Training Programmes

As far as the training of foreign diplomats is concerned, several special courses were conducted for various partner countries and two regional groupings. This included special courses for Armenia, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Eritrea, Georgia, Iran, Mongolia, Pacific Island Countries, the League of Arab States, Timor Leste, Uganda, and Zambia.

The 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) was organised on 13-31 March with the participation of fifty two diplomats from fifty two countries. The "First Global South Young Diplomats Forum" announced by the Prime Minister during the Voice of Global South Summit, took place from 20 November-01 December 2023. The participating diplomats were drawn from thirty countries. The 3rd edition of the Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme, organised in collaboration with the D&ISA Division, also took place from 09 - 27 January.

Distinguished Lecture Series

SSIFS organised the First edition of the Distinguished Lecture Series where Rafael Mariano Grossi, DG IAEA gave a keynote

address followed by a fireside chat moderated by Dean, SSIFS.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

In 2023, SSIFS signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Panama on 09 January, and Nepal on 01 June, taking the total number of MoUs signed with counterpart institutions/ Ministries of Foreign Affairs to 99.

Transparency Audit under RTI Act, 2005

The SSIFS has been mandated to carry out a Transparency Audit of proactive disclosures by public authorities under the RTI Act, 2005 with respect to public authorities under the Ministry. In 2023, SSIFS successfully conducted the audit of 167 public authorities from the Ministry and Indian Missions and Posts abroad which had submitted their self-appraisal on the CIC (Central Information Commission) portal dedicated for the purpose.

CHAPTER

35

Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), in its endeavour towards strengthening cultural relations and promoting Indian soft power across the world, made many advances in 2023. The Council works with its 38 Indian Cultural Centers

(ICCs) abroad and 11 Zonal Offices (5 Zonal offices, 4 Sub-Zonal offices and 2 Regional Offices). The activities of the ICCR comprised both regular activities as well as many new initiatives and special activities.



ICCR announced the App Gyan Setu: Connecting Culture through Knowledge launched by MoS (RRS), February 2023

Scholarships

Scholarship for foreign nationals is an important tool to encourage them to study in India. In the academic year 2023-24, ICCR offered 3775 scholarship slots to foreign nationals under its 21 Scholarship Schemes including 1000 scholarships for Afghan nationals to pursue online Undergraduate/Postgraduate (UG/PG) courses through the e-Vidyabharti portal of the Ministry. ICCR launched an application "Gyan Setu", which aims at Connecting Culture through Knowledge on 6 February to automate the entire work process of the Scholarship, especially the payments to students and academic institutions. The application was officially launched by MOS (RRS).

Chairs

ICCR is instrumental in setting up Chairs of Indian Studies

abroad on various subjects (Political Science, Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economics and Buddhist Studies), Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, Tamil and Bengali (Dance and music) in different foreign universities across the world as per the requests received from the Universities and recommended by Missions. During the period, 7 MoUs have been signed with various universities and 17 MoUs renewed across the globe to establish ICCR Chairs.

Conference and Seminars

ICCR organised a plenary session on "Leveraging the Soft Power of India- Goodwill through Craft, Cuisine and Creativity" during the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention 2023 held on 08-10 January in Indore. MOS (ML) chaired the session. The Council organised "National Convention on India's International Relation" in association with Jawaharlal Nehru University from 17-18 March at Sushma Swaraj Bhawan. The EAM inaugurated the two-day conference and delivered the keynote address.



The EAM inaugurated National Convention on India's International Relations organised by ICCR in association with Jawaharlal Nehru University, March 2023

ICCR collaborated with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Tourism and the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC) for the organisation of the Global Buddhist Summit 2023 on 20 and 21 April at New Delhi. ICCR celebrated the Coronation Day to mark 349th Anniversary of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj on 6 June at New Delhi. ICCR organized two two-day Global Conference on shaping the future world through “Holistic Yoga beyond physiology” in association with United Consciousness at Yoga Vidya, Bad Meinberg, Germany on 19 and 20 June.

ICCR organised ‘Vaishali Festival of Democracy 2023’ at Nalanda University, Bihar from 15-16 September on the occasion of UN International Day of Democracy highlighting the origin of democracy in India. ICCR organised an International Conference on “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” in association with the Permanent Mission of India, New York on 10 October at the UN General Assembly, New York.

ICCR organised the soft launch ceremony of an e-learning online portal “Universalization of Traditional Indian Knowledge System” (UTIKS) in association with Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) on 05 October at the Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE), Karnataka. ICCR organised the “Knowledge India Visitors Programme” from 04-05 December in New Delhi by inviting about 100 Heads of Departments in foreign universities teaching Indian-related subjects.

Outgoing Cultural Delegations

ICCR, in its efforts to create international understanding through culture, sponsored cultural troupes for performances in various countries. During the period 01 January - 30 November, 76 cultural delegations visited abroad, giving 370 performances in 89 countries. ICCR also sponsored 3 Vande Bharatam Troupes for their performances abroad as a part of Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav (AKAM) celebrations and sponsored a visit of 32 member groups from various genres to give cultural performances on the occasion of the 12th World Hindi Conference as a part of AKAM celebrations.

Incoming Cultural Delegations

On the occasion of the 17th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, ICCR organised a Sanskrit-based theme song by the 16-member Gandharva Choir. Sixty Indian artists held presentations on the theme “Pragatisheel Bharat” and 8 International artists’ held presentations at Indore from 8-10 January. ICCR organised a Mohiniyattam performance on 14 January at the Royal Thai Embassy for the ASEAN-INDIA event to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the ASEAN-India Friendship Year.

ICCR hosted a visit of a 6-member Dragon Boys Tassa Band group from Trinidad & Tobago and a 7-member cultural group

“Raices Santenas” from Panama from 20 February – 01 March.

On the occasion of Africa Day, ICCR organised a cultural performance with an Indian traditional/folk group on 26 May in New Delhi for the African Heads of the Missions and the Ministry. The Council organised a gala cultural performance during the meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) countries on 3 May in Goa. ICCR hosted the visit of 4 Hindi Poets one each from Mauritius, Thailand, Nepal & Russian Federation for their participation in the ‘Hindi Kavi Sammelan’. The event was organised at Vrindavan, Mathura on 16 and 17 September in collaboration with Sevagya Sansthanam (Varanasi).

ICCR supported the Parliament of India by arranging cultural performances of traditional folk-dance groups of Punjab, Rajasthan and Gujarat on the visit of foreign delegates of the 9th G-20 Parliamentary Speakers Summit (P-20) in New Delhi from 10-14 October. ICCR organised a cultural performance with 11 International groups and 1 Indian group for the ‘Folk Festival Kullu Dussehra-2023’ in collaboration with the Government of Himachal Pradesh from 24-30 October. A six-member Jazz Fusion Group visited Pretoria, South Africa, and delivered a cultural performance on the occasion of Mapungubwe Cultural Festival from 07 – 16 December.

Awards

Distinguished Alumni Awards for the year 2019 to 2022 were conferred upon (i) Dr. Oscar Riembau Pujol (2021) on 11 January in Spain, (ii) Dr. R K Lal Mervin Dharmasiri (2020) on 27 March 2023 in Sri Lanka, (iii) Mr. Odbayar Jagarnomch (2019) on 28 April in Mongolia, (iv) Dr. Riyad Mustafa Abu Shehadeh (2020) on 5 July in Palestine, (v) Dr. Wah Wah Maung (2022) on 2 August in Myanmar and (vi) Nguyen Trung Khanh (2022) on 4 August in Vietnam.

World Sanskrit Award for the year 2022 was conferred upon Vlasta Pacheiner Klander on 18 April 2023 in Slovenia. Awards for Promotion of Buddhist Studies for the years 2021 and 2022 were conferred upon Dr. Duong Thi Thanh Huong on 04 August 2023 in Vietnam and Mr. Chojamts Demberel, Khamba Nomun Khan on 8 July in Mongolia respectively.

Distinguished Indologist Award for the year 2022 was conferred upon Dr. Joanna Jurewicz, Chair of South Asian Studies, Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Warsaw, Poland, on 12 October in Poland. An award ceremony was held for presenting a trophy with crafted certificate to owners(s) and Chef(s) of the 6 selected restaurants from the USA, Sri Lanka, Costa Rica, Oman, Sweden and Mongolia in New Delhi on 12 December for their outstanding contribution in promotion of Indian cuisine and culinary traditions abroad.

Visitors Programme

The Council hosted the visits under various programmes as under:

Distinguished Visitors Programmes (DVP): Seven delegates from seven Countries namely, South Sudan, Kenya, Croatia, Egypt, Mongolia, South Africa, and Nigeria during the period January-November under Distinguished Visitors Programmes.

Academic Visitors Programmes (AVP): Ten delegates from seven Countries namely, Russia, Norway, Zambia, Serbia, Togo, UK, and South Sudan during the period January-November under Academic Visitors Programmes.

Gen- Next Democracy Network Programme: Over hundred delegates from 40 countries participated in the Gen- Next Democracy Network Programme organised by ICCR in 2023.

Visitors Programme for International Students of Hindi Subject/ Hindi Vishwa Yatra: Thirty one Delegates from twelve Countries, namely, South Africa, Cambodia, Canada, Qatar, Denmark, Bangladesh, Russia, Mauritius, Fiji, Suriname, Switzerland and Tajikistan paid a visit to India from 20 - 29 May.

Buddha Bhoomi Vandan Yatra: Twenty three delegates from eleven Countries namely, Bhutan, Cambodia, Japan, Laos, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, Thailand, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal and South Korea from 25 October – 3 November 2023 participated in the Buddha Bhoomi Vandan Yatra.

Exhibitions

ICCR organised an Exhibition 'Narasimha and Avatars' at Radhadesh, Brussels depicting Dasavataras with a special focus on Lord Narasimhadeva. Two hundred different artists around India contributed to the exhibition in the form of paintings, drawings, digital art, sculptures, and objects. ICCR organised a Photo Exhibition titled 'Central American Indigenous People: Cultural Heritage'. Panama, Costa Rica, Guatemala, and El Salvador participated in the exhibition which was inaugurated by MOS (ML) at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) on 13 October.

Busts & statues

During the period of January-November 2023, ICCR sent eighteen Busts and Statues of iconic leaders such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, Mahatma Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Munshi Premchand and Maulana Azad to different countries such as Dominican Republic, Switzerland (Geneva), Scotland (Edinburgh), Nigeria (Abuja & Lagos), Hiroshima (Japan), Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Canada, Tanzania for installation at prominent places.

Indian Culture Centre

ICCR has 38 Indian Cultural Centres (ICCs) in different parts of the world. ICCR also extends support to the Casa de la India in Valladolid, Spain. ICCR deployed 48 Teachers of Indian Culture (TICs) and 40 India-based Performing Arts teachers in the Mission / Posts / ICCs. ICCR also encouraged Missions / Posts to hire Local Resources Persons (LRPs) as Teachers of Yoga, Indian Dance and Music. A total number of 95 LRPs are presently deployed at various Missions / Posts / ICCs.

A tripartite agreement between ICCR, Routes2Roots and Centre for Cultural Resources and Training was signed on 4 October to conduct online classes and certification in the disciplines of Indian performing arts and music for Indian Diaspora and interested students abroad.

Hindi

ICCR has been publishing the Hindi bi-monthly magazine "Gagananchal" for the last 45 years, to promote the Hindi language in the country and abroad. ICCR participated in the organisation of the 12th World Hindi Conference in Fiji on 15-17 February. The 12th World Hindi Conference special issue of Gagananchal Patrika was published and released during the conference.

CHAPTER

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Nalanda University

The Government of India enacted the Nalanda University Act, 2010 with a vision to revive the ancient seat of learning – the Nalanda University at Rajgir, Bihar. Its recent origins could be traced to March 2006 when the then Hon'ble President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam proposed the revival of the ancient Nalanda while addressing a Joint Session of the Bihar Legislative Assembly.

Concurring ideas came seeking the re-establishment of ancient Nalanda, including from some Southeast Asian governments and leaders of the sixteen member-states of the East Asia Summit (EAS) in January 2007 and at the 4th EAS in October 2009 held in Thailand.

The location of the modern Nalanda University and its historical linkages to the internationally renowned ancient seat of learning, reinforce its global mandate in the present day through intergovernmental MoUs for collaboration signed by 17 countries, as well as academic and research partnerships pursued by the University.

The University is in the final phases of completing construction of its planned infrastructure requirements on a 455-acre campus near Rajgir town in Bihar.

Nalanda University commenced its academic programmes in 2014. As of date, the University has 6 schools and over 25



Nalanda University Campus, December 2023

academic courses. Currently, around 72% of total enrolments comprise international students, pursuing various post-graduate and Ph.D. programmes.

On 15 April 2023, Nalanda University and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) organised the G20 University Connect-Lecture Series titled "Engaging Young Minds Initiative" at the Nalanda University.

CHAPTER

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Archives

The Archives & Record Management (A&RM) Division is a repository of the Ministry's Archives and Records with over 1,50,000 files maintained by it. The Division also undertakes the job of appraisal and transfer of files to the National Archives of India (NAI) and has digitised most of the records of the Ministry stored with it. It is also in the process of enabling the transfer/migration of digitised data to new servers, and incorporation of superior software to enable easier retrieval of archival material.

The shifting of all the Ministry's records from the earlier location of C-1 Hutments, Thyagraj Marg to the basements of Jawahar Lal Nehru Bhawan and the ISIL Building was completed by 31 March.

The Division also facilitated the transfer of more than 10,000 old books and maps of immense archival value from the High Commission of India, London to the NAI.

In addition, more than 50,000 old files were destroyed during the year as part of the regular weeding-out exercise by the Ministry and its various offices under the guidance of the Division. Efforts have also been at hand to establish redundancy and to review the classification of files with a view to the continued facilitation of this exercise, in consultation with the concerned Territorial Divisions in the Ministry. Efforts are also at hand to find a single location for the storage of all the archives and records of the Ministry.

ANNEXES

ANNEXURES

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Annexure II: List of Cities and States / UTs for G20 Meetings (Chapter 13)

Annexure III: G20 Mechanisms (Chapter 13)

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Annexure I

G20 meetings during India's G20 Presidency

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
0.	Kick-off meeting with Heads of Diplomatic Mission	25-27 November	Swaraj Dweep (Havelock), Andaman & Nicobar
1.	1 st Sherpa Meeting	04-07 December	Udaipur, Rajasthan
2.	Accelerating Implementation of SDGs	04 December	Udaipur, Rajasthan
3.	1 st Development Working Group Meeting	13-16 December	Mumbai, Maharashtra
4.	Data for Development	13 December	Mumbai, Maharashtra
5.	1 st Finance & Central Bank Deputies Meeting	13-15 December	Bengaluru, Karnataka
6.	Strengthening Multilateral Development Banks to address global challenges of 21 st century	14 December	Bengaluru, Karnataka
7.	1 st Framework Working Group Meeting	16-17 December	Bengaluru, Karnataka
8.	Macroeconomic implications of food and security	16 December	Bengaluru, Karnataka
9.	1 st Joint Health-Finance Task Force Meeting	20 December	Virtual
10.	1 st Meeting for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion	09-11 January	Kolkata, West Bengal
11.	Digital Innovations for Financial Inclusion	09 January	Kolkata, West Bengal
12.	Think 20 Inception Meeting	13-14 January	Delhi, Delhi
13.	1 st Infrastructure Working Group Meeting	16-17 January	Pune, Maharashtra
14.	Financing Cities of Tomorrow	16 January	Pune, Maharashtra
15.	1 st Health Working Group Meeting	18-20 January	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
16.	Medical Value Tourism	19 January	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
17.	B20 Inception Meeting	22-24 January	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
18.	Startup20 Inception Meeting	28-29 January	Hyderabad, Telangana
19.	Science20 Inception Meeting	30-31 January	Puducherry, Puducherry
20.	1 st International Financial Architecture Working Group Meeting	30-31 January	Chandigarh, Chandigarh
21.	Central Bank Digital Currencies, opportunities and challenges	30 January	Chandigarh, Chandigarh
22.	1 st Education Working Group Meeting	31 January-2 February	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
23.	Role of Digital Technology in Education	31 January	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
24.	1 st Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting	02-03 February	Guwahati, Assam
25.	Capacity building of ecosystem of scaling up sustainable finance	02 February	Guwahati, Assam
26.	1 st Employment Working Group Meeting	02-04 February	Jodhpur, Rajasthan
27.	Exploring Strategies for global skills and qualifications harmonization and developing a framework for common skill taxonomies	02 February	Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
28.	1 st Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting	05-07 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
29.	Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage (CCUS)	05 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
30.	Youth 20 Inception Meeting	06-08 February	Guwahati, Assam
31.	1 st Tourism Working Group Meeting	07-09 February	Rann of Kutch, Gujarat
32.	Rural Tourism for Community Empowerment & archaeological tourism	07 February	Rann of Kutch, Gujarat
33.	Research and Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG) Inception (SERB)	08-09 February	Kolkata, West Bengal
34.	Urban 20 Inception Meeting	09-10 February	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
35.	1 st Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting	09-11 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
36.	Restoration of Degraded Landscapes with Focus on Mining Affected Areas	09 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
37.	G20 EMPOWER Inception	11-12 February	Agra, Uttar Pradesh
38.	1 st Agriculture Deputies Meeting	13-15 February	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
39.	Stock taking of G20 Initiatives in Agriculture	13 February	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
40.	1 st Digital Economy Working Group Meeting	13-15 February	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
41.	Digital Public Infrastructure & Digital initiatives of UP	13 February	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh
42.	B20 Event	17-18 February	Imphal, Manipur
43.	2 nd Finance & Central Bank Deputies Meeting	22-23 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
44.	Policy Perspectives: Road to Policy Consensus on Crypto Assets	23 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
45.	1 st Culture Working Group Meeting	23-25 February	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
46.	Khajuraho Exhibition	23 February	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
47.	1 st Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting	24-25 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
48.	Combating Tax Evasion, Corruption and Money Laundering	23 February	Bengaluru, Karnataka
49.	Women 20 Inception Meeting	27-28 February	Aurangabad, Maharashtra
50.	G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting	01-02 March	Delhi, Delhi
51.	1 st Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting	01-04 March	Gurugram, Haryana
52.	Leveraging ICT for combating corruption in Public Sector	01 March	Gurugram, Haryana
53.	B20 Event	02-03 March	Aizawl, Mizoram
54.	RIIG event (CSIR)	02-03 March	Ranchi, Jharkhand
55.	2 nd Meeting for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion	06-07 March	Hyderabad, Telangana
56.	Knowledge and Experience Exchange for Emerging Economies on advancing financial inclusion through DPI	06 March	Hyderabad, Telangana

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
57.	SAI 20 Inception Meeting	13-15 March	Guwahati, Assam
58.	B20 Event	15-17 March	Gangtok, Sikkim
59.	2 nd Education Working Group Meeting	15-17 March	Amritsar, Punjab
60.	Research in Emerging and Disruptive Technologies	16 March	Amritsar, Punjab
61.	StartUp20 Side Meeting	18-19 March	Gangtok, Sikkim
62.	Labour 20 Inception Meeting	19-20 March	Amritsar, Punjab
63.	2 nd Joint Health-Finance Task Force Meeting	20 March	Virtual
64.	Civil20 Inception Meeting	20-22 March	Nagpur, Maharashtra
65.	2 nd Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting	21-23 March	Udaipur, Rajasthan
66.	Non-pricing policy levers to support sustainable investment	21 March	Udaipur, Rajasthan
67.	2 nd Framework Working Group Meeting	24-25 March	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
68.	G20-COP28 event on macroeconomic impact of climate change and transition pathways	25 March	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
69.	RIIG (DBT)	24-25 March	Itanagar-Dibrugarh, Arunachal Pradesh & Assam
70.	2 nd Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting	27-29 March	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
71.	Best practices on water resources management	27 March	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
72.	Protection and Restitution of Cultural Properties	28 March	Virtual
73.	1 st Trade & Investment Working Group Meeting	28-30 March	Mumbai, Maharashtra
74.	Seminar on Trade finance	28 March	Mumbai, Maharashtra
75.	2 nd Infrastructure Working Group Meeting	28-29 March	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
76.	Infrastructure Taxonomies	28 March	Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh
77.	1 st Chief Science Advisers' Roundtable	28-29 March	Ramnagar, Uttarakhand
78.	2 nd Agriculture Deputies Meeting	29-31 March	Chandigarh, Chandigarh
79.	AMIS Rapid Response Forum	29 March	Chandigarh, Chandigarh
80.	2 nd Sherpa Meeting	30 March-2 April	Kumarakom, Kerala
81.	Digital Public Infrastructure & Green Development	30 March	Kumarakom, Kerala
82.	1 st Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting	30 March-1 April	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
83.	Early warning early action Disaster resilient infrastructure	30 March	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
84.	2 nd International Financial Architecture Working Group Meeting	30-31 March	Paris, France
85.	Strengthening GFSN in a fragmenting world	30 March	Paris, France
86.	2 nd Tourism Working Group Meeting	01-04 April	Darjeeling/Siliguri, West Bengal

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
87.	Adventure Tourism	02 April	Darjeeling/Siliguri, West Bengal
88.	2 nd Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting	02-04 April	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
89.	Global green hydrogen ecosystem	02 April	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
90.	2 nd Employment Working Group Meeting	03-05 April	Guwahati, Assam
91.	Science 20 event	03-04 April	Agartala, Tripura
92.	B20 Event	04-06 April	Kohima, Nagaland
93.	G20 EMPOWER Meeting	05-06 April	Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
94.	2 nd Development Working Group Meeting	06-09 April	Kumarakom, Kerala
95.	Data for Development, Just Green Transitions & LiFE	06 April	Kumarakom, Kerala
96.	2 nd Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting	12-13 April	Washington DC, US
97.	Roadmap for implementing recommendations of G20 independent review of MDBs; Macro financial implications of crypto assets	12 April	Washington DC, US
98.	Harnessing Living Heritage For a sustainable Future	13 April	Virtual
99.	Women 20 Meeting	13-14 April	Jaipur, Rajasthan
100.	2 nd Health Working Group Meeting	17-19 April	Goa
101.	Space Economy Leaders' Precursor Meeting	17-18 April	Shillong, Meghalaya
102.	Meeting of Agriculture Chief Scientists (MACS)	17-19 April	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
103.	2 nd Digital Economy Working Group Meeting	17-19 April	Hyderabad, Telangana
104.	Role of global tech sector	17 April	Hyderabad, Telangana
105.	Digital Health	18 April	Goa
106.	Promotion of Cultural and Creative Industries and the Creative Economy	19 April	Virtual
107.	RIIG event (SERB)	19-20 April	Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh
108.	Leveraging Digital Technologies for the Protection and Promotion of Culture	20 April	Virtual
109.	3 rd Education Working Group Meeting	26-28 April	Bhubaneswar, Odisha
110.	Exhibition on Future of Work	26 Apr	Bhubaneswar, Odisha
111.	Youth 20 event	26-28 April	Leh, Ladakh
112.	Science 20 event	01-02 May	Kavaratti, Lakshadweep
113.	3 rd Development Working Group Meeting	09-11 May	Goa
114.	Seminars on Data for Development & Women Led Development	09-11 May	Goa
115.	2 nd Culture Working Group Meeting	15-17 May	Bhubaneswar, Odisha
116.	Exhibition titled "Sustain: The Craft Idiom"	15-17 May	Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
117.	3 rd Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting	15-17 May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
118.	Seminars on Transition Roadmap; Biofuels	15-17 May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
119.	RIIG event (MoES)	18-19 May	Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu
120.	3 rd Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting	21-23 May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
121.	Beach cleaning exercise	21-May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
122.	3 rd Tourism Working Group Meeting	22-24 May	Srinagar, J&K
123.	3 rd Tourism WG Side event	22-24 May	Srinagar, J&K
124.	2 nd Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting	23-25 May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
125.	2 nd Disaster Risk Reduction Side event	23-25 May	Mumbai, Maharashtra
126.	2 nd Trade & Investment Working Group Meeting	23-25 May	Bengaluru, Karnataka
127.	2 nd Trade & Investment: Side event	23-25 May	Bengaluru, Karnataka
128.	2 nd Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting	25-27 May	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
129.	2 nd Anti-Corruption Side Event	25-27 May	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
130.	3 rd Employment Working Group Meeting	31 May-2 June	Geneva, Switzerland
131.	3 rd Employment Working Group Meeting Side Event	31 May-2 June	Geneva, Switzerland
132.	3 rd Health Working Group Meeting side event	04-06 June	Hyderabad, Telangana
133.	3 rd International Financial Architecture Working Group Meeting	05-07 June	Goa
134.	3 rd International Financial Architecture Working Group Meeting Side Event	05-07 June	Goa
135.	4 th Development Working Group Meeting	06-09 June	Delhi, Delhi
136.	3 rd Health Working Group Meeting	04-06 June	Hyderabad, Telangana
137.	4 th Development Working Group Meeting	06-09 June	Delhi, Delhi
138.	Development Ministers' Meeting	11-13 June	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
139.	SAI 20 Summit	12-14 June	Goa
140.	3 rd Framework Working Group Meeting	12-14 June	Kochi, Kerala
141.	3 rd Framework Working Group Meeting side event	12-14 June	Kochi, Kerala
142.	3 rd Digital Economy Working Group Meeting	12-14 June	Pune, Maharashtra
143.	3 rd Digital Economy Working Group Meeting side event	12-14 June	Pune, Maharashtra
144.	3 rd Agriculture Deputies Meeting	15-17 June	Hyderabad, Telangana

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
145.	3 rd Agriculture Deputies Meeting side event	15-17 June	Hyderabad, Telangana
146.	Women 20 Summit	15-16 June	Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu
147.	Science 20 event	16-17 June	Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh
148.	Agriculture Ministers' Meeting	17 June	Hyderabad, Telangana
149.	4 th Tourism Working Group Meeting	19-20 June	Goa
150.	4 th Tourism Working Group Meeting side event	19-20 June	Goa
151.	3 rd Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting	19-21 June	Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu
152.	3 rd Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting side event	19-21 June	Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu
153.	4 th Education Working Group Meeting	20-21 June	Pune, Maharashtra
154.	4 th Education Working Group Meeting side event	20-21 June	Pune, Maharashtra
155.	Tourism Ministers' Meeting	21-22 June	Goa
156.	Labour 20 Summit	22-23 June	Patna, Bihar
157.	Education Ministers' Meeting	22 June	Pune, Maharashtra
158.	3 rd Joint Health-Finance Task Force Meeting	22 June	Virtual
159.	3 rd Meeting for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion	24-26 June	Bali, Indonesia
160.	3 rd Infrastructure Working Group Meeting	26-28 June	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
161.	Side event High level seminar on road map to sustainable cities	26-28 June	Rishikesh, Uttarakhand
162.	B20 Event	01 July	Surat, Gujarat
163.	StartUp20 Summit Meeting	03-04 July	Gurugram, Haryana
164.	RIIG Summit	04-05 July	Mumbai, Maharashtra
165.	Research Ministers' Meeting	05-06 July	Mumbai, Maharashtra
166.	Space Economy Leaders' Meeting (SELM)	06-07 July	Bengaluru, Karnataka
167.	Urban 20 Summit	07-08 July	Ahmedabad, Gujarat
168.	3 rd Culture Working Group Meeting	09-12 July	Hampi, Karnataka
169.	Side event at JSW	09-12 July	Hampi, Karnataka
170.	3 rd Trade & Investment Working Group Meeting	10-12 July	Kevadia, Gujarat
171.	Seminar on Trade infrastructure	10-12 July	Kevadia, Gujarat
172.	3 rd Sherpa Meeting	13-16 July	Hampi, Karnataka
173.	Conference on Crime and Security in the age of NFTs, AI and Metaverse	13-14 July	Gurugram, Haryana
174.	3 rd Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting	14-15 July	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
175.	3 rd Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting	17-18 July	Gandhinagar, Gujarat

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
176.	4 th Energy Transitions Working Group Meeting	19-20 July	Goa
177.	4 th Employment Working Group Meeting	19-20 July	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
178.	Science 20 Summit	21-22 July	Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
179.	Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting	21 July	Indore, Madhya Pradesh
180.	Energy Ministers' Meeting	22 July	Goa
181.	3 rd Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group Meeting	24-26 July	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
182.	DRR Side event	24-26 July	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
183.	4 th Environment and Climate Sustainability Working Group Meeting	26-27 July	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
184.	ECSWG Side event	26-27 July	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
185.	Environment and Climate Sustainability Ministers' Meeting	28 Jul	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
186.	Civil 20 Summit	30-31 July	Jaipur, Rajasthan
187.	G20 EMPOWER Summit	01-02 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
188.	G20 EMPOWER Side event	01-02 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
189.	Think 20 Summit	01-02 August	Mysuru, Karnataka
190.	Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment	02-04 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
191.	3 rd Anti-Corruption Working Group Meeting	09-11 August	Kolkata, West Bengal
192.	Anti-Corruption Ministers' Meeting	12 August	Kolkata, West Bengal
193.	4 th Digital Economy Working Group Meeting	16-18 Aug	Bengaluru, Karnataka
194.	Side event: Digital Innovation Alliance Summit	16-18 Aug	Bengaluru, Karnataka
195.	Youth 20 Summit Meeting	17-20 August	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
196.	4 th Health Working Group Meeting	17 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
197.	Side event on AYUSH	17 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
198.	Health Ministers' Meeting	18-19 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
199.	Digital Economy Ministers' Meeting	19 August	Bengaluru, Karnataka
200.	Joint Health-Finance Ministers' Meeting	19 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
201.	4 th Trade & Investment Working Group	21-22 August	Jaipur, Rajasthan
202.	4 th Culture Working Group meeting	24-25 August	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
203.	Trade & Investment Ministers' Meeting	24-25 August	Jaipur, Rajasthan
204.	B20 Summit	25-27 August	Delhi, Delhi
205.	Culture Ministers' Meeting	26 August	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
206.	2 nd Chief Science Advisors Roundtable	27-29 August	Gandhinagar, Gujarat
207.	4 th Sherpa Meeting	03-06 September	Gurugram, Haryana

Sl. No.	Meetings	Date	City, State
208.	B20 Event	04-05 September	Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh
209.	Finance Deputies Meeting	05-06 September	Delhi, Delhi
210.	Joint Sherpas and Finance Deputies Meeting	06 September	Delhi, Delhi
211.	G20 Summit	09-10 Sep	Delhi, Delhi
212.	4 th Sustainable Finance Working Group Meeting	13-14 September	Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh
213.	4 th Meeting for the Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion	14-16 September	Mumbai, Maharashtra
214.	GPFI Side event	14-16 September	Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh
215.	4 th Framework Working Group Meeting	18-19 September	Raipur, Chhattisgarh
216.	4 th International Financial Architecture Working Group Meeting	20-22 September	Seoul, Republic of Korea
217.	IFAWG Side event	20-22 September	Seoul, Republic of Korea
218.	4 th Infrastructure Working Group Meeting	21-22 September	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
219.	IWG Side event	21-22 September	Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh
220.	G20 Expert Group on Strengthening MDBs	26 September	Delhi, Delhi
221.	G20 Asia Pacific Regional Workshop on International Taxation	05 October	Nagpur, Maharashtra
222.	4 th Finance and Central Bank Deputies Meeting	11 October	Marrakesh, Morocco
223.	4 th Finance Ministers' and Central Bank Governors Meeting	12-13 October	Marrakesh
224.	Parliament 20 Summit	12-14 October	Delhi, Delhi
225.	Parliament Forum on LiFE	12 October	Delhi, Delhi
226.	B20 Event	17 November	Shimla, Himachal Pradesh
227.	G20 Virtual Summit	22 November	Virtual

Annexure II

List of Cities and States / UTs for G20 Meetings

Sl. No.	G20 Cities List	State / Union Territory
1.	Swaraj Dweep (Havelock) - Curtain raiser	Andaman & Nicobar Islands
2.	Udaipur	Rajasthan
3.	Mumbai	Maharashtra
4.	Bengaluru	Karnataka
5.	Kolkata	West Bengal
6.	Delhi	Delhi
7.	Pune	Maharashtra
8.	Thiruvananthapuram	Kerala
9.	Gandhinagar	Gujarat
10.	Hyderabad	Telangana
11.	Puducherry	Puducherry
12.	Chandigarh	Chandigarh
13.	Chennai	Tamil Nadu
14.	Guwahati	Assam
15.	Jodhpur	Rajasthan
16.	Rann of Kutch	Gujarat
17.	Ahmedabad	Gujarat
18.	Agra	Uttar Pradesh
19.	Indore	Madhya Pradesh
20.	Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh
21.	Imphal	Manipur
22.	Khajuraho	Madhya Pradesh
23.	Aurangabad	Maharashtra
24.	Gurugram	Haryana
25.	Aizawl	Mizoram
26.	Ranchi	Jharkhand
27.	Gangtok	Sikkim
28.	Amritsar	Punjab
29.	Nagpur	Maharashtra
30.	Itanagar	Arunachal Pradesh
31.	Dibrugarh	Assam
32.	Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh
33.	Ramnagar	Uttarakhand
34.	Kumarakom	Kerala

Sl. No.	G20 Cities List	State / Union Territory
35.	Darjeeling	West Bengal
36.	Agartala	Tripura
37.	Kohima	Nagaland
38.	Jaipur	Rajasthan
39.	Goa	Goa
40.	Varanasi	Uttar Pradesh
41.	Shillong	Meghalaya
42.	Dharamshala	Himachal Pradesh
43.	Bhubaneswar	Odisha
44.	Leh	Ladakh
45.	Bangaram	Lakshadweep Islands
46.	Shimla	Himachal Pradesh
47.	Diu	Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu
48.	Srinagar	Jammu & Kashmir
49.	Rishikesh	Uttarakhand
50.	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh
51.	Kochi	Kerala
52.	Mahabalipuram	Tamil Nadu
53.	Kevadia	Gujarat
54.	Patna	Bihar
55.	Surat	Gujarat
56.	Hampi	Karnataka
57.	Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
58.	Mysuru	Karnataka
59.	Greater Noida	Uttar Pradesh
60.	Raipur	Chhattisgarh

Annexure III

G20 Mechanisms

Sherpa Track <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agriculture Working Group 2. Anti-corruption Working Group 3. Culture Working Group 4. Digital Economy Working Group 5. Disaster Risk Reduction Working Group 6. Development Working Group 7. Education Working Group 8. Employment Working Group 9. Environment & Climate Sustainability Working Group 10. Energy Transitions Working Group 11. Health Working Group 12. Trade & Investment Working Group 13. Tourism Working Group 	Finance Track <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Framework Working Group 2. International Financial Architecture 3. Infrastructure Working Group 4. Sustainable Finance Working Group 5. Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion 6. Joint Finance & Health Task Force 7. International Taxation agenda 8. Financial Sector issues
Engagement Groups <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business20 2. Civil20 3. Labour20 4. Parliament20 5. Science20 6. SAI20 7. Startup20 8. Think20 9. Urban20 10. Women20 11. Youth20 	Initiatives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Research and Innovation Initiative Gathering (RIIG) 2. Space Economy Leaders' Meeting (SELM) 3. G20 EMPOWER 4. Chief Science Advisers' Roundtable (CSAR) 5. Meeting of Agricultural Chief Scientists (MACS) 6. G20 Conference on "Crime and Security in the age of NFTs, AI and Metaverse"
Standalone Ministerial Meetings <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Foreign Ministers' Meeting 2. Ministerial Meeting on Women Empowerment 	

Annexure IV

Participation at the New Delhi G20 Leaders' Summit (09-10 September 2023)

I. G20 Members

Sl. No	G20 Members	Name of Leader/Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	African Union	Azali Assoumani	President of Comoros, President of AU
2.	Argentina	Alberto Fernández	President
3.	Australia	Anthony Albanese	Prime Minister
4.	Brazil	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	President
5.	Canada	Justin Trudeau	Prime Minister
6.	China	Li Qiang	Premier
7.	EU Commission	Ursula von der Leyen	President
8.	EU Council	Charles Michel	President
9.	France	Emmanuel Macron	President
10.	Germany	Olaf Scholz	Chancellor
11.	Indonesia	Joko Widodo	President
12.	Italy	Giorgia Meloni	Prime Minister
13.	Japan	Fumio Kishida	Prime Minister
14.	Mexico	Raquel Buenrostro Sanchez	Economy Minister
15.	Republic of Korea	Yoon Suk Yeol	President
16.	Russia	Sergey Lavrov	Foreign Minister
17.	Saudi Arabia	Mohammed bin Salman	Crown Prince
18.	South Africa	Cyril Ramaphosa	President
19.	Türkiye	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	President
20.	UK	Rishi Sunak	Prime Minister
21.	USA	Joe Biden	President

II. Guest Countries

Sl. No	Country	Name of Leader/Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	Bangladesh	Sheikh Hasina	Prime Minister
2.	Egypt	Abdel Fattah El-Sisi	President
3.	Mauritius	Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister
4.	Netherlands	Mark Rutte	Prime Minister
5.	Nigeria	Bola Ahmed Tinubu	President
6.	Oman	Assad bin Tariq bin Taimur Al Said	Deputy Prime Minister
7.	Singapore	Lee Hsien Loong	Prime Minister
8.	Spain	Nadia Calvino	Vice President of the Government
9.	UAE	Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan	President

III. International Organizations

Sl. No.	International Organization	Name of Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Masatsugu Asakawa	President
2.	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)	Amit Prothi	Director-General
3.	Financial Stability Board (FSB)	Klaas Knot	Chair
4.	International Labour Organization (ILO)	Gilbert F. Houngbo	Director-General
5.	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Kristalina Georgieva	Managing Director
6.	International Solar Alliance (ISA)	Ajay Mathur	Director-General
7.	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	Mathias Cormann	Secretary-General
8.	World Bank (WB)	Ajaypal Singh Banga	President
9.	World Health Organization (WHO)	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus	Director-General
10.	World Trade Organization (WTO)	Ngozi Okonjo Iweala	Director-General
11.	United Nations (UN)	António Guterres	Secretary-General

Annexure V

Participation at the G20 Virtual Leaders' Summit (22 November 2023)

I. G20 Members

Sl. No	G20 Members	Name of Leader / Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	Australia	Anthony Albanese	Prime Minister
2.	Japan	Fumio Kishida	Prime Minister
3.	Republic of Korea	Han Duck-Soo	Prime Minister
4.	China	Li Qiang	Premier
5.	Indonesia	Airlangga Hartarto	Coordinating Minister for Economic Affairs
6.	Saudi Arabia	Mohammed Al-Jadaan	Finance Minister
7.	Russia	Vladimir Putin	President
8.	Türkiye	Recep Tayyip Erdoğan	President
9.	South Africa	Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor	Minister of International Relations and Cooperation (Foreign Minister)
10.	Germany	Olaf Scholz	Chancellor
11.	Italy	Giorgia Meloni	Prime Minister
12.	EU Commission	Ursula von der Leyen	President
13.	EU Council	Rodolphe Ruggeri (President Charles Michel sent a written statement)	Senior Economic Advisor
14.	France	Emmanuel Macron	President
15.	UK	Oliver Dowden	Deputy Prime Minister
16.	Brazil	Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva	President
17.	Argentina	Alberto Fernández	President
18.	USA	Janet Yellen	Secretary of the Treasury
19.	Canada	Justin Pierre James Trudeau	Prime Minister
20.	Mexico	Alicia Barcena	Secretary of Foreign Affairs (Foreign Minister)
21.	African Union	Azali Assoumani	President of Comoros President of AU

II. Guest Countries

Sl. No	Country	Name of Leader / Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	Singapore	Lee Hsien Loong	Prime Minister
2.	Bangladesh	Sheikh Hasina	Prime Minister
3.	Mauritius	Pravind Kumar Jugnauth	Prime Minister
4.	Oman	Assad bin Tariq bin Taimur Al Said	Deputy Prime Minister
5.	UAE	Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan	President

Sl. No	Country	Name of Leader / Head of Delegation	Designation
6.	Egypt	Hala Helmy El-Said (President El-Sisi sent a written statement)	Minister of Planning & Economic Development
7.	Nigeria	Kashim Shettima Mustapha	Vice President
8.	Netherlands	Mark Rutte	Prime Minister
9.	Spain	Pedro Sánchez	President of the Government

III. International Organizations

Sl. No	International Organization	Name of Head of Delegation	Designation
1.	United Nations (UN)	António Guterres	Secretary-General
2.	Asian Development Bank (ADB)	Masatsugu Asakawa	President
3.	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)	Amit Prothi	Director-General
4.	Financial Stability Board (FSB)	Klaas Knot	Chair
5.	International Monetary Fund (IMF)	Kristalina Georgieva	Managing Director
6.	International Labour Organization (ILO)	Gilbert F. Hounbo	Director-General
7.	International Solar Alliance (ISA)	Ajay Mathur	Director-General
8.	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)	Mathias Cormann	Secretary-General
9.	World Bank (WB)	Ajaypal Singh Banga	President
10.	World Health Organization (WHO)	Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus	Director-General
11.	World Trade Organization (WTO)	Ngozi Okonjo Iweala	Director-General

Annexure VI

List of Full Powers since January 2023

Sl. No	Subject	Date of Issuance	Country
1.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Kingdom of Spain regarding cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Custom Matters	08.12.2023	Spain
2.	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Agreement Relating to Supply of Chain Resilience	14.11.2023	IPEF
3.	Social Security Agreement between the Argentine Republic and the Republic of India	21.07.2023	Argentina
4.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Romania on Defence Cooperation	14.03.2023	Romania

Annexure VII

List of Ratifications since January 2023

Sl. No.	Subject	Country	Date of signing	Date of ratification
1.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters.	Armenia	23.07.2023	09.08.2023
2.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Australia on Audio-Visual Co-production	Australia	10.03.2023	14.08.2023
3.	Agreement signed between the Government of the Republic of India and the Austrian Federal Government on visa exemption for the holders of Diplomatic Passport	Austria	13.05.2023	09.10.2023
4.	Agreement between the Government of Republic of India and the Austrian Federal Government on a Comprehensive Migration Mobility partnership.	Austria	13.05.2023	10.07.2023
5.	Protocol Amending the Convention between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil for Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with Respect to Taxes on Income	Brazil	24.08.2022	13.06.2023
6.	Headquarters Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient infrastructure (CDRI).	CDRI	22.08.2022	09.08.2023
7.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Fiji on exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports	Fiji	16.02.2023	29.09.2023
8.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Germany on Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership	Germany	05.12.2022	17.02.2023
9.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Development and Food of the Hellenic Republic on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture	Hellenic Republic	25.08.2023	29.09.2023
10.	Article 3 BIS Protocol Relating to an Amendment to the Convention of International Civil Aviation	International Civil Aviation	07.12.1944	05.09.2023
11.	Protocol Relating to an Amendment to Article 56 of the Convention of International Civil Aviation	International Civil Aviation	07.12.1944	05.09.2023
12.	Protocol Relating to an Amendment to Article 50(a) of the Convention of International Civil Aviation	International Civil Aviation	07.12.1944	05.09.2023
13.	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity Agreement relating to Supply Chain Resilience	IPEF	14.11.2023	28.12.2023
14.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Palau on Exemption from Visa Requirement for holder of Diplomatic & Official Passport	Palau	18.07.2022	24.11.2023

Sl. No.	Subject	Country	Date of signing	Date of ratification
15.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines regarding India Grant Assistance for Implementation of Quick Impact Project	Philippines	07.02.2023	31.03.2023
16.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Russian Federation on Technology Protection due to Cooperation in the Field of Research and Use of Outer Space for Peaceful Purposes and in Building and Operation of Launch Vehicles and Ground- Based Space Infrastructure	Russia	01.12.2021	05.12.2023
17.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the field of Combating illicit trafficking and smuggling of Narcotics drugs, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors	Saudi Arabia	29.10.2019	21.07.2023

Annexure VIII

List of Treaties, Agreements, MoUs concluded in 2023

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
1.	Social Security Agreement between the Argentine Republic and the Republic of India	29.09.2023	Yet to come into force	Argentina	Ministry of External Affairs
2.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation and mutual assistance in custom Matters	23.06.2023	09.08.2023	Armenia	Ministry of Finance
3.	Audio Visual Co- production Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and Government of Australia	10.03.2023	Yet to come into force	Australia	Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
4.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of Australia and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in Sports	07.03.2023	07.03.2023	Australia	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
5.	Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Australia	23.05.2023	23.05.2023	Australia	Ministry of External Affairs
6.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Austrian Federal Government on a Comprehensive Migration and Mobility Partnership	13.05.2023	01.09.2023	Austria	Ministry of External Affairs
7.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Austrian Federal Government on Visa Exemption for the holders of Diplomatic Passports of the Republic of India and the Holders of Diplomatic Passports of the Republic of Austria.	13.05.2023	01.09.2023	Austria	Ministry of External Affairs
8.	Host Country Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Secretariat of the Bay of Bengal initiative for Multi Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) for Establishing BIMSTEC Centre for Weather and Climate in India	24.08.2023	24.08.2023	BIMSTEC	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
9.	Agreement between Embassy of the Republic of India, Cambodia and Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) regarding Grant Assistance by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India for Making Botum Sakor, Srae Ambel, Thma Bang Districts and Trapeang Rung Commune in Koh Kong Province, Kingdom of Cambodia Mine Free	31.08.2023	31.08.2023	Cambodia	Ministry of External Affairs
10.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Chile on Expansion of Cooperation in the Agriculture Sector and Allied Sectors.	16.05.2023	16.05.2023	Chile	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
11.	Agreement Between India and China on Political Parameters and Guiding Principles for the Settlement of India-China Boundary Question	12.09.2023	12.09.2023	China	Ministry of Home Affairs
12.	Cultural Exchange Programme Between India and Republic of Colombia for the Period 2023-26.	26.04.023	26.04.023	Colombia	Ministry of External Affairs
13.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of India and Agencia Nacional De Regulacion, Control Y Vigilancia Sanitria Arcsa, Doctor Leopoldo Izquieta Perez on Cooperation in the Field of Medical Products Regulation	07.11.2023	07.11.2023	Ecuador	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
14.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Republic of India and the Arab Republic of Egypt on in the Field of Culture	25.01.2023	25.01.2023	Egypt	Ministry of Culture
15.	Memorandum of Cooperation between Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and Ministry of communication and Information Technology of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in the field of Information Technology	25.01.2023	25.01.2023	Egypt	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
16.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) Republic of India and the Egyptian Computer Emergency Readiness Team (EG- CERT) National Telecom Regulatory Authority (NTRA) Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, the Arab Republic of Egypt in the area of Cyber Security	25.01.2023	25.01.2023	Egypt	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
17.	Memorandum of Understanding between The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors	25.06.2023	25.06.2023	Egypt	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
18.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt on Cooperation in Youth Matters	25.01.2023	25.01.2023	Egypt	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
19.	Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of India and the Arab Republic of Egypt	25.06.2023	25.06.2023	Egypt	Ministry of External Affairs
20.	Strategic Partnership Agreement Between the Republic of India and The Arab Republic of Egypt	25.06.2023	Yet to come into force	Egypt	Ministry of External Affairs
21.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Equatorial Guinea for authorizing the dependents of members of a diplomatic mission or consular post to engage in gainful employment	10.05.2023	10.05.2023	Equatorial Guinea	Ministry of External Affairs
22.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Fiji on exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports	16.02.2023	Yet to come into force	Fiji	Ministry of External Affairs
23.	Joint Declaration of Intent in the area of Sports between the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Sports and Olympics and Paralympic Games of the French Republic.	07.07.2023	07.07.2023	France	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
24.	Letter of Intent on the New National Museum and Cooperation on Museology	13.07.2023	13.07.2023	France	Ministry of Culture
25.	Technical Arrangement on Civil Aviation Security between the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry for Transport at the Ministry of Ecological Transition of the French Republic	13.07.2023	13.07.2023	France	Ministry of Civil Aviation
26.	Air Services Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana	22.04.2023	Yet to come into force	Guyana	Ministry of External Affairs
27.	Declaration of Intent on Migration and Mobility between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana.	22.04.2023	22.04.2023	Guyana	Ministry of External Affairs
28.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Rural Development and Food of the Hellenic Republic on Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture.	25.08.2023	30.11.2023	Hellenic Republic	Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
29.	Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of India and Government of the State of Israel on Facilitation of the Temporary Employment of Indian Workers in Specific Labour Market Sectors in the State of Israel	03.11.2023	Yet to come into force	Israel	Ministry of Labour & Employment
30.	Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of India and Government of the State of Israel on Facilitation of the Temporary Employment of Indian Workers in Specific Labour Market Sectors in the State of Israel	03.11.2023	Yet to come into force	Israel	Ministry of Labour & Employment
31.	Declaration of Intent between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Italian Republic on Migration and Mobility	07.03.2023	07.03.2023	Italy	Ministry of External Affairs
32.	Executive Programme for Cultural Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Italian Republic for the Years 2023-2027	2.11.2023	02.11.2023	Italy	Ministry of Culture

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
33.	Migration and Mobility Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Italian Republic	02.11.2023	Yet to come into force	Italy	Ministry of External Affairs
34.	Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Italian Republic on cooperation in the field of defence	9.10.2023	Yet to come into force	Italy	Ministry of Defence
35.	Executive Programme of Cultural Cooperation Between Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Italian Republic for the Years 2023-2027	02.11.2023	02.11.2023	Italy	Ministry of Culture
36.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Civil Aviation of the Government of Republic of India and the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure and Transport of the Government of the Republic of Korea.	31.05.2023	31.05.2023	Korea	Ministry of Civil Aviation
37.	Memorandum of Understanding regarding Indian Grant Assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in Lao People's Democratic Republic between the Ministry of Education and Sports of Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India	27.07.2023	27.07.2023	Laos	Ministry of External Affairs
38.	Memorandum of Understanding regarding Indian Grant Assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in Lao People's Democratic Republic between the Ministry of Health of Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India	27.07.2023	27.07.2023	Laos	Ministry of External Affairs
39.	Memorandum of Understanding regarding Indian Grant Assistance for implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in Lao People's Democratic Republic between the Ministry of Technology and Communications of the Lao People's Democratic Republic and the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India	27.07.2023	27.07.2023	Laos	Ministry of External Affairs
40.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Madagascar Regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Project.	11.09.2023	Yet to come into force	Madagascar	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
41.	Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of Malaysia and the Government of Republic of India on Cooperation in Broadcasting	07.11.2023	07.11.2023	Malaysia	Ministry of Information & Broadcasting
42.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of a Sports Complex in Gdh, Gadhdhoo	18.01.2023	18.01.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
43.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Business Center Corporation, Ministry of Economic Development for Development of Arts Center in Male	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
44.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ga. Kondey Council for installation of Street Lights in Ga. Kondey.	11.07.2023	04.10.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
45.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ha. Utheemu Council for Utheemu Palace Roof Preservation and Development of Palace Surroundings Project.	11.07.2023	09.10.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
46.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Local Government Authority for Construction of Lh. Hinnavaru New Council office	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
47.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Education for procurement of 4 School Buses for Fuvamulah City, Kulhudhuffushi City. N. Kendhikuhludhoo and L. Gan	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
48.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Education for School Digitalisation Programme in L. Atoll Education Centre	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
49.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Education, Government of Maldives for School Digitalization Project in Th.Vilufushi.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
50.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Education, Government of Maldives for upgrading School Computer Lab.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
51.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Health for Establishment of Mental Health Unit at Abdul Samad Memorial Hospital	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
52.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives for Development of Mental Health Unit at R. Ungoofaaru Hospital.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
53.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Health, Government of Maldives for Upgrading F. Nilandhoo Hospital.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
54.	MoU between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of Outdoor Gym in Addu City, Hithadhoo Rasgedhara Dhaairaa	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
55.	MoU between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of Outdoor Gym in Gdh. Vaadhoo.	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
56.	MoU between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of Outdoor Gym in Ha. Dhindhoo.	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
57.	MoU between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of Sh. Milandhoo Running Track	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
58.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Youth, Sports and Community Empowerment for Development of Volley Court in Sh. Kanditheemu.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
59.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Sh. Foakaidhoo Council for Procurement of Furniture and Equipment for Sh. Foakaidhoo Community Centre.	11.07.2023	0910.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
60.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Maldives Regarding India Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects - Phase II through Local Bodies	18.01.2023	18.01.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
61.	Memorandum of Understanding between Maldives Immigration, the Government of the Republic of Maldives and Bureau of Immigration, the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation of Immigration Matters	24.07.2023	24.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of Home Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
62.	Memorandum of Understanding between High Commission of India, Male and Ministry of foreign Affairs, Government of Maldives and Ministry of Fisheries, Marine Resources and Agriculture, Government of Maldives for establishment of Geydhoshu Mas Plant in M.Dhiggaru.	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	Maldives	Ministry of External Affairs
63.	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Republic of India and the Ministry of Information Technology, Communication and Innovation, Republic of Mauritius on cooperation in the field of Information and Communication Technology	28.04.2023	28.04.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
64.	Memorandum of Understanding between Prasar Bharati and Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation for cooperation and collaboration on broadcasting	12.05.2023	12.05.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
65.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius on Employment of Workers from India	10.05.2023	10.05.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
66.	Memorandum of Understanding concerning cooperation on the development of a Joint Small Satellite between the Indian Space Research Organization, Department of Space, Government of India and the Mauritius Research and Innovation Council (under the aegis of the Ministry of Information technology, Communication and Innovation), Government of the Republic of Mauritius	01.11.2023	Yet to come into force	Mauritius	ISRO
67.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster II)	10.01.2023	10.01.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
68.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster III)	10.01.2023	10.01.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
69.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster IV)	10.01.2023	10.01.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
70.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster IX)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
71.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster V)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
72.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster VI)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
73.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster VII) Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
74.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster VIII)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
75.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster X)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
76.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster XI)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
77.	Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of Community Development Projects in Mauritius (Cluster XII)	19.06.2023	19.06.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of External Affairs
78.	Programme for Cultural Cooperation Between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Mauritius for the Year 2023-2026.	06.07.2023	06.07.2023	Mauritius	Ministry of Culture
79.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Embassy of India, Yangon the Government of the Republic of India and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation the Government of the Republic of Myanmar for Departmental E-Library Project Under Quick Impact Projects	06.11.2023	06.11.2023	Myanmar	Ministry of External Affairs
80.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Embassy of India, Yangon the Government of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Science and Technology the Government of the Republic of Myanmar for the Electrification of Rural Villages by Small Wind Energy in Kungyangon Township, Yangon Under Quick Impact Projects	06.11.2023	06.11.2023	Myanmar	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
81.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Embassy of India, Yangon the Government of the Republic of India and Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Conservation the Government of the Republic of Myanmar for Water Supply Using Solar Power in the Drought Affected Villages of Central Dry Zone of Myanmar Under Quick Impact Projects	06.11.2023	06.11.2023	Myanmar	Ministry of External Affairs
82.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Nepal for Cooperation.	31.05.2023	31.05.2023	Nepal	Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas
83.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of Nepal	01.06.2023	01.06.2023	Nepal	Ministry of External Affairs
84.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India and Institute of Foreign Affairs (IFA), Nepal to establish institutional relationship	01.06.2023	01.06.2023	Nepal	Ministry of External Affairs
85.	Treaty of Transit between the Government of India and the Government of Nepal.	01.06.2023	01.06.2023	Nepal	Ministry of Road Transport and Highways of India
86.	Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Cooperation between the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways of India and the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Netherlands	03.04.2023	03.04.2023	Netherlands	Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways
87.	Agreement between the Government of the Sultanate of Oman and the Government of Republic of India concerning the gainful employment of accompanying persons of official employees	15.12.2023	Yet to come into force	Oman	Ministry of External Affairs
88.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of ICT of Papua New Guinea on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.	28.07.2023	28.07.2023	Papua New Guinea	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
89.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of information and Communications Technology of Papua New Guinea on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.	28.07.2023	28.07.2023	Papua New Guinea	Ministry of External Affairs
90.	Agreement between the Republic of India and the Independent state of Papua New Guinea on Reciprocal Visa Waiver for Holders of Diplomatic and official Passports.	21.05.2023	Yet to come into force	Papua New Guinea	Ministry of External Affairs
91.	Memorandum of Understanding on Foreign office Consultations (FOC) between the Ministry of External Affairs and the Department of Foreign Affairs of the Independent State of Papua New Guinea	21.05.2023	21.05.2023	Papua New Guinea	Ministry of External Affairs
92.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Finance, Government of the Republic of Philippines and the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of the Republic of India on the Constitution of Joint Working Group on Financial Technology	19.06.2023	Yet to come into force	Philippines	Ministry of Finance
93.	Agreement Between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Philippines Regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs)	07.02.2023	Yet to come into force	Philippines	Ministry of External Affairs
94.	Indo-Pacific Framework for Prosperity agreement relating to supply chain resilience	14.11.2023	Yet to come into force	IPEF	Ministry of Commerce & Industry
95.	Defence Cooperation Agreement between Government of India and Government of Romania	28.03.2023	Yet to come into force	Romania	Ministry of Defence
96.	Land Acquisition Agreement between Government of India and Government of Romania	30.01.2023	Yet to come into force	Romania	Ministry of External Affairs
97.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles on Cooperation in the Field of Youth and Sports	23.11.2023	23.11.2023	Seychelles	Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
98.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Small Development Projects (Phase-II) through local bodies, educational and vocational institutions	23.11.2023	23.11.2023	Seychelles	Ministry of External Affairs
99.	Culture Exchange Programme (CEP) between the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of India for the year 2023- 25	04.03.2023	04.03.2023	Slovak Republic	Ministry of Culture
100.	MoU on cooperation in the field of Regulation of the safe use Nuclear Energy for Peaceful Purposes	25.09.2023	Yet to come into force	Slovakia	Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
101.	MoU between the Government of the Republic of South Africa and the Government of the Republic of India on Cooperation in the Re- introduction of Cheetah in the Republic of India	17.01.2023	17.01.2023	South Africa	Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
102.	Agreement between Government of India and Government of the Republic of Suriname regarding India Grant assistance for implementation of quick impact projects.	10.03.2023	10.03.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs
103.	MoU between the MeitY of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Entrepreneurship and Technological Innovation of the Republic of Suriname on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation	12.06.2023	12.06.2023	Suriname	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
104.	Work plan Under MoU between the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries of the Republic of Suriname for Cooperation in the Field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors for the Period of 2023-2027	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Suriname	Ministry Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare
105.	MoU between Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Directorate of Public Green and Waste Management of the Ministry of Public Works of the Republic of Suriname on Promoting Recreational activities for the Society in Nickerie, by rehabilitating the DC Roblesplein	03.17.2023	03.17.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
106.	MoU between Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Directorate of Sports of the Ministry of Regional Development and Sports of the Government of the Republic of Suriname on Setting up a Synthetic Jogging Track at Lelydorp in the district Wanica	17.03.2023	17.03.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs
107.	MoU between Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Education, Science and Culture of the Government of the Republic of Suriname on Supporting ICT Education of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Secondary Schools in Suriname by upgrading IT Equipment at the Educational Classroom of Natin	17.03.2023	17.03.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs
108.	MoU between Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Directorate of Civil Technical Works of the Ministry of Public Works of the Government of the Republic of Suriname on Promoting Safe Crossings for Pedestrians by Installation of Two Control Crossing Facilities near Schools in Paramaribo	17.03.2023	17.03.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs
109.	MoU between Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences of the Anton De Kom University (ADEKUS) of Suriname on Sustainable Support of a chemical teaching laboratory at the faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences (FWNW) of the Anton De Kom University of Suriname by Amplification of the Electrical Network and Purchase of relevant supplies	17.03.2023	17.03.2023	Suriname	Ministry of External Affairs
110.	MoU Between Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Government of The Republic of India and Ministry of Health Government of The Republic of Suriname on Cooperation in the Field of Medical Products Regulation	04.06.2023	04.06.2023	Suriname	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
111.	Cultural Exchange Programme between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania for the Years 2023-24.	09.10.2023	09.10.2023	Tanzania	Ministry of Culture

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
112.	Memorandum of Cooperation between National Sports Council of Tanzania and the Sports Authority of India on Cooperation in the Field of Sports	09.10.2023	09.10.2023	Tanzania	Sports Authority of India
113.	Memorandum of Cooperation between the MeitY of the Republic of India and the Ministry of ICT of the Republic of Tanzania on Cooperation in the Field of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.	09.10.2023	09.10.2023	Tanzania	Ministry of Electronics and information Technology
114.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority Under Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the Republic of India and Tanzania Investment Centre of the Republic of Tanzania for Setting Up of An Industrial Park in Tanzania.	09.10.2023	14.06.2023	Tanzania	Ministry of Ports, Shipping & waterways
115.	Technical Agreement Between the Indian Navy of the Republic of India and Tanzania Shipping Agencies Corporation of the United Republic of Tanzania	09.10.2023	09.10.2023	Tanzania	Ministry of Defence
116.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Digital Transformation of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago on cooperation in the field of sharing successful digital solutions implemented at population scale for digital transformation.	11.08.2023	11.08.2023	Trinidad and Tobago	Ministry of Electronics and information Technology
117.	Memorandum of Understanding between (i) the Ministry of Education of the Government of India, (ii) Department of Education and Knowledge, Abu Dhabi and (iii) Indian Institute of Technology Delhi for planning to establish Indian Institute of Technology Delhi – Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.	15.07.2023	15.07.2023	UAE	the Ministry of Education
118.	Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Industry & Advanced Technology of the United Arab Emirates on the Cooperation in the field of Industries and Advanced Technologies	05.10.2023	05.10.2023	UAE	Ministry of Commerce and Industry

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
119.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Education of the Republic of India and the Government of the United Arab Emirates on Cooperation in the Field of Education.	01.11.2023	01.11.2023	UAE	Ministry of Education
120.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India and the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, Government of the United Arab Emirates on cooperation in the field of Green Hydrogen Developments and Investments	13.01.2023	Yet to come into force	UAE	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
121.	Memorandum of Understanding between United Nations Development Programme and Indian Meteorological Department, Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India on strengthening of knowledge partnership in Weather Information Services	22.06.2023	22.06.2023	UNDP	Ministry of Earth Sciences
122.	The Artemis Accords Principles for Co-Operation in the Civil Exploration and Uses of Moon, Mars, Comets and Asteroids for Peaceful Purposes	21.06.2023	21.06.2023	USA	ISRO
123.	Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation between the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Emergency Situations of the Republic of Uzbekistan in the field of Disaster Management and Disaster Risk Reduction	20.04.2023	20.04.2023	Uzbekistan	Ministry of Home Affairs
124.	Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Japanese Language Education in India between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan	20.03.2023	20.03.2023	Japan	Ministry of External Affairs
125.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of the Sultanate of Oman and the MeitY of the Republic of India in the field of Information Technology	15.12.2023	15.12.2023	Oman	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology

Sl. No	Name	Date of Signing	Date of entry into force	Country/ Organization	Ministry
126.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India represented by the Ministry of Culture and the Government of the Sultanate of Oman represented by the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Youth in the field of Culture	15.12.2023	15.12.2023	Oman	Ministry of Culture
127.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Kenya on Cooperation in Sports	05.12.2023	05.12.2023	Kenya	Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports
128.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Kenya on Cooperation in the field of sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation.	05.12.2023	05.12.2023	Kenya	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
129.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka for Cooperation in the Field of Renewable Energy	21.07.2023	21.07.2023	Sri Lanka	Ministry of New & Renewable Energy
130.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of Republic of India and the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industrial and Digital Sovereignty of the French Republic on Cooperation in the field of Digital Technologies	13.07.2023	13.07.2023	France	Ministry of Electronic & Information Technology
131.	Joint Declaration between the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Centre National D'études Spatiales (CNES) concerning Joint Development in the field of Launchers	11.07.2023	11.07.2023	France	Department of Space
132.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Transport, Communications and Information Technology of the Sultanate of Oman and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology of the Republic of India in the field of Information Technology	15.12.2023	15.12.2023	Oman	Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
133.	Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Meteorological Department and United Nations World Food Programme on Technical and Strategic Collaboration	5.01.2023	05.01.23	United Nations World Food Programme	Ministry of Earth Science

Agreements and MOUs involving entities other than Ministries or Departments

Sl. No.	Title of the Instrument	Date of Signature	Country/Region/Place	Agency
1.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Indian Council of World Affairs (New Delhi, India) and Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research on Cooperation in the field of research.	23.03.2023	Belarus	Indian Council of World Affairs
2.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and University of Guelph, on establishment of the ICCR Chair on Indian Studies	25.05.2023	Canada	Indian Council for Cultural Studies
3.	Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the Chinese University of Hong Kong on the establishment of the ICCR Visiting Professorship of Indian Studies	10.05.2023	Hong Kong	Indian Council for Cultural Studies
4.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and the University of West Indies on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indology/Gandhian Studies Jamaica	29.03.2023	Jamaica	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
5.	Joint intent on Cooperation between the Lok Sabha of the Republic of India and the State Great Hural of Mongolia.	07.07.2023	Mongolia	Lok Sabha
6.	Protocol between the Secretariat of the Lok Sabha of the Republic of India and the Secretariat of the State Great Hural of Mongolia on Parliamentary Cooperation.	07.07.2023	Mongolia	Lok Sabha
7.	Letter of Agreement, ICCR with Jagiellonian University in Krakow, Faculty of Philology	28.09.2023	Poland	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
8.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Election Commission of India and the Electoral Commission of the Republic of Seychelles for cooperation in the field of Electoral Management and Administration	26.09.2023	Seychelles	Election Commission of India
9.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Supreme Court of the Republic of India and the Supreme Court of the Republic of Singapore in the field of Judicial Cooperation	7.09.2023	Singapore	Supreme Court of India
10.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and University of Valladolid on the establishment of the ICCR Chair for Hindi Language	29.09.2023	Spain	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
11.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Hindi Language	11.01.2023	Sri Lanka	Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Sl. No.	Title of the Instrument	Date of Signature	Country/ Region/Place	Agency
12.	Memorandum of Understanding between ICCR and University of Houston, Texas, USA on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies (Tamil)	29.03.2023	USA	Indian Council of Cultural Relations
13.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and University of Houston on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies	20.03.2023	USA	Indian Council of Cultural Relations
14.	Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Council for Cultural Research and Solomon Islands National University	09.03.2023	Solomon Islands	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
15.	Memorandum of Understanding for establishment of ICCR Chair of Indian Studies (Economics) with Solomon Islands National University.	27.06.2023	Solomon Islands	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
16.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India and Institute of Foreign Affairs, Nepal	01.06.2023	Nepal	Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service
17.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and University of Zambia (UNZA) on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Indian Studies	03.04.2023	Zambia	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
18.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Silpakorn University and Indian Council for Cultural Relations and on the establishment of the ICCR Chair of Sanskrit	11.04.2023	Thailand	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
19.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Sushma Swaraj institute of Foreign Service of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of foreign Affairs of the Republic of Panama	09.01.2023	Panama	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
20.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temple Federation on the establishment of the ICCR Chair for Purohit Course	08.02.2023	Mauritius	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
21.	Memorandum of Understanding between Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) and the Tajik National University on the establishment of the ICCR Chair for Hindi- Cum-Urdu Language in the Indian Study Center	15.03.2023	Tajikistan	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
22.	Memorandum of Understanding made and entered into by and between Indian Council for Cultural Relations and Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski on the establishment of the ICCR Chair for Hindi Language	04.09.2023	Bulgaria	Indian Council for Cultural Relations

Annexure IX

Passport Offices (State / UT-wise)

Sl. No.	Passport Office	State / Union Territory
1	PO Ahmedabad	Gujarat
2	PO Amritsar	Punjab
3	PO Bareilly	Uttar Pradesh
4	PO Bengaluru	Karnataka
5	PO Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh
6	PO Bhubaneswar	Odisha
7	PO Chandigarh	Chandigarh
8	PO Chennai	Tamil Nadu
9	PO Cochin	Kerala
10	PO Coimbatore	Tamil Nadu
11	PO Dehradun	Uttarakhand
12	PO Delhi	Delhi
13	PO Ghaziabad	Uttar Pradesh
14	PO Goa	Goa
15	PO Guwahati	Assam
16	PO Hyderabad	Telangana
17	PO Jaipur	Rajasthan
18	PO Jalandhar	Punjab
19	PO Jammu	Jammu and Kashmir
20.	PO Kolkata	West Bengal
21	PO Kozhikode	Kerala
22	PO Lucknow	Uttar Pradesh
23	PO Madurai	Tamil Nadu
24	PO Mumbai	Maharashtra
25	PO Nagpur	Maharashtra
26	PO Patna	Bihar
27	PO Pune	Maharashtra
28	PO Raipur	Chhattisgarh
29	PO Ranchi	Jharkhand
30	PO Shimla	Himachal Pradesh
31	PO Srinagar	Jammu and Kashmir
32	PO Surat	Gujarat

Sl. No.	Passport Office	State / Union Territory
33	PO Tiruchirappalli	Tamil Nadu
34	PO Trivandrum	Kerala
35	PO Vijayawada	Andhra Pradesh
36	PO Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh
37	PO Kota	Rajasthan

Annexure X

List of Passport Seva Kendras (RPO-wise)

Sl. No.	RPO Name	S. No. of PSKs	Name of Passport Seva Kendra (PSK)
1	RPO Ahmedabad	1	PSK Mithakali Ahmedabad
		2	PSK Rajkot
		3	PSK Vadodara
		4	PSK Vijay Cross Road Ahmedabad
2	RPO Amritsar	5	PSK Amritsar
3	RPO Bareilly	6	PSK Bareilly
4	RPO Bengaluru	7	PSK Bengaluru, Lalbagh
		8	PSK Bengaluru, Sai Arcade
		9	PSK Hubballi-Dharwad
		10	PSK Mangaluru
		11	PSLK Kalaburagi
5	RPO Bhopal	12	PSK Bhopal
		13	PSLK Indore
6	RPO Bhubaneswar	14	PSK Bhubaneswar
7	RPO Chandigarh	15	PSK Ambala
		16	PSK Chandigarh
		17	PSK Ludhiana
8	RPO Chennai	18	PSK Aminjikarai
		19	PSK Saligramam
		20	PSK Tambaram
		21	PSLK Puducherry
9	RPO Cochin	22	PSK Alappuzha
		23	PSK Aluva
		24	PSK Kottayam
		25	PSK Thrissur
		26	PSK Tripunithura, Cochin
10	RPO Coimbatore	27	PSK Coimbatore
11	RPO Dehradun	28	PSK Dehradun
12	RPO Delhi	29	PSK R.K Puram
		30	PSK Gurgaon
		31	PSK Herald House - ITO
		32	PSK Shalimar Place
13	RPO Ghaziabad	33	PSK Ghaziabad

Sl. No.	RPO Name	S. No. of PSKs	Name of Passport Seva Kendra (PSK)
14	RPO Guwahati	34	PSK Guwahati
		35	PSLK Aizawl
		36	PSLK Dimapur
		37	PSLK Imphal
		38	PSLK Itanagar
		39	PSLK Shillong
15	RPO Hyderabad	40	PSK Ameerpet
		41	PSK Begumpet
		42	PSK Nizamabad
		43	PSK Toli Chowki
		44	PSLK Karimnagar
16	RPO Jaipur	45	PSK Jaipur
		46	PSK Jodhpur
		47	PSK Sikar
17	RPO Jalandhar	48	PSK Hoshiarpur
		49	PSK Jalandhar-1
		50	PSK Jalandhar-2
18	RPO Jammu	51	PSK Jammu
19	RPO Kolkata	52	PSK Berhampore
		53	PSK Kolkata
		54	PSLK Agartala
		55	PSLK Gangtok
		56	PSLK Siliguri
20	RPO, Kota	57	PSLK Udaipur
21	RPO Kozhikode	58	PSK Kannur
		59	PSK Kozhikode
		60	PSK Malappuram II
		61	PSK Payyanur, Kannur
		62	PSK Vadakara, Kozhikode
22	RPO Lucknow	63	PSK Gorakhpur
		64	PSK Kanpur
		65	PSK Lucknow
		66	PSK Varanasi
23	RPO Madurai	67	PSK Madurai
		68	PSK Tirunelveli City
		69	PSK Andheri

Sl. No.	RPO Name	S. No. of PSKs	Name of Passport Seva Kendra (PSK)
24	RPO Mumbai	70	PSK Lower Parel
		71	PSK Malad
		72	PSK Nashik II
		73	PSK Thane II
25	RPO Nagpur	74	PSK Nagpur
26	RPO Panaji	75	PSK Panaji
27	RPO Patna	76	Darbhangha
		77	PSK Patna
28	RPO Pune	78	PSK Pune
		79	PSLK Solapur
29	RPO Raipur	80	PSK Raipur
30	RPO Ranchi	81	PSK Ranchi
31	RPO Shimla	82	PSK Shimla
32	RPO Srinagar	83	PSK Srinagar
33	RPO Surat	84	PSK Surat
34	RPO Tiruchirappalli	85	PSK Thanjavur
		86	PSK Tiruchirappalli
35	RPO Trivandrum	87	PSK Kollam
		88	PSK Neyyattinkara, Trivandrum
		89	PSK Vazhuthacaud, Trivandrum
36	RPO Vijayawada	90	PSK Tirupathi II
		91	PSK Vijaywada II
37	RPO Visakhapatnam	92	PSK Visakhapatnam
		93	PSLK Bhimavaram

Annexure XI

List of functional Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK)

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
1	Port Blair	Andaman & Nicobar Island	Kolkata
2	Anantapur	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
3	Bapatla	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
4	Chittoor	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
5	Gudivada	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
6	Guntur	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
7	Hindupur	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
8	Kadapa	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
9	Kodur	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
10	Kurnool	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
11	Nandyal	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
12	Narasaraopet	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
13	Nellore	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
14	Ongole	Andhra Pradesh	Vijayawada
15	Amalapuram	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
16	Eluru	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
17	Kakinada	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
18	Rajamundry	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
19	Srikakulam	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
20	Vizianagaram	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
21	Yelamanchili	Andhra Pradesh	Visakhapatnam
22	Changlang	Arunachal Pradesh	Guwahati
23	Khonsa	Arunachal Pradesh	Guwahati
24	Barpeta	Assam	Guwahati
25	Dhubri	Assam	Guwahati
26	Dibrugarh	Assam	Guwahati
27	Goalpara	Assam	Guwahati
28	Golaghat	Assam	Guwahati
29	Jorhat	Assam	Guwahati
30	Karbi Anglong	Assam	Guwahati
31	Karimganj	Assam	Guwahati
32	Kokrajhar	Assam	Guwahati

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
33	Mangaldoi	Assam	Guwahati
34	Nagaon	Assam	Guwahati
35	North Lakhimpur	Assam	Guwahati
36	Silchar	Assam	Guwahati
37	Tezpur	Assam	Guwahati
38	Tinsukia	Assam	Guwahati
39	Arrah	Bihar	Patna
40	Aurangabad	Bihar	Patna
41	Banka	Bihar	Patna
42	Begusarai	Bihar	Patna
43	Bettiah	Bihar	Patna
44	Bhagalpur	Bihar	Patna
45	Buxar	Bihar	Patna
46	Chapra	Bihar	Patna
47	Dalmianagar	Bihar	Patna
48	Ekma	Bihar	Patna
49	Dalsinghsarai	Bihar	Patna
50	Forbesganj	Bihar	Patna
51	Gaya	Bihar	Patna
52	Gopalganj	Bihar	Patna
53	Hajipur	Bihar	Patna
54	Jahanabad	Bihar	Patna
55	Jamui	Bihar	Patna
56	Katihar	Bihar	Patna
57	Khagaria	Bihar	Patna
58	Kishanganj	Bihar	Patna
59	Madhubani	Bihar	Patna
60	Maner	Bihar	Patna
61	Motihari	Bihar	Patna
62	Munger	Bihar	Patna
63	Muzaffarpur	Bihar	Patna
64	Nalanda	Bihar	Patna
65	Nawada	Bihar	Patna
66	Purnia	Bihar	Patna
67	Saharsa	Bihar	Patna

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
68	Samastipur	Bihar	Patna
69	Sasaram	Bihar	Patna
70	Sheohar	Bihar	Patna
71	Sitamarhi	Bihar	Patna
72	Siwan	Bihar	Patna
73	Supaul	Bihar	Patna
74	Bilaspur	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
75	Durg	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
76	Janjgir-Champa	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
77	Korba	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
78	Raigarh	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
79	Rajnandgaon	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
80	Surguja	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
81	Daman	Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	Mumbai
82	Silvasa	Dadar & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	Mumbai
83	Janak Puri	Delhi	Delhi
84	Mehrauli	Delhi	Delhi
85	Nehru Place	Delhi	Delhi
86	Patparganj	Delhi	Delhi
87	Yamuna Vihar	Delhi	Delhi
88	Margao	Goa	Panaji
89	Amreli	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
90	Anand	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
91	Bharuch	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
92	Bhavnagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
93	Bhuj	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
94	Chhota Udaipur	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
95	Dahod	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
96	Gandhinagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
97	Godhra	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
98	Himmatnagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
99	Jamnagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
100	Junagadh	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
101	Mehsana	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
102	Nadiad	Gujarat	Ahmedabad

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
103	Palanpur	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
104	Patan	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
105	Porbandar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
106	Surendranagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
107	Veraval	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
108	Bardoli	Gujarat	Surat
109	Navsari	Gujarat	Surat
110	Rajpipla	Gujarat	Surat
111	Valsad	Gujarat	Surat
112	Bhiwani	Haryana	Chandigarh
113	Hisar	Haryana	Chandigarh
114	Kaithal	Haryana	Chandigarh
115	Karnal	Haryana	Chandigarh
116	Sirsa	Haryana	Chandigarh
117	Yamunanagar	Haryana	Chandigarh
118	Panipat	Haryana	Chandigarh
119	Faridabad	Haryana	Delhi
120	Narnaul	Haryana	Delhi
121	Rohtak	Haryana	Delhi
122	Sonipat	Haryana	Delhi
123	Hamirpur	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
124	Kangra	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
125	Kullu	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
126	Mandi	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
127	Palampur	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
128	Una	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
129	Kathua	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
130	Rajouri	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
131	Udhampur	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
132	Anantnag	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar
133	Baramulla	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar
134	Bokaro	Jharkhand	Ranchi
135	Chaibasa	Jharkhand	Ranchi
136	Deoghar	Jharkhand	Ranchi
137	Dhanbad	Jharkhand	Ranchi

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
138	Dumka	Jharkhand	Ranchi
139	Giridih	Jharkhand	Ranchi
140	Gumla	Jharkhand	Ranchi
141	Hazaribagh	Jharkhand	Ranchi
142	Jamshedpur	Jharkhand	Ranchi
143	Jhumri Tilaiya	Jharkhand	Ranchi
144	Khunti	Jharkhand	Ranchi
145	Medininagar	Jharkhand	Ranchi
146	Sahibganj	Jharkhand	Ranchi
147	Simaria	Jharkhand	Ranchi
148	Godda	Jharkhand	Ranchi
149	Ankola	Karnataka	Bengaluru
150	Bagalkot	Karnataka	Bengaluru
151	Belagavi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
152	Ballari	Karnataka	Bengaluru
153	Bidar	Karnataka	Bengaluru
154	Chamarajanagar	Karnataka	Bengaluru
155	Channapatna	Karnataka	Bengaluru
156	Chikkaballapur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
157	Chikkodi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
158	Chitradurga	Karnataka	Bengaluru
159	Davangere	Karnataka	Bengaluru
160	Gadag	Karnataka	Bengaluru
161	Hassan	Karnataka	Bengaluru
162	Jalahalli	Karnataka	Bengaluru
163	Koppal	Karnataka	Bengaluru
164	Maddur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
165	Mysuru	Karnataka	Bengaluru
166	Raichur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
167	Robertsonpet	Karnataka	Bengaluru
168	Shivamogga	Karnataka	Bengaluru
169	Tumakuru	Karnataka	Bengaluru
170	Udupi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
171	Vijayapura	Karnataka	Bengaluru
172	Chengannur	Kerala	Cochin

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
173	Kattappana	Kerala	Cochin
174	Nenmara	Kerala	Cochin
175	Palakkad	Kerala	Cochin
176	Kasargod	Kerala	Kozhikode
177	Attingal	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram
178	Pathanamthitta	Kerala	Thiruvananthapuram
179	Leh	Ladakh	Srinagar
180	Kavaratti	Lakshadweep	Cochin
181	Balaghat	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
182	Betul	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
183	Chhatarpur	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
184	Chhindwara	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
185	Damoh	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
186	Dewas	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
187	Dhar	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
188	Gwalior	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
189	Hoshangabad	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
190	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
191	Ratlam	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
192	Rewa	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
193	Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
194	Satna	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
195	Seoni	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
196	Tikamgarh	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
197	Ujjain	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
198	Vidisha	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
199	Guna	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
200	Alibaug	Maharashtra	Mumbai
201	Aurangabad	Maharashtra	Mumbai
202	Bhiwandi	Maharashtra	Mumbai
203	Bhusawal	Maharashtra	Mumbai
204	Dhule	Maharashtra	Mumbai
205	Dombivli	Maharashtra	Mumbai
206	Jalgaon	Maharashtra	Mumbai
207	Rajapur	Maharashtra	Mumbai

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
208	Santacruz	Maharashtra	Mumbai
209	Sion	Maharashtra	Mumbai
210	Vashi	Maharashtra	Mumbai
211	Vasai	Maharashtra	Mumbai
212	Vikroli	Maharashtra	Mumbai
213	Akola	Maharashtra	Nagpur
214	Amravati	Maharashtra	Nagpur
215	Bhandara	Maharashtra	Nagpur
216	Buldhana	Maharashtra	Nagpur
217	Chandrapur	Maharashtra	Nagpur
218	Gadchiroli	Maharashtra	Nagpur
219	Hingoli	Maharashtra	Nagpur
220	Katoal	Maharashtra	Nagpur
221	Wardha	Maharashtra	Nagpur
222	Yavatmal	Maharashtra	Nagpur
223	Ahmednagar	Maharashtra	Pune
224	Baramati	Maharashtra	Pune
225	Beed	Maharashtra	Pune
226	Ichalkaranji	Maharashtra	Pune
227	Jalna	Maharashtra	Pune
228	Kolhapur	Maharashtra	Pune
229	Latur	Maharashtra	Pune
230	Madha	Maharashtra	Pune
231	Nanded	Maharashtra	Pune
232	Osmanabad	Maharashtra	Pune
233	Pandharpur	Maharashtra	Pune
234	Parbhani	Maharashtra	Pune
235	Pimpri Chinchwad	Maharashtra	Pune
236	Sangli	Maharashtra	Pune
237	Satara	Maharashtra	Pune
238	Shirur	Maharashtra	Pune
239	Srirampur	Maharashtra	Pune
240	Kakching	Manipur	Guwahati
241	Tura	Meghalaya	Guwahati
242	Aska	Odisha	Bhubaneswar

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
243	Balasore	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
244	Bargarh	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
245	Baripada	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
246	Berhampur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
247	Bhadrak	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
248	Bhawanipatna	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
249	Bolangir	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
250	Cuttack	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
251	Dhenkanal	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
252	Jagatsinghpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
253	Jajpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
254	Kendrapara	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
255	Keonjhar	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
256	Koraput	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
257	Nabarangpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
258	Phulbani	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
259	Puri	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
260	Rourkela	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
261	Sambalpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
262	Karaikal	Puducherry	Tiruchirapalli
263	Ferozapur	Punjab	Amritsar
264	Bassi Pathanan	Punjab	Chandigarh
265	Bathinda	Punjab	Chandigarh
266	Malerkotla	Punjab	Chandigarh
267	Patiala	Punjab	Chandigarh
268	Ropar	Punjab	Chandigarh
269	Moga	Punjab	Jalandhar
270	Pathankot	Punjab	Jalandhar
271	Phagwara	Punjab	Jalandhar
272	Ajmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
273	Alwar	Rajasthan	Jaipur
274	Banswara	Rajasthan	Kota
275	Barmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
276	Bharatpur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
277	Bhilwara	Rajasthan	Kota

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
278	Bikaner	Rajasthan	Jaipur
279	Chittorgarh	Rajasthan	Kota
280	Churu	Rajasthan	Jaipur
281	Dausa	Rajasthan	Jaipur
282	Hanumangarh	Rajasthan	Jaipur
283	Jaisalmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
284	Jhalawar	Rajasthan	Kota
285	Jhunjhunu	Rajasthan	Jaipur
286	Kankroli	Rajasthan	Kota
287	Dholpur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
288	Kota	Rajasthan	Kota
289	Kotputli	Rajasthan	Jaipur
290	Nagaur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
291	Pali	Rajasthan	Jaipur
292	Pratapgarh	Rajasthan	Kota
293	Sawai Madhopur	Rajasthan	Kota
294	Sirohi	Rajasthan	Jaipur
295	Sriganganagar	Rajasthan	Jaipur
296	Arani	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
297	Chennai GPO	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
298	Chidambaram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
299	Cuddalore	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
300	Dharmapuri	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
301	Kallakurichi	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
302	Kancheepuram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
303	Krishnagiri	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
304	Ranipet	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
305	Tiruvallur	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
306	Tiruvannamalai	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
307	Vellore	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
308	Villupuram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
309	Coonoor	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
310	Erode	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
311	Rasipuram	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
312	Salem	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
313	Bodineyaknur	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
314	Devakottai	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
315	Kodai Road	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
316	Nagercoil	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
317	Rajapalayam	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
318	Ramanathapuram	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
319	Thoothukkudi	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
320	Virudhunagar	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
321	Karur	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
322	Perambalur	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
323	Sirkali	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
324	Thiruthuraipoondi	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
325	Adilabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
326	Bhongir	Telangana	Hyderabad
327	Kamareddy	Telangana	Hyderabad
328	Khammam	Telangana	Hyderabad
329	Mahabubabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
330	Mancherial	Telangana	Hyderabad
331	Medak	Telangana	Hyderabad
332	Medchal	Telangana	Hyderabad
333	Mahaboobnagar	Telangana	Hyderabad
334	Nalgonda	Telangana	Hyderabad
335	Siddipet	Telangana	Hyderabad
336	Vikarabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
337	Wanaparthy	Telangana	Hyderabad
338	Warangal	Telangana	Hyderabad
339	Dhramanagar	Tripura	Kolkata
340	Amroha	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
341	Badaun	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
342	Bijnaur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
343	Moradabad	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
344	Pilibhit	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
345	Rampur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
346	Shahjahanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
347	Achnera	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
348	Agra	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
349	Aligarh	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
350	Baghpat	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
351	Bulandshahr	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
352	Hathras	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
353	Meerut	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
354	Muzaffarnagar	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
355	Noida	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
356	Saharanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
357	Vrindavan	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
358	Prayagraj (Allahabad)	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
359	Ambedkar Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
360	Amethi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
361	Ayodhya	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
362	Azamgarh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
363	Bahraich	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
364	Ballia	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
365	Balrampur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
366	Banda	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
367	Bhadohi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
368	Chunar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
369	Deoria	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
370	Farrukhabad	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
371	Fatehpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
372	Ghazipur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
373	Gonda	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
374	Mau	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
375	Hamirpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
376	Hardoi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
377	Jaunpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
378	Jhansi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
379	Lakhimpur Kheri	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
380	Maharajganj	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
381	Misrikh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
382	Pratapgarh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
383	Raebareli	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
384	Siddharth Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
385	Sitapur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
386	Sultanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
387	Unnao	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
388	Etawah	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
389	Almora	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
390	Kathgodam	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
391	Nainital	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
392	Roorkee	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
393	Rudrapur	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
394	Srinagar	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
395	Alipurduar	West Bengal	Kolkata
396	Amta	West Bengal	Kolkata
397	Arambagh	West Bengal	Kolkata
398	Asansol	West Bengal	Kolkata
399	Ashoknagar	West Bengal	Kolkata
400	Balurghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
401	Bangaon	West Bengal	Kolkata
402	Bankura	West Bengal	Kolkata
403	Bardhaman	West Bengal	Kolkata
404	Barrackpore	West Bengal	Kolkata
405	Basirhat	West Bengal	Kolkata
406	Beadon Street	West Bengal	Kolkata
407	Bishnupur	West Bengal	Kolkata
408	Bolpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
409	Canning Town Ferry Ghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
410	Chinsurah	West Bengal	Kolkata
411	Coochbehar	West Bengal	Kolkata
412	Darjeeling	West Bengal	Kolkata
413	Diamond Harbour	West Bengal	Kolkata
414	Dum Dum	West Bengal	Kolkata
415	Ghatal	West Bengal	Kolkata
416	Howrah	West Bengal	Kolkata
417	Jadavpur	West Bengal	Kolkata

Sl. No.	Locations of POPSK	State/UT	Passport Office
418	Jalpaiguri	West Bengal	Kolkata
419	Jhargram	West Bengal	Kolkata
420	Jiyaganj	West Bengal	Kolkata
421	Kakdweep	West Bengal	Kolkata
422	Contai	West Bengal	Kolkata
423	Katwa	West Bengal	Kolkata
424	Kharagpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
425	Krishnanagar	West Bengal	Kolkata
426	Makdumpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
427	Purulia	West Bengal	Kolkata
428	Raghunathganj	West Bengal	Kolkata
429	Raiganj	West Bengal	Kolkata
430	Rampurhat	West Bengal	Kolkata
431	Ranaghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
432	Samsi	West Bengal	Kolkata
433	Serampore	West Bengal	Kolkata
434	Tamluk	West Bengal	Kolkata

Annexure XII

Virtual Summits / Events

Sl. No.	Subject	Date
1.	Virtual Meeting of the 1 st Voice of Global South Summit	12.01.2023
2.	Virtual Meetings with the CEO of Airbus and the CEO of Boeing	14.02.2023
3.	Joint Virtual Launch of UPI-Pay Now Linkage between India and Singapore	21.02.2023
4.	Virtual Inauguration of India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline	18.03.2023
5.	Summit for Democracy	29.03.2023
6.	Virtual Meeting of SCO Council of Heads of State	04.07.2023
7.	Virtual Inauguration of Projects with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh	01.11.2023
8.	Virtual Meeting of the 2 nd Voice of Global South Summit	17.11.2023
9.	Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit	22.11.2023

Annexure XIII

Details of Outgoing Visits by President / Vice President / Prime Minister in 2023

Sl. No.	Country	Dates
President		
1.	Suriname and Serbia	04-09 June 2023
Vice President		
1.	United Kingdom	05-06 May 2023
Prime Minister		
1.	Japan, Australia and Papua New Guinea	19-25 May 2023
2.	USA and Egypt	19-25 June 2023
3.	France and UAE	13-15 July 2023
4.	South Africa and Greece	22-25 August 2023
5.	Indonesia	06-07 September 2023
6.	UAE	30 November - 01 December 2023

Annexure XIV

Details of Incoming Visits by Heads of State / Heads of Government / Vice Presidents / Foreign Ministers and Equivalent to India in 2023

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
1.	H.E. Chandrikapersad Santokhi, President of the Republic of Suriname (Special Guest of honour)	07-14 January 2023
2.	H.E. Dr. Mohammad Irfaan Ali, President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana (Chief guest of Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas)	08-14 January 2023
3.	H.E. Ms. Janaina Tewaney Mencomo, Minister of External Relations of the Republic of Panama	08-17 January 2023
4.	State visit of H.E. Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt	24-26 January 2023
5.	H.E. Csaba Korosi, President of the 77th Session of the UNGA.	29 January – 01 February 2023
6.	Foreign Minister of Canada, Hon. Melanie Joly	06-07 February 2023
7.	H.E. Prof. Biman Prasad, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Finance, Strategic, Planning, National Development and Statistics of Republic of Fiji.	05-10 February 2023
8.	New Zealand's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hon Nanaia Mahuta	7-10 February 2023
9.	Louis Steven Obeegadoo, Hon'ble Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Housing and Land Use Planning and Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Mauritius.	08-12 February 2023
10.	H.E. Ms. Alexandra Hill T., Minister of Foreign Affairs of El Salvador.	09-13 February 2023
11.	Ms. Akshata Murty, Spouse of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.	11-18 February 2023
12.	Visit of Hon. Dr. Bharrat Jagdeo, Vice President of the Cooperative Republic of Guyana	20-25 February 2023
13.	Study Tour by a delegation of Permanent Representatives to the UN in New York.	21-28 February 2023
14.	State visit of H.E. Olaf Scholz, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany	25-26 February 2023
15.	Visit of HRH The Crown Prince of Denmark and HRH The Crown Princess.	26 February – 02 March 2023
16.	H.E. Jan Lipavský, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic.	26 February-01 March 2023
17.	G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting H.E. Santiago Andrés Cafiero, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Government of Argentina H.E. Penny Wong, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Australia H.E. Mauro Vieira, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Republic of Brazil H.E. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Canada H.E. Qin Gang, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the People's Republic of China H.E. Catherine Colonna, Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs, Government of the French	01-02 March 2023

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
	G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting H.E. Annalena Baerbock, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of the Federal Republic of Germany H.E. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia H.E. Antonio Tajani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Government of Italy H.E. Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Government of Japan H.E. Marcelo Ebrard Casaubón, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of the Government of Mexico	01-02 March 2023
	H.E. Park Jin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Republic of Korea H.E. Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of the Russian Federation H.B. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Government of Republic of South Africa H.E. Mevlüt Çavusoglu, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Republic of Türkiye H.E. James Cleverly, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, United Kingdom H.E. Antony John Blinken, Secretary of State, United States H.E. Josep Borrell Fontelles, Vice President of the European Commission and High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting H.E. Dr. Abul Kalam Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh H.E. Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Arab Republic of Egypt H.E. Alan Ganoo, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade, Government of the Republic of Mauritius H.B. Woke Hoekstra, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Netherlands	01-02 March 2023
	H.E. Geoffrey Onyeama, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E. Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, Foreign Minister, Sultanate of Oman H.E. Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Minister of Foreign Affairs Government of the Republic of Singapore H.E. José Manuel Albares Bueno, Minister for Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Spain H.E. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation, United Arab Emirates H.E. Dr. Abul Kalam Abdul Momen, Foreign Minister, Government of People's Republic of Bangladesh H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General, UN H.E. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director, IMF H.E. David Malpass, President of World Bank Group, World Bank H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director- General, WHO H.E. Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, Director-General, WTO H.E. Gilbert F. Houngbo, Director-General, ILO <u>G20 Foreign Ministers' Meeting</u> H.E. Mathias Cormann, Secretary-General, OECD H.E. Vincent Biruta, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Republic of Rwanda, Chair of AUDA-NEPAD H.E. Klaas Knot, Chair, FSB H.E. Masatsugu Asakawa, President, ADB Amit Prothi, DG, CDRI	01-02 March 2023

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
18.	State Visit of Hon'ble Giorgia Meloni, President of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic	02-03 March 2023
19.	RAISINA Dialogue Hon. M.U.M. Ali Sabry, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka H.E. Tobias Billstrom, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sweden H.E. Ms. Tanja Fajon, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Slovenia H.E. Lars Lokke Rasmussen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Denmark H.E. Gordan Grlic Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia H.E. Abdulla Shahid, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives H.E. Rastislav Kacer, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovak H.E. Dr. Tandi Dorji, Minister of Foreign Affairs and External Trade of Bhutan H.E. Ararat Mirzoyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Armenia	02-04 March 2023
20.	State visit of The Honourable Anthony Albanese MP, Prime Minister of Commonwealth of Australia	08-11 March 2023
21.	Official Visit of His Excellency Fumio Kishida, Prime Minister of Japan	20-21 March 2023
22.	Official Visit of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan	03-05 April 2023
23.	Official visit of His Excellency Park Jin, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea	07-08 April 2023
24.	United States Congressional Staff Delegation.	08-15 April 2023
25.	Visit of H.E. Denis Manturov, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Industry and Trade of the Russian Federation	17-18 April 2023
26.	Official Visit of H.E. Eli Cohen, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel	09-11 May 2023
27.	Visit of Tenzin Lekphell, Secretary General of BIMSTEC	18-20 May 2023
28.	Visit of H.E. Abdulla Shahid, Foreign Minister of Maldives to Chennai	22-24 May 2023
29.	State Visit of His Majesty Preah Bat Samdech Preah Boromneath Norodom Sihamoni, King of Cambodia	29-31 May 2023
30.	Visit of Rt. Hon'ble Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', Prime Minister of Nepal	31 May – 03 June 2023
31.	CII-EXIM bank Conclave H.E. Mohammed B.S. Jallow, Vice-President of the Republic of Gambia Hon. Gen. (Retd.) Dr. C.G.D.N. Chiwenga, Vice President of the Republic of Zimbabwe	14-16 June 2023
32.	Official Visit of H.E. Enrique Manalo, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Philippines	27-30 June 2023
33.	Visit of H.E. Amina J. Mohammed, Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations	03-05 July 2023
34.	Official Visit H.E. Abdulla Shahid, Foreign Minister of Maldives	10-12 July 2023

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
35.	Official visit of H.E. Ranil Wickremesinghe, President of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka	20-21 July 2023
36.	Transit visit of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan	23 July 2023
37.	Visit of His Excellency Hayashi Yoshimasa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Japan	27-28 July 2023
38.	Visit of H.E. Ms. Delcy Rodriguez, Executive Vice President and Minister of Finance of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela	02-05 August 2023
39.	Visit of Honourable Eduardo Enrique Reina, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Honduras	02-06 August 2023
40.	Visit of US Congressional Delegation	10-16 August 2023
41.	Visit of H.E. Bujar Osmani, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of North Macedonia	31 August – 02 September 2023
42.	<p><u>G20 Summit Countries</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. H.E. Bola Ahmed Tinubu, President of The Federal Republic of Nigeria 2. H.E. Alberto Fernández, President of Argentine Republic 3. H.E. Ms. Giorgia Meloni, Prime Minister of Italy <p>H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and President of the African Union H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa</p> <p><u>G20 Summit Countries</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hon'ble Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 2. Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom 3. H.E. Fumio KISHIDA, Prime Minister of Japan 4. H.E. Suk Yeol Yoon, President of the Republic of Korea 5. H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt 6. H.E. Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia 7. H.E. Joe Biden, President of the United States of America 8. Hon'ble Justin Pierre James Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada 9. H.E. Li Qiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China 10. HH Shaikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates 11. H.E. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of Netherlands 12. H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Türkiye <p>H.E. Azali Assoumani, President of the Union of Comoros and President of the African Union H.E. Cyril Ramaphosa, President of South Africa</p> <p><u>G20 Summit Countries</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hon'ble Sheikh Hasina, Prime Minister of the People's Republic of Bangladesh 2. Rt. Hon. Rishi Sunak, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom 3. H.E. Fumio KISHIDA, Prime Minister of Japan 4. H.E. Suk Yeol Yoon, President of the Republic of Korea 5. H.E. Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of the Arab Republic of Egypt 6. H.E. Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia 7. H.E. Joe Biden, President of the United States of America 8. Hon'ble Justin Pierre James Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada 9. H.E. Li Qiang, Premier of the People's Republic of China 10. HH Shaikh Mohamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates 	<p>09-10 September 2023</p> <p>09-10 September 2023</p> <p>09-10 September 2023</p>

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
	11. H.E. Mark Rutte, Prime Minister of Netherlands 12. H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of Türkiye 13. H.E. Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, President of Brazil 14. H.E. Joko Widodo, President of Republic of Indonesia 15. H.E. Pedro Sanchez Perez Castejon, President of The Government of Spain 16. H.E. Olaf Scholz, Federal Chancellor of Germany 17. H.E. Emmanuel Macron, President of France 18. Hon'ble Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, Prime Minister of the Republic of Mauritius <u>G20 Summit Countries</u> 1. H.E. Charles Michel, President of the European Council 2. H.E. Ms. Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission 3. H.E. Hsien Loong Lee, Prime Minister of Singapore 4. H.E. Ms. Raquel Buenrostro Sánchez, Minister of Economy of the United Mexican States <u>International Organizations</u> 1. Her Excellency Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, 2. Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund 3. Mathias Cormann, Secretary General of OECD 4. Her Excellency Dr. Ngozi Okonjo Iweala, Director General of WTO 5. H.E. António Guterres, Secretary-General of the United Nations 6. Ajay Banga, President, The World Bank 7. Masatsugu Asakawa, President of ADB 8. H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director- General, World Health Organization 9. Gilbert Hounbo, ILO Director-General	09-10 September 2023
43.	State Visit of H.R.H. Prince Mohammed Bin Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	08-11 September 2023
44.	Visit of Her Excellency Raquel Pena, Vice President of the Dominican Republic	03-06 October 2023
45.	H.E. Ian Borg. Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Malta	06-08 October 2023
46.	State Visit of H.E. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania	08-11 October 2023
47.	Visit of H. E. Thomas Bach, President of Internal Olympic Committee	08-18 October 2023
48.	Visit of His Majesty Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, King of Bhutan	3-9 November 2023
49.	Visit of Hon'ble Dato' Seri DiRaja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia	05-08 November 2023
50.	Visit of Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence of USA for 2+2 Ministerial Meeting	10 November 2023
51.	Visit of Resident Head of Missions to Ayodhya	11 November 2023
52.	Visit of Minister of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Defence of Australia for 2+2 Ministerial Meeting	20 November 2023

Sl. No.	Visit	Date
53.	Visit of H.E. Aksel V. Johannesen, Prime Minister of Faroe Islands	20-24 November 2023
54.	Visit of H.E. Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Tourism of the Republic of Seychelles	22-24 November 2023
55.	Visit of Resident Head of Missions to Varanasi	27 November 2023
56.	State visit of His Excellency Hon. William Samoei Ruto, PhD., C.G.H., President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces	03-06 December 2023
57.	Visit of H.E. Albert R. Ramdin Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of the Republic of Suriname	05-07 December 2023
58.	Visit of Hon'ble Dr. Biruta Vincent, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Rwanda	07-08 December 2023
59.	State visit of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik, Sultan of Oman	15-17 December 2023

Annexure XV

Credential Presentation by Foreign Heads of Mission during 01 January to 31 October 2023

Sl. No.	Country	Name of Ambassador / High Commissioner	Date of Credential Presentation
1.	Lithuania	H.E. Mrs. Diana Mickeviciene	15.02.2023
2.	Lao PDR	H.E. Bounmy Vanmany	15.02.2023
3.	Greece	H.E. Dimitrios Ioannou	15.02.2023
4.	Guatemala	H.E. Omar Lisandro Castaneda Solares	15.02.2023
5.	Kingdom of Eswatini ** (At Kuala Lumpur)	H.E. Menzie Sipho Dlamini	15.02.2023
6.	South Sudan	H.E. Ms. Victoria Samuel Aru	24.02.2023
7.	Oman	H.E. Issa Saleh Abdullah Saleh AL- Shibani	24.02.2023
8.	Peru	H.E. Javier Manuel	24.02.2023
9.	Seychelles	H.E. Ms. Lalatiana Accouche	24.02.2023
10.	Cambodia	H.E. Kuong Koy	24.02.2023
11.	Hungary	H.E. Istvan Szabo	24.03.2023
12.	Mauritius	H.E. Haymandoyal Dillum	24.03.2023
13.	Kyrgyz Republic	H.E. Askar Beshimov	24.03.2023
14.	Portugal	H.E. João Manuel Mendes Ribeiro de Almeida	24.03.2023
15.	Mauritania ** (at Abu Dhabi)	H.E. Muhammad Ahmad Salem Muhammad Rarah	24.03.2023
16.	United States of America	H.E. Eric M. Garcetti	11.05.2023
17.	Qatar	H.E. Mohammed Hassan Jabir Al-Jabir	11.05.2023
18.	Monaco** (At Paris)	H.E. Didier Gamerdinger	11.05.2023
19.	Chad	H.E. Mrs. Dillah Lucienne	19.07.2023
18.	Burundi	H.E. Brig. General Aloys Bizindavyi	19.07.2023
19.	Finland	H.E. Kimmo Lahdevirta	19.07.2023
20.	Angola	H.E. Clemente Pedro Francisco Camenha	19.07.2023
21.	Ethiopia	H.E. Demeke Atnafu Ambulo	19.07.2023
22.	Venezuela	H.E. Ms. Capaya Rodriguez Gonzalez	21.08.2023
23.	Colombia	H.E. Dr. Victor Hugo Echeverri	21.08.2023
24.	Algeria	H.E. Ali Achoui	21.08.2023
25.	Brazil	H.E. Kenneth Felix Haczynski da Nobrega	21.08.2023
26.	Australia	H.E. Philip Green	21.08.2023
27.	Netherlands	H.E. Mrs. Marie Louisa Gerads	21.08.2023
28.	Estonia	H.E. Mrs. Marje Luup	29.08.2023
29.	Ukraine	H.E. Oleksandr Polishchuk	29.08.2023

Sl. No.	Country	Name of Ambassador / High Commissioner	Date of Credential Presentation
30.	Burkina Faso	H.E. Dr. Desire Boriface Some	29.08.2023
31.	Norway	H.E. Mrs. May-Elin Stener	29.08.2023
32.	Cyprus	H.E. Evagoras Vryonides	23.10.2023
33.	Bulgaria	H.E. Nikolay Yankov	23.10.2023
34.	European Union (EU)	H.E. Herve Delphine	23.10.2023
35.	France	H.E. Dr. Thierry Mathou	23.10.2023
36.	Moldova	H.E. Mrs. Ana Taban	23.10.2023

Annexure XVI

Final Departure Status of Foreign Heads of Missions from 01 January 2023 to 31 October 2023

Sl. No.	Mission	Name of Head of Mission	Date of Final Departure
1.	Islamic Republic of Pakistan	Aftab Hasan Khan	26.01.2023
2.	Republic of Seychelles	Thomas Selby Pillay	30.01.2023
3.	Royal Embassy of Cambodia	Ung Sean	11.02.2023
4.	Federative Republic of Brazil	Andre Aranha Correa do Lago	19.03.2023
5.	Republic of Poland	Prof. Adam Burakowski	03.04.2023
6.	Republic of Chad	Soungui Ahmed	25.04.2023
7.	Finland	Ms. Ritva Koukku-Ronde	06.05.2023
8.	Bosnia & Herzegovina	Muhamed Cengic	20.06.2023
9.	Georgia	Archil Dzuliashvili	20.06.2023
10.	Australia	Barry Robert O' Farell	30.06.2023
11.	Republic of Estonia	Ms. Katrin Kivi	31.07.2023
12.	Republic of Bulgaria	Mrs. Eleonora Dimitrova	31.07.2023
13.	Ireland	Brendan Ward	14.08.2023
14.	Norway	Hans Jacob Frydenlund	19.08.2023
15.	Republic of Cyprus	Agis Loizou	24.08.2023
16.	State of Kuwait	Jasem Ibrahim Alnajem	19.08.2023
17.	Delegation of the EU	Ugo Astuto	14.09.2023
18.	Republic of Uzbekistan	Dilshod Akhatov	06.09.2023
19.	France	Emmanuel Lenain	17.09.2023
20.	Sri Lanka	H.E. Milinda Moragoda	01.10.2023
21.	Armenia	Youri Babakhanian	04.10.2023
22.	Azerbaijan	Dr. Ashraf Shikhaliyev	22.10.2023

Annexure XVII

Cadre strength at Headquarters and Missions abroad during 2023-24

Sl. No.	Cadre/Post	Posts at Hqrs.	Posts at Missions	Total
1.	Grade I	6	29	35
2.	Grade II	11	51	62
3.	Grade III	50	144	194
4.	Grade IV	58	164	222
5.	Junior Admin. Grade/Senior Scale	116	312	428
6.	(i) Junior Scale	20	25	45
	(ii) Probationers Reserve	69		69
	(iii) Leave Reserve	15		15
	(iv) Deputation Reserve	19		19
	(v) Training Reserve	7		7
	Sub Total I	371	725	1096
	IFS(B)			
7.	(i) Grade I	118	126	244
	(ii) Deputation Reserve	6		6
8.	(i) Integrated Grades II & III	365	262	627
	(ii) Leave Reserve	30		30
	(iii) Deputation Reserve	16		16
	(iv) Training Reserve	25		25
9.	(i) Grade IV	220	579	799
	(ii) Leave Reserve	60		60
	(iii) Deputation Reserve	54		54
10.	(i) Grade V/VI	173	84	257
	(ii) Leave Reserve	60		60
	(iii) Deputation Reserve	14		14
11.	(i) Grade II of Cypher Cadre	32	76	108
	(ii) Leave Reserve	5		5
12.	(i) Stenographer's Cadre	523	577	1100
	(ii) Leave Reserve	47		47
	(iii) Training Reserve (Hindi)	10		10
	(iv) Deputation Reserve	12		12
13.	Interpreter's Cadre	9	26	35
14.	L&T Cadre	20	3	23
Sub Total II		1799	1733	3532
Grand Total (Subtotal I+II)		2170	2458	4628

List of Abbreviations

A

AALCO	Asia Africa Legal Consultative Organization
ACD	Asia Cooperation Development
ACMECS	Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy
ACMP	Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports for Movement of Goods to and from India
ACTREC	Advance Centre for Training, Research and Education in Cancer
ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADMM +	ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting Plus
AERB	Atomic Energy Regulatory Board
AfCFTA	African Continental Free Trade Area
AFINDEX	Africa-India Exercise
AFMS	Armed Forces Medical Services
AG	Australia Group
AIIA	All India Institute of Ayurveda
AIWC	Australia India Water Centre
AKAM	Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav
AMEXCID	Mexican Agency for International Development Cooperation
AMR	Advanced Modular Reactors
ANAMAR	National Authority for Maritime Affairs, Dominican Republic
ANASTU	Afghan National Agricultural Science and Technical University
ANF	Aids to Navigation Fund
APA	Asian Parliamentary Assembly
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
APPU	Asia-Pacific Postal Union
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASS	Africa Scholarship Scheme
ASSOCHAM	The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry
AU	African Union
AVP	Academic Visitors Programme

B

BADP	Border Area Development Programme
BARC	Bhabha Atomic Research Centre
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

BCGSI	Bilateral Consultative Group on Security Issues
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BoI	Bureau of Immigration
BPWC	BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, Iran and China
BTWC	Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention

C

CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General of India
CAMM	Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility
CAR	Central African Republic
CARICOM	Caribbean Community
CBIC	Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs
CCIT	Convention on Countering of International Terrorism
CCUS	Carbon Capture, Utilization and Storage
CD	Cyber Diplomacy
CD	Conference on Disarmament
CDF	Chief of Defence Staff
CDRI	Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure
CDSCO	Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation
CEC	Central Election Commission
CEDT	Centre for Entrepreneurship Training and Development
CEIT	Center of Excellence in IT
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEPA	Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement
CERN	The European Organization for Nuclear Research
CFM	Moçâmedes Railway Company
CGIMA	Contact Group on Illicit Maritime Activities
CHG	Council of Heads of Government
CHOGM	Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting
CICA	Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia
CII	Confederation of Indian Industry
CIM	Minister of Commerce and Industry
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CNES	National Centre for Space Studies (French National Space Agency)
CNT	National Transition Council
CoAS	Chief of Army Staff
COFCOR- CARICOM	Council for Foreign and Community Relations- Caribbean Community

COM	Council of Ministers
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
CORSIA	Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation
CPC	Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference
CSC	Colombo Security Conclave
CSIR	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research
CSIR-NIO	CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography
CT	Counter Terrorism
CWC	Chemical Weapons Convention

D

DAE	Department of Atomic Energy
DBT	Department of Biotechnology
DCoC-JA	Djibouti Code of Conduct – Jeddah Amendment
DDP	Department of Defence Production
DEA	Department of Economic Affairs
DEWG	Digital Economy Working Group
DGFT	Directorate General of Foreign Trade
DGRIS	Director General for International Relations and Strategy
DIA	Document Issuing Authorities
DICSEP	Dubrovnik International conference on the Sanskrit Epics and Puranas
DIGEMAPS	Directorate General of Medicines, Food and Health Products
DPA	Development Partnership Administration
DPI	Digital Public Infrastructure
DPIIT	Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade
DPM	Deputy Prime Minister
DPRK	Democratic People's Republic of Korea
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRDO	Defence Research and Development Organisation
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWG	Defence Working Group

E

EAM	External Affairs Minister
EAS	East Asia Summit
EAS FMM	EAS Foreign Ministers' Meeting
EAS SOM	EAS Senior Officials' Meeting
ECA	Export Credit Agency

ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECR	Emigration Check Required
ECTA	Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement
EDB	Economic Development Board
EEC	Eastern Economic Corridor
EEPC	Engineering Export Promotion Council
EFD	Economic and Financial Dialogue
EG&IT	e-Governance and Information Technology
EMTCT	Elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission
EPCC	Executive Programme on Cultural Cooperation
EPCES	Export Promotion Council for EOUs and SEZs
EPCP	Electric Propulsion Capability Partnership
ESG	Executive Steering Group
EU	European Union
EV	Electric Vehicle
e-VBAB	e-Vidya Bharti Arogya Bharti
EWG	Employment Working Group

F

FASF	French Air and Space Force
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FCBD	Finance and Central Bank Deputies
FCMNO	Constancia Mangué Nsue Okomo Foundation
FFC	Friendly Foreign Countries
FICCI	Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry
FIEO	Federation of Indian Export Organizations
FLS	Foundational Learning Survey
FMCBG	Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors
FMD	Financial Markets Dialogue
FMFD	Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue
FMM	France Media Monde
FoGG	Friends of the Gulf of Guinea
FPG	Fukuoka Prefectural Government
FSB	Financial Stability Board
FTF	Foreign Terrorists Fighters
FYP	Five Year Plan

G

GASCC	Global Air and Space Chiefs' Conference
GBA	Global Biofuels Alliance
GCNEP	Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership
GCTF	Global Counter Terrorism Forum
GCTS	Global Counter Terrorism Strategy
GGE	Group of Governmental Experts
GGE on LAWS	Group of Governmental Experts on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
GMC	Goa Maritime Conclave
GMCOS	Gandhi Mandela Centre of Specialization
GOFVOT	Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism
GoG	Gulf of Guinea
Gol-UNSCDF	Government of India-United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
GPAI	Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence
GPFI	Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion
GSDP	Green and Sustainable Development
GSL	Goa Shipyard Ltd
GSS	Global Standardization Symposium

H

HAA	High Altitude Area
HADR	Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief
HAL	Hindustan Aeronautics Limited
HCCH	Hague Conference on Private International Law
HCoC	Hague Code of Conduct
HCSS	Hague Centre for Strategic Studies
HICDP	High Impact Community Development Project
HLDMM	India-EU High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Mobility
HLPF	High-Level Political Forum
HLW	High-Level-Week
HRVP	High Representative and Vice President

I

IA	Implementation Agreement
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
IAFS	India-Africa Forum Summit
IATC	India Africa Trade Council

IBC	International Buddhist Confederation
IBCA	International Big Cat Alliance
IBF	India-Bhutan Foundation
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICCR	Indian Council for Cultural Relations
iCET	Critical and Emerging Technologies
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICMR	Indian Council for Medical Research
ICP	Immigration Check Posts
ICPRCP	Intergovernmental Committee for Promoting the Return of Cultural Property to its country of Origin or Restitution in case of illegal appropriation
ICRISAT	International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICWA	Indian Council of World Affairs
ICWF	Indian Community Welfare Fund
IDY	International Day of Yoga
IEA	International Energy Agency
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IESAA	Indo-European Science and Arts Association
IETO	India Economic Trade Organization
IEW	India Energy Week
IFC-IOR	Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region
IFCPAR	Indo-French Center for Promotion of Advanced Research
IFREMER	French Institute for Ocean Science
IFTM	International and French Travel Market
IGBF	Indo-German Business Forum
IGC	Intergovernmental Consultations
IGN	Intergovernmental Negotiations
IGSTC	Indo-German Science and Technology Centre
IIDEA	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
IIFT	Indian Institute of Foreign Trade
IIT	Indian Institute of Technology
IITM	Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILC	International Law Commission
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMD	Indian Meteorological Department

IMEC	India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMO	International Maritime Organization
IMRC	India-Mexico Research Consortium
IMT	India-Myanmar-Thailand
IMT-GT	Indonesia–Malaysia–Thailand Growth Triangle
IMWG	Inter-Ministerial Working Group
INAC	International Arts and Crafts
INB	Intergovernmental Negotiating Body
INDUS X	India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem
INS	Indian Naval Ship
IOC	Indian Ocean Commission
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IORA	Indian Ocean Rim Association
IPACC	Indo-Pacific Armies Chiefs Conference
IPAMS	Indo-Pacific Management Seminar
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IPEF	Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity
IPOI	Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
IRIGC-M&MTC	India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation
IRIGC-TEC	India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation
ISA	International Solar Alliance
ISB	Indian School of Business
ISPS	International Ship and Port Facility Security
ISRO	Indian Space Research Organisation
ITEC	Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation
ITER	International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor
ITPO	India Trade Promotion Organization
ITRA	Institute of Agronomic Research
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
IUSSTD	India-US Strategic Trade Dialogue
IYM	International Year of Millets

J

JASDF	Japan Air Self-Defence Force
JCEC	Joint Committee on Economic Cooperation

JCIFM	Joint Committee on Inundation and Flood Management
JDCC	Joint Defence Cooperation Committee
JDP	Joint Development Plan
JEC	Japanese Endowed Courses
JETRO	Japan External Trade Relation Organisation
JIM	Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing
JMC	Joint Ministerial Commission
JNPP	Jaitapur Nuclear Power Project
JSDF	Japan Self Defence Force
JSTC	Joint Science and Technology Committee
JTG	Joint Technology Group
JWG-CT	Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism
JWG-CTTC	Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime

K

KIP	Know India Programme
KMTTP	Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

L

LAAD	Latin American Defence and Security Exhibition
LAC	Line of Actual Control
LCS	Local Currency Settlement
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LiFE	Lifestyle for Environment
LIGO	Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory
LLDCs	Landlocked Developing Countries
LMA	Labour Mobility Agreements
LMIS	Labour Market Information System
LNG	Liquified Natural Gas
LOC	Line of Credit
LoC	Line of Control
LTAG	Long-Term Aspirational Goals

M

MAHSR	Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail
MANAGE	National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management
MAPL	Motihari-Amlekhgunj Petroleum Pipeline Project
MATES	Mobility Arrangement for Talented Early-Professionals Scheme

MBC	Mauritius Broadcasting Corporation
MCG	Military Cooperation Group
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MDTI	Ministerial Dialogue on Trade and Investment
MFFLI	Merck Foundation First Ladies Initiative
MGC	Mekong Ganga Cooperation
MIDC	Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation
MIFC	Mauritius International Financial Centre
MIFCO	Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company
MIIM	Make in India Mittelstand
MLAT	Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters Treaties
MMP	Migration and Mobility Partnerships
MMPA	Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement
MNDF	Maldives National Defence Force
MNRE	Ministry of New and Renewable Energy
MoA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOCA	Ministry of Civil Aviation
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo
MoS (ML)	Minister of State for External Affairs of India (Meenakshi Lekhi)
MoS (RRS)	Minister of State for External Affairs of India (Rajkumar Ranjan Singh)
MoS (VM)	Minister of State for External Affairs of India (V. Muraleedharan)
MPS	Maldives Police Service
MPX	Maritime Partnership Exercise
MSDTF	Mauritius Sanatan Dharma Temples Federation
MSMEs	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises
MTCR	Missile Technology Control Regime
MVR	Maldivian Rufiyaa

N

NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NASRDA	National Space Research and Development Agency
NCB	Narcotics Control Bureau
NCC	National Cadet Corps
NCMRWF	National Center for Medium Range Weather Forecast
NCQG	New Collective Quantified Goal

NDDB	National Dairy Development Board
NDLD	New Delhi G20 Leaders' Declaration
NDV	Nuclear Disarmament Verification
NHPC	National Hydroelectric Power Corporation
NIBC	Nigeria-India Business Council
NIBSS	Nigeria Inter-Bank Settlement System
NiMET	Nigerian Meteorological Agency
NIOT	National Institute of Ocean Technology
NPCI	National Payments Corporation of India
NRI	Non-Resident Indians
NSA	National Security Advisor
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation
NSF	National Science Foundation
NSG	Nuclear Suppliers Group

O

OCI	Overseas Citizens of India
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OEWG	Open Ended Working Group
OFA	One Future Alliance
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OIA	Overseas Indian Affairs
OPCW	Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
OSOWOG	One Sun, One World, One Grid
OVL	ONGC Videsh Ltd

P

PAMED	Sustainable Livelihoods Improvement Programme
PASSEX	Passing Exercise
PB	Prasar Bharati
PBBY	Pravasi Bharatiya Bima Yojana
PBC	Peacebuilding Commission
PBD	Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas
PBSK	Pravasi Bharatiya Sahayata Kendras
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PCFD	Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats
PCTD	Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora
PDCTO	Principal Deputy Chief Technology Officer

PDNSA	Principal Deputy National Security Advisor
PDOT	Pre-Departure Orientation Training
PGA	President of General Assembly
PGE	Protector General of Emigrants
PGII	Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment
PHARMEXCIL	Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India
PHDCCI	PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry
PHPA	Punatsangchhu Hydroelectric Project Authority
PIC	Pacific Island Countries
PIO	Persons of Indian Origin
PMBJP	Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana
POE	Protector of Emigrants
POPSK	Post Office Passport Seva Kendra
PPPR	Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response
PPR	Preliminary Project Report
PR	Permanent Representative
PRR	Prosecutions, Rehabilitation and Reintegration
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PSK	Passport Seva Kendra
PSLK	Passport Seva Laghu Kendra
PSP	Passport Seva Project

Q

QIF	Quad Infrastructure Fellowships
QIP	Quick Impact Project
QUIN	Quad Investors Network

R

RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure
ReCAAP	Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ships in Asia
RETAP	Renewable Energy Technology Action Platform
RIAT	Royal International Air Tattoo
RIIDC	Rajasthan State Industrial Development and Investment Corporation
RIKEN	Institute of Physical and Chemical Research
RITES	Rail India Technical and Economic Service
ROC	Republic of Congo
RPO	Regional Passport Office
RVNL	Rail Vikas Nigam Limited

S

SADC	South African Development Cooperation
SAGAR	Security and Growth for All in the Region
SAMHITA	South Asian Manuscript Histories and Textual Archive
SATTE	South Asia's Travel and Tourism Exchange
SCEP	Strategic Clean Energy Partnership
SCF	Standby Credit Facility
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SCO CHS	SCO Council of Heads of State
SCO RATS	Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation
SCOMET	Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SELF	Senior Enlisted Leaders Forum
SELM	Space Economy Leaders Meeting
SERB	Science and Engineering Research Board
SGOS	Sectoral Group of Secretaries
SIBS	Sweden-India Business Council
SICA	Central American Integration System
SII	Study in India
SIPCOT	State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu
SIPO	Singapore-India Partnership Office
SJVL	Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam
SMR	Small Modular Reactors
SOMS	Straits of Malacca and Singapore
SOPECAM	Cameroon Press and Publishing Company
SoTF	Summit of the Future
SPDC	Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children
SPEED	Shared Prosperity through Enhanced Engagements in Defence
SPTC	Seychelles Public Transport Corporation
SSA	Social Security Agreements
SSIFS	Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service
SSW	Specified Skilled Workers
STAR-C	Solar Technology Application Resource Centre
STINT	Swedish Foundation for International Cooperation in Research and Higher Education
STP	Sao Tome and Principe

T

TAWG	Thematic Area Working Groups
TCC	Troop Contributing Countries
TDC	Trilateral Development Cooperation
TEC	Technical and Economic Cooperation
TEPA	Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement
TIFF	Tashkent International Film Festival
TIR	Transport International Routier
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPF	Trade Policy Forum
TSUL	Tashkent State University of Law
TT&C	Telemetry, Tracking & Command
TTC	Trade and Technology Council

U

UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNAIDS	UN Programme on HIV/AIDS Program
UNCCI	UNCITRAL National Coordination Committee India
UNCCT	United Nations Counter Terrorism Center
UNCITRAL	United Nations Commission on International Trade Law
UNCOPUOS	United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
UNDC	United Nations Disarmament Commission
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCAP	United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNIDIR	United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research
UNIDROIT	International Institute for the Unification of Private Law
UNOCT	United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRCCA	United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia
UNSG	United Nations Secretary General
UPI	Unified Payments Interface
UPITS	Uttar Pradesh International Trade Show

UPU	Universal Postal Union
USMSC	US Military Sealift Command
USTR	US Trade Representative

V

VBSM	Virtual Buyer Seller Meet
VDPA	Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VOGSS	Voice of Global South Summit
VUCL	Vidhyut Utpadan Company Limited

W

WA	Wassenaar Arrangement
WFP	World Food Program
WGIHR	Working Group on Amendments to the International Health Regulations
WHC	World Hindi Conference
WHO	World Health Organization
WMCC	Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WMO	World Meteorological Organization
WTSA	World Telecommunication Standardization Assembly

X

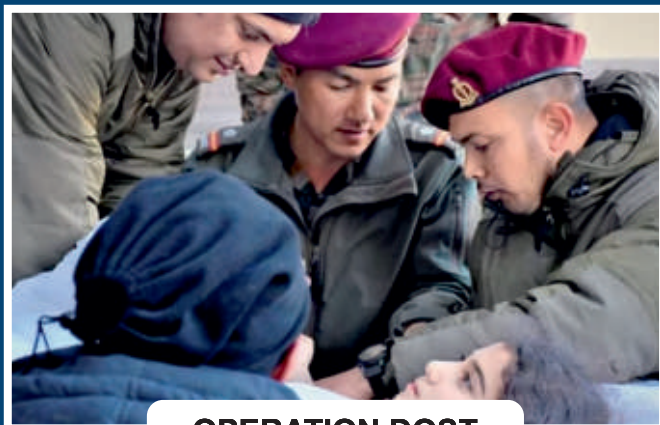
XPD	External Publicity & Public Diplomacy
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Y

YA	Yaoundé Architecture
YEP	Youth Exchange Programme
YPS	Young Professionals Schemes



OPERATION KAVERI



OPERATION DOST



OPERATION KARUNA

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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