

Ministry of External Affairs
Policy Planning and Research Division

Overview of Major Achievements during the month of March 2021

I. Achievements pertaining to citizen-centric:

1. March 2021 has been very important for us. The number of countries to which India has been sending vaccines has doubled during the month. As on 30.03.2021, India has supplied vaccines to 83 countries. India also gifted 200,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses for UN Peacekeeping personnel.
2. On 25 March, MoS virtually joined in the celebration of IORA Day 2021. India commemorated the day by organising a Yoga & Ayurveda workshop on 'Wellness and Holistic Living in times of COVID-19' for all IORA Member States & Dialogue Partners.
3. On 22 March, a North East Buyer-Seller Meet was organised by MEA, in association with Indian Chamber of Commerce, in Guwahati. The event saw participation of over 100 entrepreneurs including 70 from the North Eastern region and 30 from neighbouring countries.
4. NASA and ISRO are collaborating to launch a new satellite called NISAR, or the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar. NASA, in a release on 24 March 2021 said that the NISAR satellite will be equipped with the largest reflector antenna, space agency has ever launched. The NISAR satellite is designed to observe and take measurements of some of the planet's most complex processes, which include ecosystem disturbances, ice-sheet collapse, and natural hazards such as earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanoes and landslides.

II. Diplomatic Engagements and other Interactions:

1. On 19 March, Rashtrapati Ji had a telephonic conversation with President Sebastian Piñera Echnique of Chile. The two leaders agreed to deepen bilateral relations post COVID-19 pandemic, including the 2nd expansion of India-Chile PTA.
2. Prime Minister (PM), along with the US President and Prime Ministers of Australia and Japan virtually participated in the first Leaders' Summit of the Quad Framework on 12 March. The leaders exchanged views on practical areas of cooperation towards maintaining a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region. The Summit also resulted in the setting up of three Working Groups for collaboration on COVID-19 vaccines, climate and new technologies.

3. PM visited Bangladesh on 26-27 March for his first outgoing visit since the outbreak of COVID-19. The visit coincided with the commemoration of three epochal events – the birth centenary of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman (Mujib Borsho); the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Bangladesh; and 50 years of the establishment of diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh. During the visit, PM held talks with the Prime Minister of Bangladesh; called on the President of Bangladesh; and interacted with different sections of the Bangladesh society.

4. PM also attended the National Day celebration of Bangladesh as the guest of honour. During the event, the Prime Minister handed over the Gandhi Peace Prize 2020 conferred posthumously on Sheikh Mujibur Rahman to Prime Minister of Bangladesh and her sister Sheikh Rehana.

5. Other elements of PM's programme included visits outside Dhaka to the National Martyr's Memorial in Savar; Orakandi; Satkhira; and Tungipara. The two Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated a digital exhibition on Bapu and Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. The visit also saw exchange of 5 MoUs; foundation stone laying/inauguration of a memorial in the honour of the martyrs of the Indian Armed Forces in the 1971 war, development projects funded by India and Border Haats; inauguration of a cross-border passenger train service linking Dhaka with New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal; and release of India-Bangladesh Friendship Stamps on the 50th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties.

6. Earlier in the month, the two Prime Ministers had jointly inaugurated the Maitri Setu, the road bridge connecting Tripura with Bangladesh on the Feni river. A Track 2 Kolkata-Dhaka dialogue was also held on 25 March, prior to the visit.

7. PM addressed the India-Sweden Virtual Summit with his Swedish counterpart Stefan Löfven on 5 March. The two leaders stressed the need for vaccine equity by providing urgent and affordable access to vaccines across all nations. He also participated in the India-Finland Virtual Summit with Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin on 16 March. The virtual summit provided a blueprint for the future expansion and diversification of India-Finland partnership.

8. PM met President of the Inter Parliamentary Union (IPU), Duarte Pacheco on 16 March and US Secretary of Defense General Lloyd Austin on 19 March. During the meeting, Prime Minister outlined his vision for the strategic partnership between the two countries. PM addressed the Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival on 12 March and the International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure on 17 March.

9. In March, PM had a series of telephonic conversations with foreign leaders, including the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia; President of Sri Lanka; and Prime Ministers of Japan and Portugal.

10. EAM visited Dhaka on 4 March prior to the Prime Minister's visit to Bangladesh. During

the visit, he met the Bangladesh Foreign Minister, Dr. A.K. Abdul Momen and called on the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina. He also inaugurated the new Indian Cultural Centre in Dhaka.

11. EAM visited Tajikistan on 29-30 March and attended the 9th Ministerial Conference of Heart of Asia – Istanbul Process on Afghanistan. During the visit, EAM met with the President, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister and Speaker of Tajikistan. On the sidelines, he also had meetings with the President of Afghanistan; Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Iran, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan; and Executive Director of Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA).

12. EAM met the Nigerian NSA Babagana Monguno on 5 March; UK's Minister of State for Foreign Commonwealth & Development Affairs, Lord Tariq Ahmad on 15 March; IPU President Duarte Pacheco on 16 March; and US Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin on 20 March.

13. Kuwait's Foreign Minister and MOS for Cabinet Affairs, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah visited India from 17-18 March. He met with EAM on 18 March and both ministers reviewed all aspects of India-Kuwait bilateral relationship. A Joint Statement on establishment of a Joint Ministerial Commission at the level of Foreign Ministers was issued during the visit.

14. Afghanistan's Foreign Minister Mohammad Haneef Atmar visited India on 22-23 March. He met with EAM to discuss issues of bilateral and regional interest including regional connectivity and Afghan peace process.

15. EAM had telephonic calls with his counterparts from New Zealand, Madagascar, Kuwait, Panama, Jamaica, South Korea, Paraguay, Syria, Portugal and Rwanda. He also spoke to the UK Foreign Secretary and US Special Representative for Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad. On the occasion of 70 years of India-Germany diplomatic relations, EAM and German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas exchanged special messages.

16. EAM made a statement in the Lok Sabha on recent developments pertaining to the welfare of Indians in abroad, NRIs and PIOs on 15 March. He also made a statement in the Rajya Sabha on the Vaccine Maitri initiative on 17 March.

17. EAM addressed the virtual Israeli Asia-Pacific Ambassadors' Conference on 2 March. On 4 March, he addressed the event to commemorate Chabahar Day held on the margins of the Maritime India Summit-2021 and the WION Global Summit on "Power Play in Post Pandemic World" on 24 March. He also addressed the India Economic Conclave on 26 March, where he spoke about the strength of India-Bangladesh ties.

18. Minister of State (MOS) inaugurated ICCR's Northern Regional Centre at the University of Delhi on 4 March. On 08 March, on the occasion of International Women's Day, MOS

● unveiled two Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) in Delhi and Cochin, to be transformed as "All Women PSKs".

19. On 15 March, MoS addressed the tenth anniversary reception of Indo-American Friendship Association. He addressed the first India-EAEU Conclave on 16 March, organized by CII in collaboration with Eurasian Economic Commission and MEA. On 22 March, he addressed the Development Cooperation Dialogue, the Forum for Indian Development Cooperation Annual Symposium 2021 organized by RIS. MoS also spoke at the inaugural and valedictory sessions of the Fourth Global Ayurveda Festival (12 March and 19 March respectively).