



Ministry of External Affairs



Annual Report | 2020-21



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Ministry of External Affairs

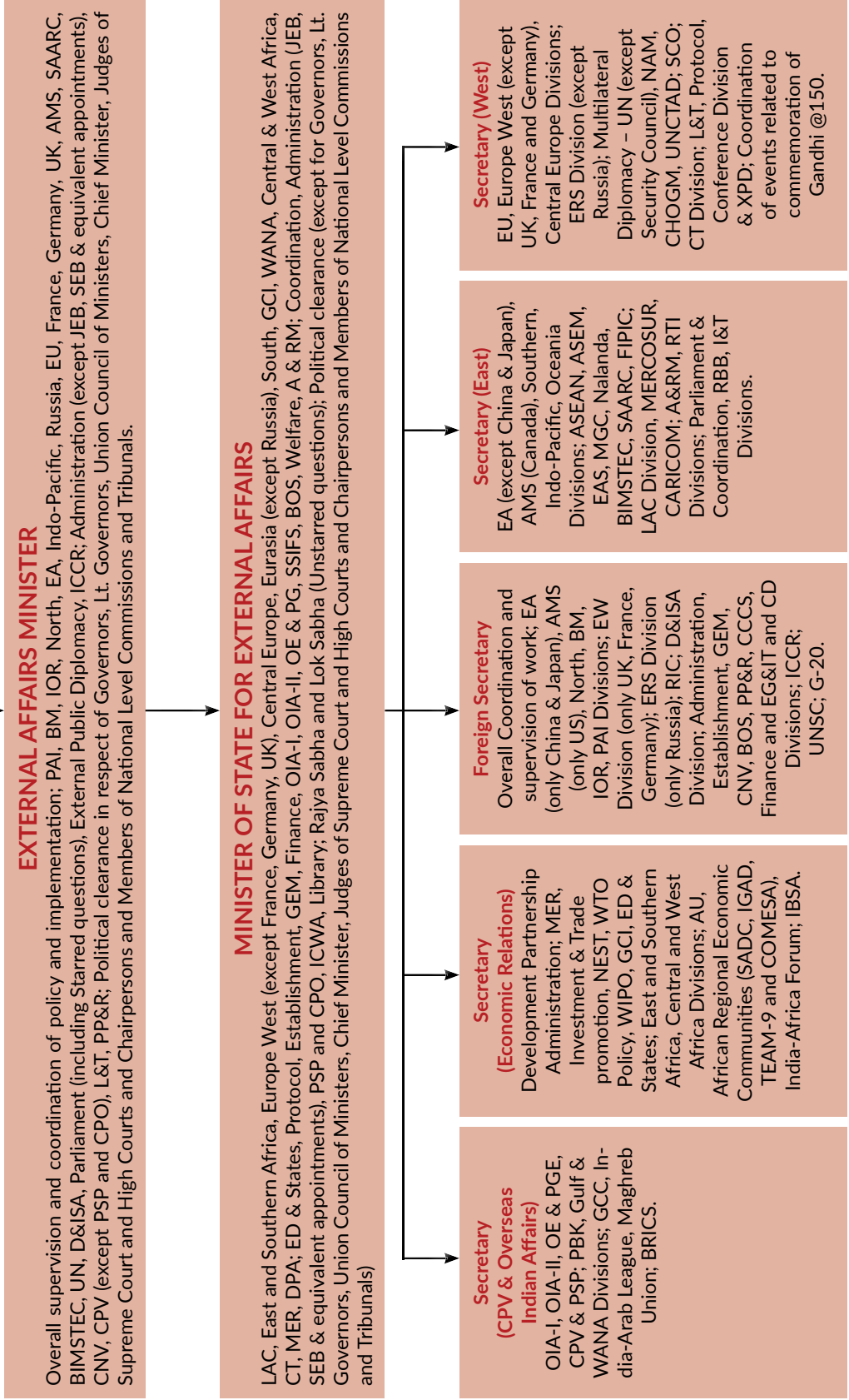
New Delhi

Annual Report | 2020-21



The Annual Report of the Ministry of External Affairs is brought out by the Policy Planning and Research Division. A digital copy of the Annual Report can be accessed at the Ministry's website : www.mea.gov.in.

**ORGANOGRAM OF THE
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL
AFFAIRS***



* As on 18 January 2021



MEA's Global Footprint

Mission & Posts

Bilateral Trade

Solar Alliance

Iconic Projects

Peace Keeping

Grants & Loans

Mahatma Gandhi Statues

Indian Languages Chair

Indian Cultural Center

Mahatma Gandhi Stamps

Mission & Posts

196

Mission and posts operational globally

9

New missions/posts to be opened in 2020-21

Missions & Posts in

Fiji

1



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INTRODUCTION AND SYNOPSIS

The Covid-19 pandemic delivered a major shock to the international system in 2020-21. Society as a whole and governments across the world were forced to cope with unprecedented disruption. The spreading virus caused different parts of the world to lock down and impose restrictions on movement. This in turn led to major economic trauma including loss of livelihoods and the most severe contraction of output in decades. The human cost of the pandemic has been substantial. More than 2 million lives were lost. A whole way of life stood threatened.

The Ministry of External Affairs, during this very difficult period, has focused on coping with the outcome of the pandemic and in taking the lead in responding to it. The response was at multiple levels and along multiple directions of effort. A Covid-19 cell was immediately created and senior officers deployed on Covid related duties. A Control Room manned 24x7 was set up to deal with emergency requests from stranded Indians and to disseminate information. It has received more than 110,000 emails and 33,000 telephone calls. The Ministry played a key

role in the procurement operations to strengthen the capacities of the medical system to respond to the pandemic. Testing kits, ventilators, PPEs and masks and also appropriate technologies were sourced on a worldwide basis.

The evacuation of more than 110,000 foreign nationals from different parts of India to 123 countries was facilitated. A large-scale coordinated effort, the Vande Bharat Mission, involving Indian Missions and Posts abroad and all concerned organisations in India was launched. More than 3 million Indians have returned to India under this mission. Returns took place by air, by sea and by land.

India also acted as a responsible international citizen during the crisis by providing Covid-related medical supplies to over 154 countries. These included medications such as Hydroxychloroquine and Paracetamol. These supplies were transported in spite of lockdowns and logistical challenges. Indian Rapid Response Teams were also deployed in Comoros, Kuwait, Maldives and Mauritius to assist in pandemic response.



Vande Bharat Mission

Development and production of Covid vaccines in India, and their export highlighted India's position as a responsible and reliable stakeholder in global health supply chains and as a responsible global citizen. They also focused attention on the capacities of India's bio-pharmaceutical sector. In 2021,

India provided vaccines to Afghanistan, Bhutan, Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar, Mauritius, Mexico, Seychelles, Sri Lanka, the UAE, Brazil, Morocco, Bahrain, Oman, Egypt, Algeria, Kuwait and South Africa. The supplies have been made under grant assistance as well as on a commercial basis.



Launch of Vaccine Maitri in Nepal

The Ministry adapted with speed and scale to the challenges imposed to diplomatic communication and interaction imposed by the disruptions to travel. Corona-era diplomacy using virtual tools was rapidly activated. Multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral meetings have taken place at all levels using virtual platforms

and voice communications. The Prime Minister participated in several virtual multilateral and plurilateral summit level meetings including G20, SAARC, UN General Assembly, BRICS Summit, the Vaccine Summit, SCO Summit, and the ASEAN-India Summit



1st Bilateral Virtual Summit between India and Australia on 04 June 2020

Prime Minister conducted at least 70 tele-conversations and virtual meetings with leaders around the world. Virtual Summit meetings were also initiated and Prime Minister participated in summits with Australia, Bangladesh, Denmark, EU, Italy, Luxembourg, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, and Vietnam.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) conducted at least 113 tele-conversations and meetings with his counterparts and leaders around the world. EAM conducted virtual Joint Commission meetings with 27 countries. He also participated in several multilateral/ plurilateral Ministerial meetings. These included BRICS, SCO, RIC, G20, Afghanistan Peace Negotiations and Afghanistan Pledging Conference, IBSA, G4, SAARC, Alliance for Multilateralism, India-Central Asia Dialogue, CICA, India-GCC Dialogue, India-Nordic Baltic Conclave and East Asia Summit.

The first post-pandemic visit by EAM was to Russia, to attend the SCO Foreign Ministers Meeting. Subsequently, EAM visited Bahrain, Japan, Qatar, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and UAE.

Minister of State visited Oman and UAE. Minister of State also chaired a Joint Commission meeting with Suriname.

The first post-pandemic overseas diplomatic visit by Foreign Secretary was to Bangladesh in August 2020. This was followed by official visits to France, Germany, Myanmar, Maldives, Nepal and UK.

Incoming visits did not stop during this period. US Secretary of State and Defence Secretary visited India for a 2+2 Meeting on 26-27 October 2020. Other inbound visits included those of UK Secretary of State on 14-17 December 2020 and Nepal Foreign Minister on 14-16 January 2021.

As India began unlocking, air bubble agreements were negotiated with 24 countries that restored mobility between

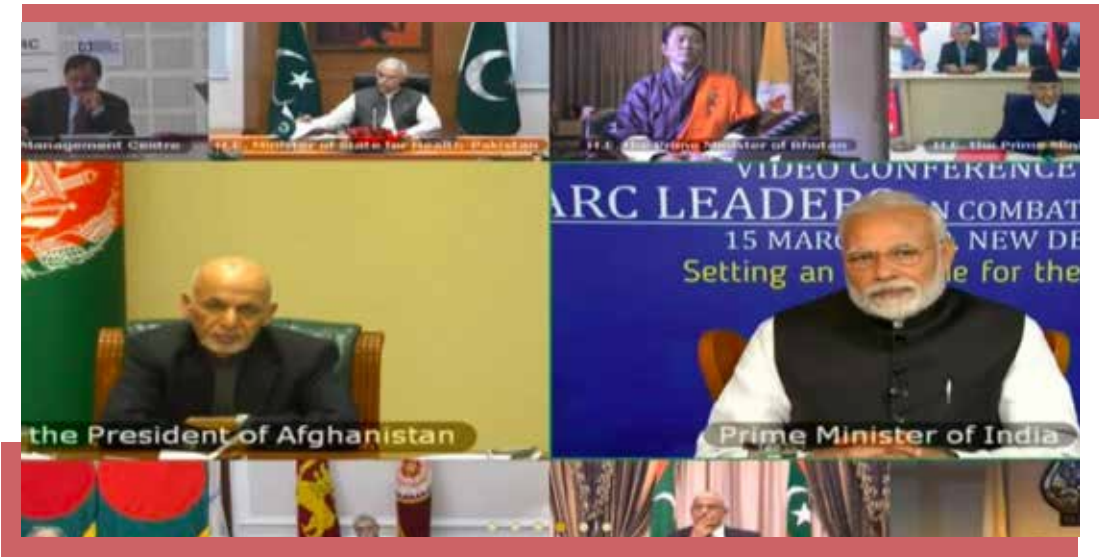
India and these destinations.

The policy of putting Neighbourhood First remained one of the fundamental pillars of Indian diplomacy during this period. Our neighbours were prioritized in our overseas Covid assistance programmes. The SAARC Covid-19 Emergency Fund was created with India contributing USD 10 million.

A number of joint capacity building programmes such as India-Bhutan Friendship Scholarships, e-ITEC programmes were launched. India sent consignments of Covid related essential medicines via sea to Maldives and airlifted another 6.2 tons of medicines under Operation Sanjeevani. India also sent Covid related medicines and medical equipment by air to Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.

The Prime Minister convened a meeting of SAARC leaders to identify cooperative measures for each country to mitigate the spread of the pandemic on 15 March 2020. Virtual Summits have taken place between India and Bangladesh and India and Sri Lanka. Prime Minister had telephonic conversations with Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on 1 January 2020, 10 April and 15 August 2020. EAM visited Sri Lanka and Foreign Secretary visited Bangladesh, Nepal, Myanmar and Maldives. Regular interaction using virtual platforms at the Ministerial and senior official level continued during this period.

Work on a large number of development partnership projects in multiple sectors, including connectivity projects, in the neighbourhood, went ahead. Among the major projects that were inaugurated are the Chilahati-Haldibari rail link with Bangladesh and the launch of Phase-II of RuPay Card with Bhutan. Work on connectivity projects including new Akhaura-Agartala cross-border railway link, India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, hydropower projects with Bhutan, Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project continued.



Prime Minister convened a meeting of SAARC leaders on combating Covid-19 on 15 March 2020

In the broader Indian Ocean region, under PM's broad vision of SAGAR - Security and Growth for all in the Region - relations have been augmented with partners in the region in defence and security, development partnership, training and capacity building. High level contact was sustained. Prime Minister and Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court Building in Mauritius during a video conference on 30 July 2020.

The Indian Ocean region received priority in Covid assistance. HADR assistance and Covid relief was delivered through Mission Sagar in which Indian naval ships visited Mauritius, Seychelles, Comoros and Madagascar. Vaccines were supplied to Seychelles and Mauritius.

India's Act East policy focuses on its relations with the East and South-East Asian region. High-level contacts were sustained and enhanced. The Prime Minister held telephonic conversations and virtual meetings with 9 countries in the region. Summit level meetings were held with Vietnam and Australia. EAM held meetings with counterparts in Mongolia, Philippines, South Korea and Vietnam. He attended a meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the United States, Japan, Australia and India in Tokyo on 06 October 2020.

India continued to intensify its engagement with various Indo-Pacific frameworks including ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

Outreach to India's partners in the Middle East and Gulf region was also maintained and sustained. Prime Minister held virtual meetings with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and UAE. EAM conducted virtual calls with counterparts from UAE and Oman and a Joint Commission Meeting with UAE. The first port of call in EAM's first visit

overseas during the pandemic was Tehran in September 2020. Subsequently, he visited UAE and Bahrain in November 2020 and Qatar in December 2020. Minister of State visited Oman and UAE in December 2020 and January 2021, respectively.

This region houses a large concentration of the Indian diaspora. It was a major focus of Vande Bharat missions and of community welfare activities by Missions and Posts in the region. Close contact was maintained with the governments of this region on the issue of the capacities of the Indian diaspora and their welfare. 4 Air Bubble arrangements with Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and UAE were negotiated to facilitate movements during the region.

Contact was maintained with partners in Africa. The Prime Minister conducted virtual meetings with counterparts in Ethiopia, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania and Uganda. EAM conducted a virtual call with Nigeria and a Joint Commission Meeting with Angola. India further expanded its diplomatic footprint in Africa and the opening of new resident missions in Sao Tome Principe, Sierra Leone and Togo has been approved.

Development partnership activities continued. 13 Lines of Credit (LoC) of about USD 1.36 billion were extended to various countries in 2020 and 6 LoC Projects were completed in 2020-21. India currently deploys USD 31.6 billion in 308 LoCs. Development Partnership Administration played a key role in managing India's HADR and Covid relief operations during the pandemic. In-person ITEC courses remained largely suspended during this period. A number of ITEC programme were however continued by means of online e-ITEC courses on public health, health care delivery and Covid-19 management strategies.

India has been involved in cultural and heritage conservation projects in various partner countries. Restoration of the My Son Temple complex in Vietnam, Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear

temples in Cambodia, and Vat Phou Temple in Lao PDR are some of the key ongoing projects being implemented by the Ministry.

India's ties with the United States were strengthened during this period by regular contact at the highest levels. Former President Donald Trump visited India on 24 February 2020 and attended the Namaste Trump event in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. Subsequently, Prime Minister spoke to the then President Donald Trump on several occasions and to incoming President Joseph R. Biden. Former Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and Secretary of Defence Mark T. Esper visited India for the annual 2+2 meetings in October 2020. Defence and security ties were enhanced. Business ties were deepened by a number of major investments by US technology majors in India. People to people contact continued. An Air Bubble was established and operated.

India maintained its Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership with Russia. Political understanding, strong defence cooperation, space partnership and energy ties are major pillars of the relationship with Russia.

Europe and the European Union are major partners. New dimensions were added to the relationship by the Virtual Summits between India and the European Union, India and Denmark, India and Italy, and India and Luxembourg. India and Denmark entered into a Green Strategic Partnership following their Summit on 28 September 2020.

India's engagement with China is complex. The two sides have agreed to manage their differences and not allow differences on any issue to become disputes. Further, the two sides also agreed that pending final settlement of the boundary question, maintenance of peace and tranquility in the border areas is an essential basis for the overall development of the bilateral relationship. However, since April-May 2020 the Chinese side undertook several attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Western Sector, which seriously disturbed the peace and tranquility along the LAC in the Western Sector and impacted the development of the relationship. While Indian Armed Forces responded appropriately to such attempts, both sides also agreed to resolve the issues through peaceful dialogue. Consequently, discussions have continued with the Chinese side to achieve complete disengagement from all friction points and full restoration of peace and tranquility in the India-China Border Areas at an early date.

The year saw further strengthening of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. Japan is the only country with which India has Annual Summits and 2+2 Ministerial Meeting. The two sides maintained the momentum of their ties through virtual meetings and phone calls despite Covid-19 related disruptions. EAM visited Tokyo for the 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue on 7 October 2020.

The following pages provide further details on the key developments in India's foreign relations during 2020-21.

India engaged actively in plurilateral initiatives throughout this period. It chaired the Council of Heads of Government of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and hosted a SCO Virtual Summit on 10 November 2020. The Prime Minister attended a virtual BRICS Summit on 17 November 2020 and EAM attended the BRICS Virtual Foreign Ministers' Meeting on 04 September 2020. EAM travelled to Moscow to attend the Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Ministers meeting on 10 September 2020.

India joined the United Nations Security Council for a non-permanent tenure on 1 January 2021. It will chair the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Taliban Sanctions Committee and the Libya Sanctions Committee. India is committed to Reformed Multilateralism which takes into account human-centric globalisation and the current global realities.

India has a substantial forthcoming multilateral calendar. India is currently BRICS President and Chairman of the WHO Executive Board. It will also chair the G20 in 2023. Logistical and substantive preparations to manage these responsibilities are underway.

The 3rd General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance, held in October 2020 in a customised virtual format, saw the participation of 53 member countries. The First Governing Council meeting and the first Executive Committee meeting of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure was held in March and June 2020, respectively.

Strategic outreach to foreign media and influencers and to larger global audiences using traditional channels of communication and outreach and social media continued. Engagement with think tanks and academic institutions in the public diplomacy space was intensified. The flagship conferences of the Ministry, the Raisina Dialogue, the Global Technology Summit and the Asian Economic Dialogue have adapted to the new realities by switching to the virtual mode.

The Ministry has continued to improve the delivery of public and consular services through e-Sanad and Madad Platform. On 30 December 2020, the Ministry also launched the Global Pravasi Rishta Portal and app in order to connect with Indian Diaspora across the world.

The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) was held in virtual mode on 9 January, 2021.

Digital platforms are also being integrated into the Ministry's functioning. The Ministry was able to adapt to the requirements of the increasing volume of virtual diplomacy. The Economic Division of the Ministry set up a website www.indbiz.gov.in on 16 December 2020.

INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS

Afghanistan

India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership witnessed further strengthening in 2020-21 despite the challenge posed by the Covid pandemic. The momentum of high-level bilateral engagements was maintained, including in the areas of political, defence, security, trade and investment, connectivity, development partnership, social and cultural cooperation, education, and capacity building.

EAM attended the inaugural session of the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha, virtually, on 12 September 2020. EAM later attended the 2020 Afghanistan Conference held in Geneva on 24 November 2020 via virtual platform.

India and Afghanistan have reached an agreement to build the Shatoot Dam, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents of Kabul city. India had earlier built the 202km Phul-e-Khumri high-voltage transmission line that provides electricity to Kabul city. India has also launched Phase-IV of the High Impact Community Development Projects programme in Afghanistan, which includes more than 100 projects worth USD 80 million.

Bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan has crossed the USD 1.5 billion mark in 2020-21.

India extended Covid-19 related assistance to Afghanistan including more than 20 MT of life-saving medicines and humanitarian assistance of 75,000 MT of wheat through Chabahar Port to strengthen the food security situation. 500,000 doses of Covishield vaccine, were sent to Afghanistan in February 2021 as grant assistance.

India conducted capacity-building programmes for the members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF) in 2020.

Bangladesh

In 2020-21 India-Bangladesh relations made further progress with both countries maintaining close contact, including at the highest levels. Prime Minister and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Haisna held a India-Bangladesh Virtual Summit on 17 December 2020.

During the Summit, the Chilahati-Haldibari Rail Link was inaugurated and 8 bilateral MoUs were signed in various sectors such as agriculture, hydrocarbons exploration, and development partnership. The Bangabandhu Bapu Digital Exhibition on the legacies of Mahatma Gandhi and Sheikh Mujibur Rehman was launched on this occasion.

Foreign Minister-level Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) meeting took place virtually on 29 September 2020. Foreign Secretary undertook two visits to Dhaka in March and August 2020.

The year 2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Bangladesh Liberation War and of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh.

Bangladesh is now India's largest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second largest trade partner of Bangladesh. Close to 30% of India's total development partnership outlays are committed to Bangladesh. India has extended concessional credits amounting to almost USD 10 billion to Bangladesh. These include three of its largest bilateral Lines of Credit.

India has provided three tranches of Covid related assistance to Bangladesh. Over 2 million doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Bangladesh in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Bhutan

The multi-dimensional relationship between India and Bhutan was further strengthened during 2020-21. Traditional as well as new areas of cooperation including hydropower, ICT, health, culture, agriculture, space, tertiary education, and digital and financial connectivity, demonstrated sustained growth.

On 16 April 2020, Prime Minister spoke with the Bhutanese Prime Minister Lotay Tshering. Both leaders had earlier interacted virtually during the SAARC leaders conference on Covid-19 in March 2020. Prime Ministers of India and Bhutan launched Phase-II of the RuPay Card during a virtual ceremony on 20 November 2020.

The Concession Agreement for the 600 MW Kholongchhu (Joint Venture) Hydro Electric Project was signed on 29 June 2020. Both Governments continue to maintain close coordination to expedite the implementation of two other ongoing projects - 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I and 1020 MW Punatsangchhu-II.

India has committed financial support of Rs. 4500 crores for the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) of Bhutan (2018-23), comprising Rs. 2800 crores for Project Tied Assistance, Rs. 850 crores for High Impact Community Development Projects and Rs. 850 towards Program Grant. India has also committed a 'Transitional Trade Support Facility' of Rs. 400 crores, to be provided over the 12th FYP of Bhutan. Around 600 big and small projects in the areas of infrastructure development, roads and bridges, industries, agriculture, e-governance, community development projects like irrigation channels, farm roads, block connectivity roads, basic health units, etc. have been identified by the two sides and are at various stages of implementation.

150,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Bhutan in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Maldives

Robust cooperation between India and Maldives was maintained

despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic. Foreign Secretary visited Maldives from 8-10 November 2020. This was the first post-pandemic high-level visit to Maldives. During his visit, an agreement on USD 100 million grant support for the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP) was signed. Three other MoUs were also signed during the visit.

India’s multi-faceted and timely assistance to Maldives helped it to cope with Covid-19’s health and economic impact. Indian Air Force airlifted 6.2 tons of medicines from various Indian cities through Operation Sanjeevani in April 2020. In May 2020, the Indian Navy’s INS Kesari supplied 580 tons of food aid under Mission Sagar. 100,000 doses of Covishield vaccines were sent to Maldives in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Both countries made significant progress on various ongoing bilateral projects under Lines of Credit and grants. Bilateral cooperation expanded to include new avenues. Work commenced on 9 High Impact Community Development Projects. President Solih inaugurated the Ekuveni synthetic track project funded by an MVR 8 million Indian grant in January 2021. India provided a Dornier aircraft to the Maldives in September 2020, which will be operated by the Maldives National Defence Forces.

India created South Asia’s first air travel bubble with Maldives in August 2020. India became the largest source for tourists in Maldives in a pandemic-hit 2020. A direct ferry service between both countries was launched in September 2020 . India’s ‘Neighbourhood First’ policy and Maldives’ India First’ policy operated in tandem for mutual benefit.

Myanmar

Myanmar is India’s land gateway to ASEAN and a vital component of India’s “Neighbourhood First” and “Act East” policies.

A series of high-level visits have helped in sustaining the momentum in bilateral ties. The President of Myanmar visited India from 26-29 February 2020. Foreign Secretary and Chief of Army Staff visited Myanmar on 4-5 October 2020. Foreign Office Consultations between the two countries took place in October 2020 via virtual platform.

India’s development assistance to Myanmar exceeds USD 1.8 billion with grants-in-aid project constituting the largest component. More than 100 projects have been implemented, till date, under the Border Area Development Programme. India is working trilaterally with Japan to provide soft infrastructure for schools in the Rakhine State constructed by Japan. India has also invested in a series of skill development and capacity building initiatives in Myanmar.

India has extended Covid related assistance to Myanmar including medicines and medical equipment. 1.5 million doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Myanmar in January 2021 as grant assistance.

In accordance with our vision of SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region - India handed over a Kilo-class

submarine, INS Sindhuvir, to Myanmar Navy in October 2020. This is the Myanmar Navy’s first submarine. An Implementing Arrangement on Hydrography was signed between the two countries in December 2020.

Nepal

In consonance with India’s Neighbourhood First Policy, there has been continued momentum in bilateral ties with Nepal, with a focus on promoting greater connectivity, on infrastructure development and on capacity building.

Prime Ministers of India and Nepal exchanged views on jointly combating the Covid-19 pandemic at the video-conference of SAARC leaders held on 15 March 2020, and during their telephone conversation on 10 April 2020.

The engagement between India and Nepal was further strengthened with high-level visits and virtual meetings of various bilateral mechanisms. EAM and the Nepalese Minister for Foreign Affairs held a telephone conversation on 20 March 2020. Foreign Secretary visited Nepal from 26 - 27 November 2020 and the Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane visited Nepal from 4 - 6 November 2020. India-Nepal Joint Working Groups on commerce, railways, power, oil and gas sector also met virtually to advance the cooperation in respective areas.

The 6th Meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Commission was co-chaired by EAM and Nepal Foreign Minister. Both sides welcomed the completion of the work on first passenger railway line between India and Nepal from Jaynagar to Kurtha via Janakpur.

India remained the largest trade partner of Nepal with bilateral trade crossing USD 7 billion in 2019-20. India-assisted development projects in Nepal focussing on road and rail connectivity, infrastructure, humanitarian assistance, and capacity building achieved substantial progress during 2020-21. Work on the construction of a new Integrated Check Post at Nepalgunj, with Indian assistance, commenced in November 2020. Several post-earthquake reconstruction projects and High Impact Community Development projects were also completed in the last year.

India provided about 25 tons of medicines, medical equipment, and other medical supplies to Nepal to assist in its efforts to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. India also facilitated an uninterrupted flow of trade and supplies across the border. Both sides worked together to manage the return of stranded nationals. In January 2021, India sent 1 million doses of the Covishield vaccine as grant assistance to Nepal.

Pakistan

Despite repeated reminders calling upon Pakistan to adhere to the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding for maintaining peace and tranquility along the Line of Control and the International Boundary, Pakistani forces consistently resorted to unprovoked firing and ceasefire violations including by deliberately targeting innocent civilians. Pakistan employed new methods to pursue

its strategy of proxy war in Jammu and Kashmir, including through the use of tunnels and drones along the LoC and the IB to aid and abet cross-border terrorism and smuggling of arms and narcotics.

Following the onset of Covid, India has facilitated the repatriation of over 1400 Indian nationals and Long-Term Visa holders (NORI visa) from Pakistan to India and over 1250 Pakistan nationals stranded in India due to Covid-19 induced border restrictions

India remains committed to ensuring the safe and hassle-free movement of pilgrims through the Kartarpur Corridor across the Budhi Ravi Channel. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the Government continues to facilitate the visit of pilgrims as per the 1974 Bilateral Protocol on visit to Religious Shrines between India and Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

In 2020-21, India’s relations with Sri Lanka further strengthened in consonance with India’s ‘Neighborhood First’ and SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) policies.

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

India’s engagement with countries in the Indian Ocean Region continued undeterred in 2020-21 despite the Covid pandemic.

Comoros

India-Comoros bilateral relationship gained further momentum. EAM had a telephone conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Comoros on 25 April 2020 to express solidarity with the Government and the people of Comoros during the Covid crisis. In response to a request for medical assistance from the Comorian side, a 14-member Indian Medical Assistance Team visited Comoros from 1-18 June 2020. A consignment of medicines which included Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) was also donated by India to Comoros.

Madagascar

India-Madagascar relations further intensified in 2020-21. Responding to the requests for assistance in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, India provided humanitarian and medical assistance to Madagascar including the supply of 100,000 tablets of HCQ and 44,000 tablets of Azithromycin.

Earlier, India had provided humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to Madagascar following floods. INS Airavat visited the port of Antsiranana under ‘Operation Vanilla’ and delivered relief material on 1 February 2020 for the flood-affected northern region of Madagascar. INS Shardul also visited the port of Antsiranana from 10-14 March 2020 to

A virtual Bilateral Summit held between Prime Minister and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on 26 September 2020 reviewed progress on all major aspects of the bilateral relations. National Security Advisor visited Sri Lanka from 27-28 November for Maritime Security NSA Trilateral Meeting in Colombo. EAM visited Colombo from 5-7 January 2021 and met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, and Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena.

India continued its assistance to Sri Lanka in various spheres including Covid-19 response, trade and investment, defence, development cooperation, and culture, as per the requirements of Sri Lanka. India gifted 4 consignments of essential medicines and other items weighing over 25 tons in total to Sri Lanka. Both India and Sri Lanka also closely coordinated in ensuring smooth repatriation of their stranded citizens from each other’s territory. Under the Vande Bharat Mission 11 flights, one ship, INS Jalashwa, and several chartered flights repatriated around 3500 stranded Indians from Sri Lanka to India.

In January 2021, India sent 500,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine, as grant assistance to Sri Lanka.

deliver 600 tons of rice.

The 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated with the inauguration of an 8 KW Solar Power Plant at the Embassy building by Prime Minister Christian Ntsay.

Mauritius

India’s relationship with Mauritius was strengthened in 2020-21. India was a first responder during the Covid crisis, providing about 14 tons of Covid related essential medicines, including 500,000 tablets of HCQ and a special consignment of Ayurvedic medicines. As part of Mission Sagar, medical assistance teams were deployed in Mauritius to help in dealing with the Covid emergency. Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth on 23 May 2020 where Prime Minister Jugnauth conveyed his thanks for India’s assistance during the Covid pandemic.

Both Prime Ministers jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court building in Mauritius through a video-conference on 30 July 2020. The landmark project has been completed with Indian grant assistance under the ‘Special Economic Package’ of USD 353 million offered by India to Mauritius.

India responded promptly to the request of Mauritius for assistance in dealing with the environmental crisis due to an oil spill following a vessel MV Wakashio running aground near the Mauritius coast on 25 July 2020. India sent 30 tons of specialized technical equipment and a 10-member Coast Guard Technical Response Team to deal with the containment

of oil spills.

100,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Mauritius in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Seychelles

India’s relations with Seychelles witnessed further momentum in 2020. Seychelles was an important destination for Indian Covid-19 assistance and was among the first few countries to receive lifesaving medicines. A first consignment of 4 tons

of medicines was sent on 15 April 2020, via a chartered Air India flight. The second consignment arrived on 7 June 2020 through INS Kesari as a part of Mission Sagar. 50,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Seychelles in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Developmental cooperation is one of the strongest pillars of India’s bilateral relations with Seychelles. 12 projects under the High Impact Community Development Project were inaugurated. Seychelles also formally joined the E-Vidya Bharati and E-Arogya Bharati (Telemedicine & Tele-Education) project in September 2020 with Indian grant assistance.

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND OCEANIA

India’s engagement with Southeast Asian countries and Oceania takes place under the framework of the Act East Policy. Key elements of Act East Policy continued to gain momentum in 2020-21 with growing economic cooperation, cultural ties and development of strategic relationships with countries in the region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.

India’s relationships with Australia, Indonesia, Singapore and Vietnam are grounded in shared democratic ethos, increasingly aligned geostrategic views, shared aspirations for common good, strong people-to-people links and complementary economies.

The first-ever Virtual Summit at Prime Minister-level was held with Australia on 4 June 2020. In 2020, Prime Minister had tele-conversations with Presidents of Indonesia and the Philippines and Prime Ministers of Australia, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. Prime Minister exchanged views with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc on 21 Dec 2020 at a virtual bilateral summit on wide-ranging bilateral, regional and global interests.

Virtual Global Investor Round-table 2020, presided over by Prime Minister on 5 November 2020 saw participation of Australian Superannuation Funds. Prime Minister of Australia virtually addressed the inaugural session of the Bengaluru

Tech Summit on 19 November 2020 which was inaugurated by Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was re-elected as the Prime Minister of New Zealand. Ms. Priyanka Radhakrishnan became New Zealand’s first Minister of Indian origin and was appointed as the Minister for the Community, Youth and Voluntary Sector. Minister Radhakrishnan participated in the 5th Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 8 January 2021.

Vice-President of Vietnam visited India in February 2020. Princess Mahachakri Sirindhorn and Princess Chulabhorn, both sisters of the King of Thailand visited India in February 2020. EAM had tele-conversations with Foreign Ministers of Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia in 2020 while the Minister of State gave a keynote address to a Vietnamese think tank (VIISAS) in October 2020. Structured mechanism meetings at the EAM level were held in 2020 with Vietnam (Joint Commission Meeting; 25 August 2020) and Philippines [Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (JCBC); 6 November 2020].

2020-21 witnessed significant developments in bilateral ties with Australia with adoption of declarations and signing of 9 landmark documents including "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership". These will provide solid ground for further expansion of relations.

INDO-PACIFIC

During 2020-21, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, India continued to intensify its engagement with various Indo-Pacific frameworks. These include Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

The end of 2020 was marked by the 37th ASEAN, 15th East Asia

Summit (EAS), and the 17th India-ASEAN Summit from 11-15 November 2020 hosted by Vietnam. Prime Minister co-chaired the 17th ASEAN-India Summit, along with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc. The Summit reviewed the status of the ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership. EAM attended the 15th East Asia Summit virtually. He spoke of the importance of adhering to international law, respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty, and promoting a rules-based global order.

In August 2020, India hosted the 2nd IORA Expert’s Group

Meeting on Academics, Science and Technology in August 2020.

Strengthening ties with the Mekong region, India sanctioned

a total of 23 projects under Quick Impact Project schemes in 2020, in Vietnam, Cambodia and Lao PDR.

EAST ASIA

China

Over the past three decades, peace and tranquility in the border areas formed the basis for development of relations in other domains. While the year 2020 marked the 70th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between India and China, the year also witnessed heightened tensions in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas.

From April-May 2020, there had been an enhanced deployment of troops and armaments by the Chinese side in the border areas and along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector. Since mid-May the Chinese side attempted to transgress the LAC in several areas of the Western Sector of the India-China border area. These attempts were invariably met with an appropriate response from Indian Armed Forces.

Given the growing friction along the LAC, the Senior Commanders of the two sides in a meeting on 6 June 2020 agreed on a process of disengagement that involved reciprocal actions. Both sides also agreed to respect and abide by the LAC and not undertake any activity to alter the status quo. However in violation of this the Chinese side engaged in a violent face off on 15 June 2020 at Galwan. Our brave soldiers laid down their lives and also inflicted costs including casualties on the Chinese side. EAM had a telephone conversation with State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi on 17 June 2020 and strongly conveyed India’s concerns. EAM also stressed that the Chinese side needed to take appropriate action so as to restore peace and tranquility along the LAC.

The Special Representatives of India and China on the Boundary Question also had a telephone conversation on 5 July 2020. It was agreed that both sides should work towards complete disengagement at the earliest and de-escalation in the India-China border areas so as to restore full peace and tranquility in the border areas.

EAM met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 10 September 2020 in Moscow. Both Ministers had a frank and constructive discussion on the developments in the India-China border areas and reached a five point agreement to address the ongoing issues along the LAC, ensure disengagement from all friction areas and restore peace and tranquility. During the leadership level engagements, the two sides agreed to maintain close communication at the diplomatic and military level to achieve a peaceful resolution to the situation along the LAC.

The 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) were held through video-conference on 24 June 2020, 10 July 2020, 24 July 2020, 20

August 2020, 30 September 2020 and 18 December 2020 respectively. Nine rounds of meetings between the Senior Commanders were also held.

As on date, the military and diplomatic engagements to resolve the situation and restore full peace and tranquility are continuing.

Japan

While the Covid pandemic has caused disruptions, the two sides still maintained the momentum of their ties through virtual meetings and phone calls in 2020-21. On 21 December 2020, the 6th edition of the SAMVAD dialogue was held in Tokyo in the hybrid format. Prime Minister delivered a video message while Prime Minister Suga delivered remarks in person. EAM visited Tokyo for the 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue with Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi on 7 October 2020.

The two countries concluded and signed an Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement or ACSA on 9 September 2020. Joint operational engagements continued in 2020 with the completion of the 4th edition of the maritime bilateral exercise JIMEX. Japan and India also participated in Phase-1 Malabar-20 with the US and Australia held in the Bay of Bengal in November 2020.

13 Vande Bharat flights carried around 2665 Indians and 10 charter flights carried around 436 Indians from Japan to India. From India, 13 Vande Bharat flights carried 1286 Indians to Japan.

Republic of Korea

While the Covid pandemic has caused disruptions, regular bilateral exchanges have continued to push forward cooperation. On 20 August 2020, the India-Republic of Korea Consultations on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation were held virtually. As part of Vande Bharat Mission, 242 Indians were repatriated to India and the travel of 234 Indians was facilitated. In addition, around 1350 Indians traveled between India and RoK by charter flights.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

The Government of India extended medical assistance worth about USD 1 million to DPR Korea in the form of anti-Tuberculosis medicines.

Mongolia

2020 marked the 65th anniversary of the establishment of bilateral relations between the two countries. Regular bilateral exchanges have continued to build on existing ties. On 30 August 2020, the Election Commission of India and the General Election Commission of Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the field of Elections.

The 7th meeting of the India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation was held virtually on 3 December 2020. The meeting was chaired jointly by EAM and Mongolia's Chief Minister and Cabinet Secretary, L. Oyun-Erdene.

India sent Covid related medical aid to Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria among others and facilitated the export of medicines to Jordan, Israel, and Egypt, manufactured by Indian Pharmaceutical companies . India sent food aid and

relief materials to Lebanon in the aftermath of the August 2020 Beirut explosions and to Sudan, following devastating floods in Sudan and South Sudan in September 2020.

GULF AND WEST ASIA

Gulf

There was robust cooperation between Gulf countries and India during the Covid-19 pandemic in consonance with India's 'Think West' Policy. Prime Minister participated virtually in the 15th G-20 Summit under the Presidency of Saudi Arabia in November 2020. The Prime Minister also held telephonic conversations with his counterparts in the region during 2020-21.

EAM visited UAE and Bahrain in November 2020 and Qatar in December 2020. The annual India-GCC Political Dialogue was convened virtually in November 2020, wherein the Indian delegation was led by EAM. Minister of State paid an official visit to Oman in December 2020 and to UAE in January 2021. India welcomed the decision of UAE and Bahrain to normalize relations with Israel.

The leadership of Gulf countries took exceptional care of Indians in their respective countries and facilitated an orderly return of Indian nationals. India ensured that the supply chains of essential items to these countries were not disrupted despite lockdowns in India. Similarly, India also ensured that Indian doctors and medical professionals were able to travel to the Gulf to help in fighting the pandemic.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, over 230,000 Indian nationals were repatriated from Gulf countries to various states in India. Additionally, 4 Air Bubble arrangements were agreed with

Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE and Qatar.

Iran

2020 marked the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between India and Iran.

EAM visited Iran on 9 September 2020 and held comprehensive bilateral discussions with Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on issues including bilateral trade and connectivity projects. Earlier, EAM and Foreign Minister Zarif also held a tele-conversation on 13 April 2020 and exchanged views on regional developments.

Iran's Majlis ratified the bilateral Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) in September 2020 which will strengthen bilateral commercial and trade ties. With the first ever transshipment through Chabahar, the port saw a steady increase in bulk and general cargo traffic in 2020-21, and emerged as the "connecting point" for the region to deliver humanitarian assistance during the Covid pandemic.

Despite a ban on its export, India supplied surgical masks worth USD 3 million to Iran. More than 4000 Indian nationals were repatriated from Iran via air and sea routes as part of the Vande Bharat Mission and Operation Samudra Setu respectively. India also supplied 45 MT of Malathion (95 per cent ULV) to help Iran control locusts.

WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, high level interactions continued to maintain the momentum of our bilateral relations with countries in West Asia and North Africa (WANA) in 2020-21. During the year, relations with all the WANA countries were carried forward through telephone calls and virtual meetings. EAM had a virtual meeting with Morocco's Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita. Minister of State had a meeting with Syrian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Faysal Mekdad and chaired Foreign Office Consultations with Palestine in virtual format. EAM inaugurated the 15th CII-EXIM Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership virtually on 22

September 2020 in New Delhi.

A delegation from AIIMS visited Eritrea in January 2020 to explore possibilities of forging a partnership in capacity building for Eritrean medical practitioners. A Cooperation Agreement between the Supreme Court of India and the Supreme Council of Judicial Power of Morocco was signed in July 2020.

Minister of State announced that India will contribute another USD 10 million over the coming two years in support of Palestinian refugees during the Extraordinary Virtual Ministerial Pledging Conference for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on 23 June 2020,

AFRICA

Prime Minister and EAM continued to engage with their counterparts in the region in 2020-21. The 1st India-Angola Joint Commission Meeting was held in September 2020, co-chaired by EAM and his counterpart from Angola. 3 MoUs on Health, Training of Diplomats and Visa facilitation were signed during the meeting. Minister of State paid an official visit to Mozambique in January 2020 and Ghana in January 2021. The 15th CII-Exim Bank Digital Conclave in September 2020 witnessed participation from various African leaders.

Our diplomatic presence in Africa further increased in 2020 with the opening of three more Missions in Sao Tome Principe, Sierra Leone, and Togo. Diplomatic Missions in Mauritania, Liberia, Guinea Bissau, and Cabo Verde are likely to be opened shortly. Chad opened its resident embassy in New Delhi in

early 2020 and India is likely to open one in 2021.

17 African countries have signed agreements under India's flagship project in tele-education and telemedicine for Africa called e-Vidya Bharati and Arogya Bharati Network Project. India continued its development partnership association with Africa by announcing various LoCs worth approximately USD 3 billion. India has provided medical assistance to 35 African nations on a grant basis in their fight against the Covid-19 pandemic by providing Covid medicines worth approximately USD 1.8 million. At least 16 African countries were provided various training programmes in India under the ITEC programme. Over 4000 Indian nationals were repatriated to India under Vande Bharat Mission. India established Air Bubble arrangements with Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania.

EURASIA

India's traditionally close relations with countries in the Eurasian region, part of India's extended neighbourhood, in particular with Russia, were further strengthened during 2020-21. Relations acquired greater strategic significance through mechanisms such as the India-Central Asia Dialogue, India-Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) negotiations on a possible Free Trade Agreement, International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), and cooperation under the framework of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

The significance of India's relationship with Russia and the personal rapport between Prime Minister and President Putin was evident from the number of virtual contacts even during the Covid-19 pandemic. There were 3 telephonic conversations between the two leaders on various occasions. The only outgoing Ministerial level visits between March-September 2020 were to Russia, a special and privileged strategic partner, by Defence Minister and EAM. A tri-service Indian contingent participated for the first time in the military parade in Moscow for the commemoration of the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Second World War. Exports to Russia stood at USD 1.8 billion and imports at USD 3.8 billion during the year.

The relationship with other countries in the Eurasia region also progressed notably despite the continuing impacts of the Covid pandemic. High level exchanges continued during this period with Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Prime Minister and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev co-chaired the India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit on 11 December 2020. Both leaders held in-depth exchange of

views on bilateral relations and reaffirmed the India-Uzbekistan Strategic Partnership.

India provided humanitarian medical assistance to Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan in their fight against Covid-19. India and the Eurasian countries actively assisted one another in enabling the return of their stranded nationals to their respective home countries.

Prime Minister participated in the Virtual Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group themed on "United Against Covid-19 Pandemic," under the chairmanship of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

EAM participated in the virtual meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on 24 September 2020, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan.

Consultations were held with Kazakh and Tajik officials on enhancing space cooperation and on peaceful use of space technology respectively.

This year also saw the first-ever joint meeting of the respective National Coordination Committees of India and Uzbekistan to follow up on implementation of bilateral projects, co-chaired by Minister of State and Uzbekistan Deputy Prime Minister Sardor Umurzakov in August 2020.

The 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue in October 2020, and the decision to hold it annually, provide an alternative

institutional framework for cooperation between India and the Central Asian countries. The dialogue was significant in terms of the announcement of a USD 1 billion Line of Credit

and an innovative grant financing mechanism for High Impact Community Development Projects in Central Asian countries by India.

EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

European Union

The year 2020 has been a milestone for India-EU relations. Both sides committed to augmenting their ties in the context of the global pandemic and a continuously evolving geopolitical landscape. India continued to accord high diplomatic priority to the EU amidst the changing structural contours of a post-Brexit Europe. Over the years, a multi-tiered institutional architecture for bilateral cooperation has been established with the Summit at the apex level. The first India-EU Summit was held in Lisbon in 2000 which marked a watershed in the development of the relationship. Since then, 15 annual bilateral summits have taken place between India and the EU. The relationship was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' during the 5th India-EU Summit held at The Hague in 2004.

On 15 July 2020, Prime Minister held the 15th India-EU Summit, virtually, along with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen. The Summit provided a new strategic roadmap upto 2025 to comprehensively upgrade the relationship, including establishing new dialogue mechanisms on bilateral trade and investment and maritime security.

The EU remains one of the top trade and investment partners of India. The India-EU-27 total bilateral trade in goods from January to July 2020 was USD 40.09 billion and trade in services was USD 33.15 billion. At 17.31% of the total FDI flows to India (USD 470 billion), the EU is the largest source of FDI. FDI flows from the EU-27 from April 2000 to March 2020 totaled USD 81.35 billion.

Central Europe

Politically, India's relations with Central European countries are free from any major bilateral irritants. Bilateral relations with several Central European countries are rooted in cultural ties. Many countries support India at international and multilateral fora including India's permanent membership to the UNSC. Over the years, political stability in the region and a strongly growing economic profile have led to deepening of relations with India and opening of new vistas of cooperation. Within the EU, Central European countries have a strong voice and constitute groupings like the Visegrád Group (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia) which is a robust force within the EU.

During 2020-21, high-level bilateral engagements with Central European countries remained active. Prime Minister and

Denmark Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen co-chaired the 1st India-Denmark Virtual Summit on 28 September 2020. India and Denmark agreed to form a Green Strategic Partnership, the first of its kind, to foster cooperation in addressing bilateral and global challenges on climate change.

During 2020-21, Prime Minister held virtual consultations and telephonic conversations with his counterparts from Austria, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Slovenia, Romania, Greece, Czech Republic, Estonia, and Lithuania and had in-depth discussions on issues of mutual interest.

The 1st India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave was organized jointly by the Ministry and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on 5 November 2020. EAM was the keynote speaker at the inaugural session which also saw Ministerial level participation from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, and Latvia.

India provided support to Central European countries during the Covid-19 pandemic with respect to the supply of medical assistance and evacuation of foreign nationals, which was appreciated by the leadership of these countries.

Western Europe

In 2020-21, India's relations with West European countries and EU included sustained interactions at the highest levels despite limitations posed by Covid. In addition to the India-EU Virtual Summit, Prime Minister also participated in Virtual Summits during the Covid pandemic period with Italy and Luxembourg.

Exchanges were also held at multiple political and official levels on cooperation on Covid and post-Covid recovery, strategies on vaccines, diversification of supply chains and cooperation in new emerging areas such as green technology, AI, the digital domain, and renewables. India has stressed the need to conclude Migration Mobility Partnership Agreements (MMPA) with several countries, including UK, Portugal, Italy, Germany, and the Benelux group to facilitate the legal movement of peoples. A MMPA with France is awaiting French ratification.

At the invitation of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Prime Minister participated in the Climate Ambition Summit co-hosted by the UK on 12 December 2020.

Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the UK Dominic Raab visited India from 14-17 December 2020 and held discussions with EAM.

THE AMERICAS

The United States of America

The India-US relationship was elevated to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership during the State visit of former President Donald Trump to India in February 2020.

The 3rd Annual 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue held in New Delhi on 27 October 2020 enabled a comprehensive review of the bilateral ties from the strategic perspective and provided political direction to advancing these further. 5 MoUs/Agreements, including the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement, were signed during this occasion.

To respond to the Covid-19 pandemic, India and the US stepped up bilateral collaboration particularly in the field of health, medical research, therapeutics, and vaccine development.

India and the US have witnessed a sustained increase in their bilateral trade over the last few years. The US is India's largest trading partner (goods and services combined). In 2019, bilateral trade increased by 4.3% to reach USD 148.8 billion. In 2020, bilateral trade in goods reached USD 26.55 billion during April-August 2020.

Several important consultations were conducted during the year, including the India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership Ministerial Meeting, India-U.S. CEO Forum, India-U.S. Counter Terrorism Joint Working Group, India-U.S. Cyber Security Dialogue, India-U.S. Information and Communication Technology Working Group meeting and consultations on the United Nations Security Council. The inaugural meeting between the Indian Defence Innovation Organization (DIO-IDEX) and US Defence Innovation Unit as well as the India-U.S. Defence Technology and Trade Initiative were held in 2020.

Former President Trump conferred the highest US decoration, the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, to Prime Minister on 21 December 2020 in recognition of the exemplary contribution made by the Prime Minister for the advancement of the India-United States strategic partnership.

On 17 November 2020, Prime Minister and the then President-elect Joseph Biden agreed to work closely to further advance the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. They discussed key priority areas, including containing the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting access to affordable vaccines, tackling climate change, and fostering cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Canada

The Prime Minister spoke to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau twice on the telephone in 2020.

On 8 October 2020, the Prime Minister delivered an inaugural address at the virtual Invest India 2020 Conference organised by Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd.

On 3 November 2020, EAM participated in the informal Group of Foreign Ministers on Covid-19 Response (Ministerial Coordination Group on Covid-19), convened by the Foreign Minister of Canada on 3 November 2020.

The Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism discussed the India-Canada Counter-Terrorism Action Plan on 26 August 2020.

India and Canada have been working to deepen their trade and commerce relations. Bilateral trade was worth USD 2.17 billion from 01 April to 31 August 2020. India's exports to Canada during the year were USD 2.09 billion and imports from Canada were USD 2.10 billion. Canadian Pension Funds have pledged to invest over USD 50 billion in India. India and Canada are discussing the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA). A virtual meeting on CEPA, and BIPPA between India and Canada was held on 22 June 2020 and on 27 October 2020.

Commerce and Industry Minister spoke with Canadian Minister for Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade Mary Ng on several occasions and discussed issues pertaining to maintenance of global supply chains, pharmaceuticals products availability, G-20 cooperation and bilateral trade.

India is enhancing its engagement with Canada in the field of education. India has now become the top source of foreign students with 230,000 Indian students studying in Canada. Canada is one of the 28 countries covered under the Scheme for promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration, an initiative aiming to improve research ecosystems in India's higher education institutions. So far, 19 projects under 'Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration' and 106 under 'Global Initiative of Academic Networks' have been awarded to Canadian faculties.

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

India continued its engagement with all 33 countries of Latin America and Caribbean region in 2020-21, despite the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The region remained an important area of focus for our foreign policy,

especially with the steady growth in bilateral trade which increased five-fold in the last five years to reach approximately USD 38 billion. The global restrictions resulting from the pandemic were used as an opportunity to increase engagement,

and thereby demonstrate our continued commitment to the region.

Just two months after his highly successful visit as Chief Guest for India’s Republic Day, President Bolsonaro of Brazil and Prime Minister had a telephonic discussion on the global situation of the Covid-19 pandemic in April 2020. EAM held telephonic conversations with 23 of his counterparts in the region. The First Joint Commission Meeting between India and Chile chaired by EAM and his counterpart was held on 16 October 2020.

Several key MoUs/Agreements were signed with LAC countries. These included cooperation in the field of lithium exploration and exploitation with Argentina and deepening trade and

investment ties with Mexico.

As a mark of solidarity, and in line with our role as the “Pharmacy of the World”, India sent medical aid packages consisting of hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines, and medical equipment to 27 countries in the LAC region.

More than 3,000 Indian nationals stranded in the region were repatriated. Indian Missions worked with local authorities, other embassies, and aviation companies to find different ways to fly out Indians under stringent travel restrictions. Citizens from LAC countries were also helped in their journey back home and the Ministry facilitated the evacuation flights of LAC countries including those of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Colombia.

BIMSTEC, SAARC &NALANDA

India played a pioneering role in combating the Covid pandemic through active engagement in the SAARC context. At the initiative of the Prime Minister, a video conference of South Asian Leaders was held on 15 March 2020. India pledged a voluntary contribution of USD 10 million to the SAARC Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund. India hosted a video conference of health professionals from all SAARC countries on 26 March 2020. In April, India hosted a video conference of trade officials of SAARC countries to discuss the implications of Covid-19 on intra-regional trade. Additionally, India launched a Covid-19 Information Exchange Platform ‘COINEX’ in May 2020. India also extended foreign currency swap support to SAARC partners - Maldives (USD 150 million) and Bhutan (USD 200 million).

2020 saw the finalisation of the draft BIMSTEC Master Plan on Transport Connectivity at the 3rd BIMSTEC Working Group Meeting on Transport Connectivity which was chaired by India in a virtual format on 8 December 2020.

Nalanda University has made steady progress both in terms of physical infrastructure as well as academic programmes. The University was awarded the 5 Star Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment, Large Development (GRIHA LD- 5 Star) by the GRIHA Council on 9 October 2020 for a Net Zero Energy Campus. The University also bagged CSR award in Excellence in Education for its innovative academic architecture.

COUNTER-TERRORISM

The issue of countering terrorism found prominent mention in various bilateral and multilateral meetings at all levels during the year. During all such interactions, India strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and reiterated its commitment to combating the menace of terrorism at the regional and global level. During the year, despite limitations imposed by Covid-19 pandemic, India continued to hold structured consultations virtually through the mechanism of

Joint Working Groups on Counter-Terrorism (JWG-CT) with partner countries such as the EU, the US, Australia, the UK, and France. In addition, India participated in the BRICS Counter-Terrorism Working Group and Sub Groups meetings. India also participated in the meetings of FATF, GCTF, the UN and various other regional and multilateral organisations on issues pertaining to countering terrorism.

POLICY PLANNING AND RESEARCH

The Policy Planning and Research Division is the nodal division of the Ministry for policy planning and public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. It also conducts bilateral and multilateral policy dialogues.

Virtual dialogues were held with Australia, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Poland, Turkey, Vietnam, UK, the EU and BRICS. The

division continued to provide policy analyses and reports on a number of issues. A number of Track 1.5/ 2 Dialogues with Canada, EU, Japan, South Korea and the US were facilitated.

Regular and structured interactions were held with think tanks and academic institutions. Several joint activities were undertaken with universities and research bodies. Flagship

conferences organized by the Ministry are adapting to the post-Covid realities by adopting virtual and hybrid platforms. The Global Technology Summit was held in December 2020

via virtual platform. The Raisina Dialogue, Asian Economic Dialogue and Indian Ocean Conference are scheduled to be held later in 2021.

INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS (ICWA)

The ICWA continued to accord high priority to research and study of political, economic and security developments in Asia, Africa, Europe, the United States, the Indo-Pacific Region, and the wider global geostrategic environment. The conclusions were disseminated in the form of Issue Briefs, Viewpoints, and Special Reports, which were published on the ICWA

website. Further, ICWA continued the process of translating its academic output in Hindi which has been regularly posted on its website. In addition, since April 2020, the Council has published books and Sapru House Papers. In line with its mandate ICWA conducted a large number of events, lectures, conferences and outreach activities.

RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES (RIS)

The Research and Information System for Developing Countries is an autonomous policy research institute that specializes in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. It fosters effective 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. Through its intensive network of think tanks, RIS seeks to strengthen policy coherence on international economic issues and the development partnership canvas.

In 2020-21, RIS organized a number of policy dialogues

focused on the Covid-19 pandemic. These included, among others, (a) Prospects and Perspectives on India-Vietnam S&T Cooperation; (b) BIMSTEC in the post-Covid Era; (c) Indonesia’s Covid-19 Exit plan and Potential for Bilateral and Regional Cooperation; (d) Expanding South-South Cooperation in the interdependent world; (e) Strengthening Cooperation Initiatives between India and Côte d’Ivoire; (f) STI for SDGs; (g) Multilateral Response to Covid-19 from South Asia - Need for South Asian Cooperation for Accelerating Recovery from Covid-19. The 5th Meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT, bringing together the think tanks of BIMSTEC countries, was also organised.

NEW, EMERGING AND STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGIES

Set up in January 2020, the New Emerging and Strategic Technologies (NEST) Division engages in new technology diplomacy and also deals with the foreign policy and international legal aspects of such discussions in global forums. NEST Division is the coordinating point for positions taken by India in negotiations regarding technology governance rules, standards, and architecture in the multilateral or plurilateral context, including at the UN and relevant international

organizations. The Division is mandated to build interfaces with key partner countries and international organizations in this context. It is assessing demand-driven requirements of new emerging and strategic technologies in India in collaboration with line Ministries, and facilitating, like synapses, the interlocutor/ partner interfaces for their acquisition, strengthening, in particular, the role of Indian Missions in this process.

CYBER DIPLOMACY, E-GOVERNANCE & IT

India signed a Framework with Australia on cyber and cyber-enabled critical technology cooperation along with a Five-Year Plan of Action to promote an open, free, safe, and secure internet in adherence with international law and to provide an enabling environment to deliver increased prosperity to the two nations. The Five Year Plan of Action under the Framework is being implemented. This inter-alia includes the formation of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on ICT and

on Cyber Security, creation of “Australia India Strategic Research Fund” to prioritize research focused on innovation in the digital economy, promoting stronger cyber forensic and investigation capabilities, and collaboration on research into the practical applications of Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence, etc. India signed a Memorandum of Cooperation in the field of Cyber Security with Japan and conducted cyber dialogues with Germany, the EU, and the US.

India has also been participating and deliberating on cyber-related issues in various regional and multilateral settings, including UNDOC’s 6th session of the International Expert Group virtual meeting on cybercrime, ASEAN Regional Forum meeting on cyber issues, 5thASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, 6thmeeting of the BRICS Working Group on Security, and Shanghai Cooperation Organization Expert group meeting on International Information Security, among others.

UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

India continued its high-level engagement with the United Nations in line with the central role that the institution plays in the world order. India was persistent in its efforts to move the process of UN Security Council reforms forward.

On 21 September 2020, the Prime Minister addressed the High-level meeting of the General Assembly to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations. Addressing the General Assembly virtually in the General Debate on 26 September 2020, Prime Minister called for urgent reform of the United Nations and for inclusion of India’s voice in its decision-making structures.

India participated in a Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the Covid-19 pandemic which was held on 3-4 December 2020.

In the election for the non-permanent members of the UN Security Council, India secured 184 votes out of the 192 votes cast. India took up its non-permanent seat at the Security Council from 1 January 2021. This is India’s eighth tenure in the Security Council. India will chair the UN Counter-Terrorism Committee, the Taliban Sanctions Committee and the Libya Sanctions Committee.

A Performance Monitoring Dashboard for the Ministry was developed. It focuses on target areas capturing all major schemes, programmes and initiatives of the Ministry across five clusters: Diaspora Engagement, Development partnership, International engagement, Trade & Commerce & Citizen services. Vande Bharat Mission Portal was launched in May 2020 to facilitate the travel of Indian nationals back home during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister participated in the virtual Climate Adaptation Summit on 25 January 2021 organised by the Government of Netherlands and Global Commission for Adaptation (GCA). India is one of the co-conveners of GCA.

The 206th Session of Governing Council of Inter-Parliamentary Union was held virtually from 1-4 November 2020. India was elected as a Member of the Commission on Status of Women in elections held in September. India, Afghanistan, and China contested for two seats in the Asia-Pacific Group with India and Afghanistan emerging as winners. India was also elected to the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC) and Commission on Population and Development.

India presented an Approach Paper on WHO reforms to the newly formed Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response in December 2020.

India continued to be the largest cumulative contributor of UN Peacekeeping troops, having provided around 2,53,000 since the 1950s. As of 31 October 2020, India is the fifth-largest contributor with 5,353 personnel deployed in 8 peacekeeping missions. India made deployments of medical personnel to Goma (DRC) and Juba (South Sudan).

BRICS Summit convened by Russia. At the BRICS Virtual Foreign Ministers’ Meeting, EAM highlighted the various steps undertaken by India in the wake of the pandemic, such as the launching of the Aarogya Setu Citizen App, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package and India’s supply of drugs and healthcare products to nearly 85 nations.

EAM chaired the IBSA Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in September 2020, wherein the Ministers adopted and released the IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on the Reform of UN Security Council as a common endeavour of Global South.

The Prime Minister also participated in the virtual 12th

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

The Economic Diplomacy Division, as part of its efforts to give a focused direction to the economic diplomacy dimension of the country’s foreign policy, undertook a number of initiatives during 2020-21.

The Third General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance was held on 14 October 2020 on a customized virtual platform. The first Governing Council meeting of Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) was held on 20 March 2020 in New Delhi. At present, 22 members, consisting of 18 national governments and 4 multilateral organizations have joined CDRI.

India participated at the 53rd Session of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) in September 2020 and its inter-session working groups.

India has signed and ratified social security agreements with a total of 19 countries till date.

India has Air bubbles operational so far with 24 countries, viz., Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Canada, UAE, Bahrain, Nigeria, Japan, Kenya, Ukraine, Oman, Iraq, France, Germany, Tanzania, Rwanda, Netherland, USA, UK, Ethiopia, Kuwait, Nepal and Qatar. Air bubbles to Sri Lanka, Australia, Singapore, Russia, Israel, New Zealand, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, and Thailand are being pursued.

India is in the process of concluding its old-generation investment treaties and actively engaged with over 30 countries in negotiating bilateral investment treaties based on the new

model treaty of 2015. The Permanent Court of Arbitration has been conducting the PCA-India Conferences and workshops under the ambit of the Host Country agreement.

To enable our Missions and Posts abroad to effectively respond to the growing demands of Indian industry and business a website on Economic Diplomacy has been launched. A section of the website is dedicated to the Resources Platform which would provide detailed information on World Resource Endowments and Opportunities. A specific effort towards boosting Agri exports is being undertaken.

A number of Industrial Outreach and Investment Promotion and Publicity events were organised. These include the India-Canada Agri-Tech Virtual Summit; 15th CII Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership over virtual platform; World Solar Technology Summit on a virtual platform; India Myanmar Virtual Business Meet 2020; India Thailand Digital Conference & Virtual Business Meet on Pharma and Healthcare Sectors, Auto and Auto Components; Digital Conference on Doing Business with Bangladesh; the 1st Indo ASEAN Oceanic Business Summit & Expo; Global Ayurveda Summit 2020; Ayurveda Day 2020; a virtual summit on India-Philippines Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship; Virtual Global Investor Roundtable. As a part of the AatmaNirbharBharat Initiative, the Ministry has been working in collaboration with Missions to chalk out a detailed strategy to increase exports of India’s goods and services in other countries.

STATES DIVISION

This Ministry facilitated external economic engagement of States through the network of Indian Missions and Posts abroad and Branch Secretariats/Regional Passport Offices in India. Several events were organized such as the 3rd edition of Deccan Dialogue on 16 November 2020 to facilitate diplomatic outreach of States and promote economic diplomacy dialogue at the state level, using State Facilitation and Knowledge Support Funds.

In a major initiative, a special programme was launched for the first time, to train senior officers from States on the modalities of international engagement. A policy decision was taken to launch a new North East Dialogue this year. Liaising with state and UT governments through regular interactions with their Resident Commissioners continued. Several MoUs between state governments and cities with their foreign counterparts to establish sister-state and city partnerships were facilitated by the Division.

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Amidst an evolving global landscape on disarmament, non-proliferation and international security affairs, India was engaged in and active in relevant multilateral forums and with partner countries based on its national security interests and

traditionally valued role.

In 2020, India’s traditional resolution titled “Measures to Prevent Terrorists from Acquiring Weapons of Mass Destruction”, was

again adopted by the First Committee of the United National General Assembly without a vote. The resolution calls upon the UN Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and to support international efforts in this regard.

Another India-sponsored resolution on the “Role of Science and Technology in the Context of International Security and Disarmament” was adopted by consensus. The Resolution encourages outreach events at the national, regional, and

international levels to facilitate multilateral dialogue on current developments in Science and Technology and their potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts.

In 2020-21, India continued to contribute to deliberations in the international arena on disarmament and international security matters in pursuance of its commitment to the goals of universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament, general disarmament and global peace and security.

under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law, EnricaLexie case (Italy and India), Seventh meeting of

the Experts’ Group on the Parentage/Surrogacy Project and various treaty negotiations.

SUMMITS & CONFERENCE DIVISION

Conference Division provides all logistical arrangements to various Divisions of the Ministry in organizing meetings, events, seminars, conferences including international & multilateral involvement of Foreign Ministers, delegates in India and abroad. In view of the specific nature of organizing events

involving protocol, the security of delegates and the highest degree of precision, Conference Division has empaneled 8 Event Management Companies (EMCs). Selection of EMC for the event is done as per requirements of the concerned division of the Ministry.

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

Inspired by the spirit of ‘VasudhaivaKutumbakam’, India’s international development cooperation continued to expand during the year in its geographical reach as well as in the areas of cooperation.

A key aspect of India’s development assistance in the past few years has been the extension of Lines of Credit to other developing countries. 13 new LoCs of about USD 1.9 billion were extended to various countries, and 6 LoC Projects were completed in 2020-21.

Major developmental projects identified by the host governments as priority areas are currently under implementation in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Maldives. These include projects in infrastructure, hydroelectricity, power transmission, agriculture, industry, education, health, archaeological conservation, etc. Beyond the neighborhood, bilateral projects have been undertaken in South East Asia, Oceania, Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

India responded to the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic by reaching out to our developing partner countries with medical aid in the form of medicines, Covid protection gear, pharmaceutical products, and medical expertise. During the year, India provided Covid-related medical support such as

drugs, testing kits, and Covid protection gear to 82 countries in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. It is noteworthy that the entire delivery of aid was conducted at the height of the global lockdown when supply and logistic chains were severely disrupted.

During 2020-21, in-person ITEC courses remained largely suspended due to the global outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. The Ministry organised the successful repatriation of nearly 1200 ITEC trainees stranded at various training institutions in India at the time of the imposition of lockdown on 24 March 2020. Subsequently, the ITEC programme was continued through online e-ITEC courses which focused extensively on public health, health care delivery, and Covid-19 management strategies. A total of 20 such e-ITEC courses were organised during this period.

Cognisant of India’s identity as a civilisational and cultural powerhouse, the Ministry created a dedicated division for heritage conservation in January 2020 within the Development Partnership Administration (DPA). Restoration of the My Son Temple complex in Vietnam, Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear temples in Cambodia and Vat Phou Temple in Lao PDR are some of the key ongoing projects being implemented by the Division.

CONSULAR, PASSPORT AND VISA SERVICES

Over 373,732 documents have been successfully processed through e-Sanad since its launch in 2017. 5439 documents have been attested/apostilled online and 337,224 attestations and 330,750 apostille services have been rendered in offline mode till September 2020. On the MADAD Portal, as of October 2020, 69,000 grievances have been registered, out of which 61,000 grievances have been resolved. During this year, visa exemption agreements for holders of diplomatic and/

or official passports were signed with Grenada and Marshall Islands. Visa exemption agreements for holders of diplomatic and/or official passports were operationalized with Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea, Oman, and the Marshall Islands. From April 2020 to January 2021, India received 17 extradition requests and has sent 18 extradition requests to various foreign countries. In 2020, two fugitive criminals were extradited by foreign countries to India.

OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF) proved critical in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic in extending assistance to distressed and stranded Indians abroad. As of 31 December 2020, around Rs 33.5 crores were utilized to extend assistance to more than 156, 000 Indians.

5 new Pre-Departure Orientation Training centres under Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY) for Migrant workers were set up in October 2020 at Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Trivandrum, Amritsar, and Jalandhar, in addition to 23 existing centres.

In January 2021, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with Japan to facilitate mobility of Indian skilled workers, under the scheme of the “Specialized Skilled Worker” visa category

of Japan.

During the year, the Ministry’s in-house think tank on migration research, India Centre for Migration prepared two special reports on the impact of Covid-19 on international migration from India and on the flow of returnee migrants. ICM has also developed two handbooks on law enforcement agencies and women workers from India

The 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) convention was held virtually on 9 January 2021. The Prime Minister inaugurated the 16th PBD Convention 2021. The theme for this year’s Convention was “Contributing to Aatma Nirbhar Bharat”.

EXTERNAL PUBLICITY

External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division continued with its efforts to effectively articulate India’s position on key foreign policy issues in accordance with its mandate. Simultaneously, pro-active efforts to project the ‘India Story’ and other notable achievements of the country to an international audience continued apace. While the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic presented their own set of challenges, with the creative use of virtual platforms, the Ministry was able to maintain the momentum of its activities during the year. Due press coverage was given to over 13 virtual summits at the Prime Ministerial level, to over 34 ministerial meetings at the level of EAM, and 7 visits by EAM until January 2021. A training module on social media for all Heads of Missions and Posts in October 2020 was organized.

The Ministry’s web portal www.mea.gov.in, that regularly communicates India’s foreign policy positions, witnessed more than 4.8 million hits since January 2020, with more than 55 million hits since its launch in 2012. The Ministry’s digital

outreach on social media platforms saw robust growth. It has a total of 3.6 million followers on Twitter with @MEAIndia having 2.1 million followers and @IndianDiplomacy having 1.5 million followers, adding approximately 200,000 followers since last year. @MEAIndia is now the third most followed handle among all Foreign Offices across the world. The Ministry’s YouTube channels saw a combined view count of over 27 million across both channels - an increase of more than 27% over last year. With a growth of 31% over last year, the Ministry now has a followership of approximately 523,000 followers. Its popularity is increasing among the young, with content specially curated for that segment of the population.

Leveraging the power of digital diplomacy during the pandemic, the Ministry has ensured that Indian community outreach, outreach with our interlocutors, and promotion of India’s soft power continues uninterrupted even in challenging conditions.

LEGAL AND TREATIES DIVISION

The Legal and Treaties Division is responsible for handling all legal and treaty-related matters in respect of the Ministry. During 2020-21, India signed 120 agreements with 52 countries and organizations; ratified 15 agreements and processed full

powers for 10 undertakings. (See Annexure-I)

India participated at the Sixth Committee (Legal) of the United Nations General Assembly, Working Groups constituted

PROTOCOL

Protocol Division comprises a total of seven sections viz. Protocol-I, Protocol-II, Protocol-III, Protocol (Hyderabad House), Protocol Special, Protocol (Hospitality & Accounts) and Government Hospitality Organization (GHO). During Covid-19 period from April 2020-January 2021, 33 Virtual Summits at the level of Prime Minister were organized. In addition, 6 incoming

visits at the level of Vice President and Foreign Minister/ Deputy Foreign Minister and 103 entertainment functions were handled during the period. 513 requests for airport passes, lounges (ceremonial and reserved) and exemption from frisking were facilitated.

ADMINISTRATION, ESTABLISHMENT, AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

In April 2020, the Division published the 9th edition of 'Financial Powers of Government of India's representatives' abroad'- also known as the Red Book.

Administration has undertaken reorganisation of Divisions and their portfolios to account for new developments and functional priorities, such as - creation of the Oceania Division, setting up of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) procurement cell under DPA-IV, bifurcation of Economic Diplomacy & States Division into two separate entities.

In pursuance of the Cabinet approval in March 2018 for opening of 18 new Missions in Africa, between March 2018-May 2019

6 Missions in Rwanda, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and Guinea were opened in the first phase and 3 Missions in Eswatini, Eritrea and Cameroon were opened in the second phase.

Between June 2019 and September 2020, 6 more Missions were opened in the third phase and these include Missions in Sierra Leone, Sao Tome & Principe, Liberia, Republic of Togo, Republic of Chad, and Mauritania. Preparatory administrative and establishment related measures have been initiated for setting up the remaining 3 Missions in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau, and Somalia.

ESTABLISHMENT DIVISION

During the Covid-19 pandemic, the Establishment Division worked on sanitisation of office buildings as well as residential complexes. Preventive measures to contain the spread of Covid were adopted in all workplaces. To maintain social distancing, there has been an increased demand for video conferencing for conducting meetings, and steps were taken to upgrade

infrastructure to facilitate smooth video conferencing. In continuation of its activities under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the Ministry organised "SwachhtaPakhwada" as well as Shramdan in all its various offices in India and in Missions/ Posts abroad.

RIGHT TO INFORMATION

From April to October 2020, a total of 1570 RTI applications and 183 First Appeals seeking information under the RTI Act 2005 have been received and have been disposed of satisfactorily. During the pandemic, in keeping with instructions of the Department of Personnel & Training (DOP&T) on Suo Moto disclosure, uploading of RTI applications/appeals/

responses and monthly RTI figures on public domain has been implemented. In collaboration with 'SushmaSwaraj Institute of Foreign Service', implementation of online suo-moto disclosure (transparency audit) by all the CPIOs in the Ministry in a time-bound manner, as per the instructions of CIC, has commenced.

IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY AND PROPAGATION OF HINDI ABROAD

The Ministry has a comprehensive scheme for the promotion and propagation of Hindi abroad for the implementation of the Official Language Policy of the Government of India. World Hindi Conference and Regional Hindi Conferences take place

regularly. World Hindi Day on 10 January and Hindi Divas on 14 September are celebrated every year. Ministry has instituted Atal Bhashantar Yojna (ABY) for training language experts towards creating a pool of specialized interpreters.

Hindi Pakhwada was organised in the Ministry which saw considerable participation despite prevailing conditions of

Covid-19.

SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF FOREIGN SERVICE

Foreign Service Institute (FSI) was renamed as Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service (SSIFS) in honour of former EAM, Late Smt. Sushma Swaraj on 14 February 2020 on her birth anniversary. In 2020-21, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the Institute has started a blended learning approach to conduct training programmes both online and on-campus sessions. The hybrid methodology of physical-cum-digital training has proved beneficial for the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officer Trainees (OTs) of the 2019 batch and a new system of assessment as per the prescribed mandate was introduced by the SSIFS for the

IFS OTs 2019 batch.

For the first time in September 2020, a fully online training programme was organized for diplomats from Suriname. In October-November 2020, the 1stSushma Swaraj lectures on 'Introduction to India' were conducted for newly arrived resident foreign diplomats. For the first time, two fully online training programmes were organized for diplomats from Suriname on Protocol in September and on Commercial & Economic Diplomacy in December 2020.

INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS

During the pandemic, ICCR facilitated online classes through Universities and Institutes to more than 900 newly admitted students to avoid loss of their academic year. During the period from 1 April to 31 October 2020, ICCR had 57 operational Chairs across the globe. It facilitated the celebration of the 6th International day of Yoga -2020 in 147 Countries through 114 Indian Missions and 39 posts. During Covid-19, ICCR took

the initiative of presenting online/ virtual performances by streaming recorded performances at festivals abroad such as in India Global Week - London, The Great India Festival (TGIF) - Ottawa, Sarang-2020 - The 6th Annual Festival of India in the Republic of Korea and sponsored sitar group for "India en Concierto festival - Spain.

PARLIAMENT AND COORDINATION DIVISION

The responsibility of the Parliament & Coordination Division broadly consists of Parliamentary work; coordination within and outside the Ministry; admission of foreign students in Indian educational institutions and monitoring as well as

review of MoUs signed by the Union of India with foreign countries. During January-December 2020, in light of the Covid pandemic, the Coordination Division issued new guidelines to make clearances for virtual conferences easier.

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INDIA'S NEIGHBOURS

Afghanistan

India and Afghanistan are connected by centuries of historical, people to people and cultural relations. The guiding spirit of the India - Afghanistan relationship is the Strategic Partnership Agreement (SPA), signed in October 2011.

The SPA provides for India's assistance to help rebuild Afghanistan's infrastructure and institutions, education and technical assistance to rebuild indigenous Afghan capacity in different areas; encouraging investment in Afghanistan's natural resources; providing duty-free access to the Indian market for Afghanistan's exports; Political support for an Afghan-led, Afghan-owned, Afghan-controlled and inclusive process of peace and reconciliation; and, advocating the need for a sustained and long-term commitment to Afghanistan by the international community.

India-Afghanistan relationship is characterized by regular high-level exchanges. Our leaders have met each other during

bilateral visits as well as on the sidelines of international events. EAM discussed bilateral issues with Afghan Foreign Minister Haneeb Atmar in April and August 2020. Minister of State participated in the Afghan National Day celebrations in New Delhi. Foreign Secretary visited Afghanistan from 28-29 February 2020, which was his first visit abroad after assuming charge. From Afghanistan, Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation, visited India in October 2020. During the visit, Dr Abdullah called on Prime Minister. Other high level visitors from Afghanistan included Hamdullah Mohib, National Security Advisor (January 2020); Hamid Karzai, former President of Afghanistan (January 2020); Field Marshal Abdul Rashid Dostum (September 2020); Atta Mohammad Noor, Chief Executive of Jamiat-e-Islami (October 2020). The US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation Amb. Zalmay Khalilzad visited India twice (May and September 2020).



Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of High Council for National Reconciliation, Afghanistan called on Prime Minister on 08 October 2020

EAM represented India at the inaugural session of the intra-Afghan negotiations in Doha on 12 September 2020. A delegation from India physically participated in Doha. EAM called for a permanent and comprehensive ceasefire in Afghanistan. EAM highlighted India's role as a major development partner of Afghanistan with over 400 projects completed in all the 34 provinces.

Development Cooperation

As an important stakeholder, India is working with the people of Afghanistan and the world community for a peaceful, prosperous, sovereign, democratic and united Afghanistan. India has a development cooperation portfolio of more than USD 3 billion for Afghanistan. It is centred around five pillars: (a) large infrastructure projects; (b) human resource development and capacity building; (c) humanitarian assistance; (d) High Impact Community Development Projects; and (e) enhancing trade and investment through air and land connectivity.

EAM represented India at the 2020 Afghanistan Conference held in Geneva from 23-24 November 2020, via Videoconference. EAM announced an agreement with Afghanistan for building the Shatoot dam, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents of Kabul city. India had earlier built the 202-km Phul-e-Khumri transmission line that provides electricity to Kabul city. EAM also announced the launch of Phase-IV of the High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) in Afghanistan, which includes more than 100 projects worth USD 80 million. In his statement, EAM emphasized India's long term commitment to the development of Afghanistan as a contiguous neighbour and a strategic partner.

India extended Covid-19 related assistance to Afghanistan including more than 20 MT of life saving medicines. India extended humanitarian assistance of 75,000 MT of wheat to

Afghanistan through Chabahar Port to strengthen the food security of Afghanistan during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The on-going bilateral defence cooperation continued in 2020-21. India conducted capacity building programmes for members of the Afghan National Defence and Security Forces (ANDSF).

Various scholarship programmes including Special Scholarship scheme for Afghan Nationals and online short term capacity building courses continued during 2020-21.

Economic Cooperation and Connectivity

Bilateral trade between India and Afghanistan crossed the USD 1.5 billion mark in 2019-20. India's exports to Afghanistan almost touched USD 1 billion (USD 997.58 million) and India's imports from Afghanistan stood at USD 530 million. The growth in trade value has consistently improved over the last five years. Indian exports to Afghanistan have witnessed a growth of over 89% between 2015-16 and 2019-20. Similarly, India's imports also grew by 72% during the same period. In 2019-20, the exports in value terms increased by 39% and imports over 21% compared to 2018-19.

In April 2020, world-wide spread of Covid-19 disrupted the normal trade and merchandise transport. Overall Indian exports to Afghanistan lagged behind by 12% during April-September 2020 (as compared with April-September 2019). However, with the start of normalization of the economy and markets, trade figures have started to improve. Afghan exports to India in September 2020 registered over 27% growth (as compared with September 2019).

Since its inauguration in 2017, the Air Freight corridor has facilitated Afghan exports to India. During January-October

2020, 157 cargo flights carried 3505 MT of dried fruits, fresh fruits, medicinal herbs, saffron, asafoetida, and spices valued at over USD 85 million. Saffron and Hing are high value products and are mainly routed through Air-corridor. Similarly, Chabahar

port witnessed shipping of 4500 MT of Afghan products including dry fruits and fresh fruits to India valued at around USD 11 million.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh is one of the closest partners and important neighbours of India. Relations between the two countries are multi-faceted. Over the decades, relations have transcended the strategic partnership.

2021 marks the 50th anniversary of the Bangladesh Liberation War and also the establishment of bilateral diplomatic ties between India and Bangladesh. India's close association with the Bangladesh Liberation War makes the bilateral relations unique.

Political Relations

Both countries maintain close contact, including at the highest levels. Prime Ministers of both countries have met 8 times in the past 5 years, which included 4 bilateral visits and 4 meetings on the sidelines of international summits. Since April 2020, both Prime Ministers have spoken to each other twice on phone (29 April and 25 May). Prime Minister, at the request of Prime Minister Hasina, had delivered a video message on the occasion of "Mujib Barsho" on March 17, 2020.



Prime Minister and Bangladesh PM at the India-Bangladesh Virtual Bilateral Summit on 17 December 2020

The most recent high-level interaction between both Prime Ministers was the India-Bangladesh Virtual Summit on 17 December 2020. Prime Minister is expected to visit Dhaka in March 2021 for the commemoration of the 50th anniversary of establishment of the diplomatic relations, the golden jubilee of Bangladesh Liberation War, and the Mujib Barsho celebrations of Bangladesh.

There are regular interactions between the Foreign Ministers as well. 6 rounds of Foreign Minister-level Joint Consultative Commission (JCC) meetings have taken place in 2020-21. The last round was held virtually on 29 September 2020. Foreign Secretary undertook two visits to Dhaka in March and August 2020. In addition, regular interactions and visits at the Senior Official- level have continued between different Ministries on both sides.

Both sides concluded 8 bilateral cooperation documents during 2020-21. During the India-Bangladesh Virtual Summit of 17 December 2020, a Framework of Understanding on Cooperation in the Hydrocarbon Sector; MoU regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects through Local Bodies and other Public Sector Institutions; Protocol on Transboundary Elephant Conservation; MoU for Supply of Equipment & Improvement of Garbage/Solid Waste Disposal Ground at Lamchori Area for Barishal City Corporation; MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture; MoU between Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman Memorial Museum, Dhaka, Bangladesh and the National Museum, New Delhi, India and Terms of Reference of India-Bangladesh CEO's Forum were signed. In addition, the 2nd addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed in May 2020.

Connectivity

Both sides are making concerted efforts to enhance transport and connectivity with each other, with the North Eastern Region through Bangladesh. The focus has been on railway, road, coastal as well as riverine connectivity.

At present, five out of the six pre-1965 rail links have been restored, namely, Petrapole (West Bengal)-Benapole (Bangladesh), Gede (West Bengal)-Darshana (Bangladesh), Radhikapur (West Bengal)-Biral (Bangladesh) and Singhbad (West Bengal)-Rohanpur(Bangladesh) and the latest one - the Chilahati (Bangladesh) – Haldibari (West Bengal) link. Work is undergoing on the Shahbazzpur (Bangladesh) – Mahishashan (Assam) link. In addition, when trade via land came to a halt in the wake of Covid, parcel and container train services were introduced in July 2020 to ensure supply of essential commodities. The work on the new Akhaura (Bangladesh)-Agartala (Tripura) cross-border railway link has continued to progress.

Some of the recent initiatives between India and Bangladesh to increase connectivity are the following:

(I) The second addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade was signed in May 2020, which has increased the number of river routes to a total of 10, and connected Tripura to the Indian National Waterways. The trial run on the new route (Sonamura-Daudkandi) was successfully completed in September 2020, where it was received by the Tripura Chief Minister. This was the first ever export from Bangladesh to Tripura through inland waterways.

(II) EAM, the Minister of Railway & Minister of Commerce and Industry handed over 10 broad gauge locomotives to their Bangladeshi counterparts in July 2020. These locomotive gauges will help in enhancing rail connectivity with India and also augment Bangladesh's capacity to receive cargo from India and movement of passenger and freight trains within Bangladesh.

(III) Both sides conducted the trial run for moving goods to and from India through Bangladesh under the Agreement on the use of Chattogram and Mongla Ports in July 2020. Discussions regarding the finalization of transit fees are currently underway.

(IV) The maiden container cargo exports from India to Bangladesh using inland waterways reached Pangaon International Container Terminal in Dhaka in July 2020.

There are four bus services approved between India and Bangladesh, though they are suspended temporarily due to the Covid situation. The routes are Kolkata-Khulna, Dhaka-Kolkata, Dhaka-Agartala and Dhaka-Shillong-Guwahati.

More than 100 flights per week have been approved to operate between India and Bangladesh. In order to facilitate resumption of flight operations that were disrupted due to Covid pandemic, an Air Travel Bubble was established between

both sides in October 2020. This allows for 56 flights per week between both sides.

Economic and Commercial

Bilateral trade has tripled over the last decade to USD 10 billion. Bangladesh is now India's biggest trade partner in South Asia and India is the second biggest trade partner of Bangladesh. The bilateral trade was USD 9.5 billion in FY 2019-20, while it was USD 10.25 billion in 2018-19 (The figures for April-October 2020 is USD 4.72 billion). Both sides are looking at ways to boost Indian investment in Bangladesh and also to enhance trade through direct air services, railways, coastal shipping services and inland waterway services. Both sides are currently undertaking a joint study on the various aspects of a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Both sides also finalized the terms of reference for India-Bangladesh CEO Forum, which is envisaged to provide policy level inputs in various areas of trade and investments as well as to facilitate exchanges amongst the business communities of both countries.

India's well-connected rail system was used to supply essential commodities to Bangladesh during Covid pandemic, as the trade via land route had been disrupted. During the lockdown period, more than 800 rakes (total 1.65 million MT) consisting of essential items like onions, red chillies, ginger, paddy seeds etc. have been transported via four existing rail routes between India and Bangladesh.

Both sides concluded a Framework of Understanding on cooperation in the hydrocarbon sector in December 2020. Further, Indian Oil has entered into a collaboration with Beximco Group of Bangladesh in July 2020 for setting up a Joint Venture company (JV) for LPG business in Bangladesh, and for exploring other business opportunities in Bangladesh and other countries. The JV company will take over the operations of the existing LPG infrastructure consisting of LPG Import Terminal and Bottling Plant at Mongla of Beximco Group and augment the business with the experience of Indian Oil. Future plans include investing in a large LPG Terminal at a deep-water port (at Matarbari or Mirsarai) which would allow large refrigerated cargo and would significantly reduce the cost of imports.

Developmental Partnership

India extends close to 30% of its total global developmental assistance to Bangladesh. India has extended total concessional credit of close to USD 10 billion, including three Lines of Credit (LoC) to Bangladesh, the biggest with any country. Out of the total 46 projects under Indian LoCs, 14 have been completed, 17 projects are ongoing or are at tendering stage and the remaining 15 are at the detailed project report preparation stage. The sectors supported by these LoCs include power generation and transmission, rail and road transport and infrastructure development including Economic Zones, among others.

The Government of India also provides grant assistance to Bangladesh for projects under 'Aid to Bangladesh'. Major infrastructure and socio-economic projects include the 12 km Agartala-Akhaura rail link, dredging of inland waterways and the India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (for supply of high-speed diesel from Siliguri to Parbatipur). Several High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) in the areas of education, health, water, culture, urban development, disaster management and community welfare etc. are also being implemented. These include projects such as construction of school/college buildings, laboratories, dispensaries, deep tube wells, community centres, renovation of historical monuments/buildings etc. In total, 81 HICDPs have been undertaken, of which 63 have been completed. In December 2020 Virtual Summit, both sides decided to expand the scope and quantum of projects under HICDP.

Defence Cooperation

Defence cooperation between India and Bangladesh has progressively grown. Holding of the Annual Defence Dialogue, high level exchanges at the level of Services Chiefs and conduct of annual service specific Staff Talks have contributed to significant improvement in bilateral defence cooperation. The 7th Navy Staff Talks (October 2020), 4th Coast Guard Staff Talks (October 2020) and 3rd Annual Defence Dialogue (November 2020) were conducted. India also gifted a regiment of 120 mm mortars to the Bangladesh Armed Forces in December 2020.

There has been a steady rise in the training cooperation with Bangladesh Armed Forces, though the training/courses for 2020-21 underwent some disruption due to Covid pandemic. Amidst travel restrictions arising out of Covid-19 pandemic, important courses like Higher Defence Management Courses and courses in the Defence Services Staff College in India were conducted with revised schedules. One additional vacancy in Higher Defence Management Course was allotted in lieu of the 3rd National Defence College vacancy and two additional vacancies in the Defence Services Staff College for 2020-21. Marking the 50th anniversary of 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War, where both Indian forces and Muktibahini fought together, a marching contingent of Bangladesh Armed Forces participated in the 2021 Republic Day Parade of India.

Security and Border Management

The 51st round of Director General-Level Talks (DGLT) between Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh

(BGB) was held in December 2020 in Guwahati, while the 50th round of DGLT took place in September 2020 in Dhaka. Both sides have intensified coordinated patrolling after the talks, given the temporary disruptions during the Covid pandemic.

Training and Capacity Building

Training and Capacity building is an active pillar of India's development cooperation with Bangladesh. The Government of India sponsors training courses in India for Bangladesh officials under the ITEC, TCS, ICCR, SAARC and other schemes. Since 2014, approximately 1500 Bangladesh judicial officers and 5600 civil servants have been trained at Indian institutions covering areas like administration, police, customs, narcotics detection, nuclear science etc. 20 scholarships are also provided every year to wards of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) personnel to study in India. Approximately Rs 52 crores worth of scholarships have been provided till date.

Cultural and People to People Relations

Indian art and cultural forms are promoted through Indira Gandhi Cultural Centre (IGCC) in Dhaka. Several training courses in yoga, kathak, Manipuri, Hindi, Hindustani music etc. are offered. The total number of visas issued has increased from 500,000 to 1.6 million a year between 2014 and 2019, making Bangladesh India's biggest visa operations globally. Cruise services have also been approved between both sides.

Covid Cooperation

The Government of India has provided 3 tranches of medical aid to Bangladesh. 30,000 surgical masks and 15000 head covers were given as the 1st tranche, while 50,000 gloves and 100,000 HCQ tablets, and 30,000 RT-PCR test kits were given as 2nd and 3rd tranches respectively. 6 online courses have been conducted of which one was conducted exclusively in Bangla language. In total, 352 Bangladeshi professionals have been trained in these courses.

Over 2 million doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Bangladesh in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Both countries are in active discussions regarding cooperation in the field of Covid-19 vaccine, including Phase-III testing, vaccine distribution, co-production and delivery in Bangladesh. The Government of India facilitated the repatriation of more than 5500 Bangladeshi nationals from India during the lockdown period.

Bhutan

India and Bhutan share a special partnership, anchored in mutual understanding and respect, reinforced by a shared cultural heritage and strong people-to-people links. The multi-dimensional relations between the two countries

deepened over the course of the year, with sustained growth in the traditional as well as new areas of cooperation including hydropower, ICT, health, culture, agriculture, space, tertiary education, and digital and financial connectivity.



Prime Minister and Bhutanese PM jointly launched RuPay card Phase-II in Bhutan

High-Level Exchanges and Dialogues

The special relationship is sustained by the tradition of regular high-level exchanges and interactions between the two countries. On 16 April 2020, Prime Minister spoke on the telephone with Prime Minister Lotay Tshering. The two Prime Ministers discussed the regional situation in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic and both the leaders expressed happiness at the progress made in implementing the special arrangements agreed between the leaders of the SAARC countries. Earlier, the two leaders had interacted virtually in March 2020 during the SAARC leaders conference on Covid-19.

On 17 September 2020, the Prime Minister held telephonic conversation with Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the King of Bhutan. They discussed all aspects of bilateral relations and also explored avenues for further strengthening and expanding the multifaceted India-Bhutan ties.

Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering launched phase-II of the RuPay Card during a virtual ceremony on 20 November 2020, that will complete the interoperability of the RuPay Cards in both the countries. During the event, both the Prime Ministers welcomed recent initiatives in other areas of technological cooperation, in particular, in the space sector, signing of a framework MoU for 'Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space'. Both leaders also underlined that the unique relations between the two countries are not

only invaluable but also unparalleled examples for the world. In pursuant to the cooperation in the space sector, four Bhutanese space engineers underwent training at ISRO from December 2020 to February 2021 to work on the joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan.

In the virtual presence of EAM and Tandi Dorji, Foreign Minister of Bhutan, the Concession Agreement for 600 MW Kholongchhu (Joint Venture) Hydro Electric Project was signed between the Royal Government of Bhutan and Kholongchhu Hydro Energy Limited on 29 June 2020. On the occasion, EAM and Foreign Minister of Bhutan emphasized the significance of hydropower development as an important pillar of mutually beneficial bilateral economic cooperation.

Developmental Cooperation

India's extensive development partnership with Bhutan is people-centric and is based on priorities and needs set by the Government of Bhutan. Government of India has committed financial support of Rs. 4500 crores for the 12th Five Year Plan (FYP) of Bhutan (2018-23), comprising Rs. 2800 crores for Project Tied Assistance, Rs. 850 crores for High Impact Community Development Projects and Rs. 850 towards Program Grant. Government of India has also committed a 'Transitional Trade Support Facility' of Rs. 400 crores, to be provided over the 12th FYP of Bhutan. India also provided an early release of Rs. 501 crores from the Government of India committed Financial Support of Rs. 4500 crores for the 12th

FYP of Bhutan, to support Bhutan's efforts in mitigating the impact of Covid-19.

180 new High Impact Community Development Projects worth Rs. 298 Crore in various sectors such as irrigation channels, farm roads, basic health units, etc. have been identified in April and October 2020 for implementation during the 12th FYP of Bhutan. These projects are under various stages of implementation.

India is also providing technical support for the planning of a Multi-Disciplinary Super Speciality Hospital (MDSSH) in Bhutan. An expert team led by HSCC Ltd. visited Bhutan in March 2020 and continued discussion with the Royal Government of Bhutan for preparation of DPR of the project.

Hydropower Cooperation

The mutually beneficial hydropower cooperation reached another milestone with the signing of the Concession Agreement for 600 MW Khologchhu Hydroelectric Project on 29 June 2020. Both governments maintained close coordination to expedite implementation of two ongoing major projects – the 1200 MW Punatsangchhu-I Hydroelectric Project and the 1020MW Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project. Government of India has also released the committed amount of Rs. 100 crores as 'Adjustment to Mangdechhu Tariff' which is being utilised for supplementing revenue-generating activities in Bhutan. The jointly constructed 720 MW Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project was awarded the 'Brunel Medal' for 'Excellence in Civil Engineering' by the London based Institute of Civil Engineers.

Education and Capacity Building

Government of India has instituted three new India-Bhutan Friendship Scholarships for Bhutanese students who are offered admission in IIT Kanpur. In addition to this, Government of India offers various scholarship schemes, such as the Ambassador's Scholarship, Nehru Wangchuck Scholarship, Undergraduate Scholarship under Project Tied Assistance, Nalanda University Scholarship, ICCR scholarship, SAARC scholarship to Bhutanese students. AYUSH scholarship can also be availed by students from Bhutan. India is Bhutan's main partner in the capacity building of government officials of the Royal Government of Bhutan. Under ITEC training programme, approximately 325 training slots are assigned to Bhutan out

of which 279 slots were utilized in 2019-2020. During the period from April-November 2020, 86 Bhutanese nationals have availed training opportunities through e-ITEC training programmes. Customized e-ITEC training programmes are also being designed for Bhutanese finance sector professionals in the areas of SEBI policies and security market regulations as well as for judicial officers of Bhutan. Besides, a number of government officers from Bhutan are also being trained in premier government training institutes including LBSNAA, SSFSI, NACEN, and SVP-NPA.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

India continued to be Bhutan's largest trading partner. In 2019, the bilateral trade reached around Rs. 9647 crores. Both governments continued to engage in taking measures to facilitate trade and mutual investments. A new trade route was opened via Torsha Tea Garden (India) and Ahllay (Bhutan). New trade points at Nagarkata, Agartala, and Pandu & Jogighopa riverine ports will also be operational shortly.

In October 2020, formal market access was granted for export of Bhutanese agri-products (apple, areca nut, ginger, mandarin, potato) to India. Similarly, Indian agri-products (okra, onion, tomato) were granted formal market access to Bhutan. The 1st Plant Quarantine office on the India-Bhutan border was opened at the Land Customs Station in Jaigaon, India to facilitate exports of agricultural products from Bhutan to India.

Cooperation during Covid-19 pandemic

In line with India-Bhutan unique and special relations, Government of India ensured continuous supply of trade and essential items to Bhutan, despite Covid-19 related lockdowns. Government of India so far has provided essential medicines and medical supplies, including Paracetamol, Hydroxychloroquine, PPEs, N95 masks, x-ray machines and test kits, etc to the Royal Government of Bhutan. India has also entered into an 'Air Travel Arrangement' or 'Transport Bubble' agreement with Bhutan for the resumption of flights in a gradual manner with Bhutan. The flights were suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic. India is also collaborating with Bhutan for conducting Phase-III clinical trials of the Covid-19 vaccine candidates.

150,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Bhutan in January 2021 as grant assistance.

President, Foreign Minister and other leaders of the Maldives.

Foreign Secretary visited the Maldives from 8-10 November 2020. This was the first high-level visit to the Maldives since the onset of the pandemic. During his visit, an agreement on USD 100 million grant support for the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), and an MoU on Cooperation in Youth Affairs

and Sports were signed. 2 MoUs on High Impact Community Development projects (HICDPs) – agriculture laboratory in Hanimaadhoo and a Drug Detox facility in Addu – were also signed. Foreign Secretary also handed over 67 children's parks (funded by an Indian grant) to be set up across islands.

Covid-19 assistance

The pandemic exacted a severe cost on the Maldivian economy (among the worst-affected in South Asia due to dependence on tourism revenues) and its health sector. The elements of India's multi-faceted and timely assistance to the Maldives to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 included:

- (a) Evacuation of all 9 Maldivians from Wuhan in February 2020 during the coronavirus outbreak.
- (b) Donation of 5.5 tons of essential medicines in April 2020.
- (c) Airlifting of 6.2 tons of medicines by the IAF from various India cities through Operation Sanjeevani in April 2020.
- (d) USD 150 million under the currency swap arrangement between RBI and MMA.

(e) Deployment of Rapid Response Medical Team to assist in Covid-19 preventive methods.

(f) Supply of 580 tons of food aid under Mission Sagar by INS Kesari in May 2020.

(g) Financial Assistance of USD 250 million through SBI subscription of T-Bonds for budget support.

(h) Strengthening of clinical research capacity for Maldivian health professionals in Oct/Nov 2020.

(i) Permissions for Maldivian patients to travel to India for urgent treatment.

Upon the request of the Government of Maldives, India has extended financial assistance of USD 250 million to the Maldives in September 2020 through investment in Maldivian T-Bonds by SBI. The assistance will shore up government finances in the Maldives at a time when revenue has cratered by 50% due to a collapse of the tourism industry. It is the single largest financial assistance extended to the Maldives during the pandemic by any nation or institution by far.



Vaccination Drive in Maldives. Maldives was the first country to receive Made-In-India vaccines under Vaccine Maitri.

100,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Maldives in January 2021 as grant assistance. Maldives was the first country to receive Made-In-India vaccines

Economic Relations

A cargo ferry service was jointly launched on 21 September 2020 by Minister of State for Shipping with his Maldivian counterpart Aishath Nahula. The cargo service connects Male and Kulhudhufushi with Cochin and Tuticorin.

On the request of the Government of Maldives, an air travel bubble was initiated between the two countries in late August 2020 to boost tourism flows from India to the Maldives. This was the first air travel bubble in the South Asian region. India became the largest source market for tourists in the Maldives in a pandemic-hit 2020. With 62,905 tourists, India occupied the top slot followed by Russia and Italy, in a year which saw no Chinese tourists visit the Maldives, after March 2020.

India extended the agreement to maintain supplies of 11 essential commodities including foodgrains, onions and

construction material to the Maldives. This year the quota for export of these items is higher than any previous year.

Maldivian Airlines provided the seaplane (and crew) for the maiden flight of the seaplane service between Sabarmati and Kevadia in Gujarat inaugurated by Prime Minister.

A Buyer-Seller Meet organised by FICCI was held on 15 January 2021 to map the requirements and capabilities of both sides in the seafood sector. A new focus on the Maldivian tourism, fisheries, health and real estate sectors is expected in the first quarter of 2021, given expected recoveries in both economies.

Development Partnership

People-centric grant projects being implemented by India in Maldives were completed and inaugurated through virtual ceremonies. These include the gifting of vehicles to Male City Council, installation of streetlights in Kolhufushi, donation of gym equipment to 61 islands, upgradation of training facilities for Maldives Police Services, etc. Work commenced on 9 ongoing High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) – 3 fish processing plants, 5 eco-tourism zones and 1 water bottling plants.

Considerable progress was made in the implementation of 9 mega infrastructure projects financed by EXIM Bank of India LoC worth USD 1.3 billion. Tenders for 6 large infrastructure projects – roads and reclamation in Addu, Gulhifalhu Port, Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP), Airport Expansion in Hanimaadhoo, Cricket Stadium in Hulhumale, Water and Sewerage Networks across 34 islands – will be launched in the first quarter of 2021. At Least 4 of these projects are expected to be awarded by the end of this financial year.

President Solih inaugurated the Ekuveni synthetic track project funded by an MVR 8 million Indian grant in January 2021. Several Indian grant projects are likely to be inaugurated in the first quarter of 2021.

Myanmar

Myanmar is India's land link to ASEAN and a vital component of both India's "Neighbourhood First" and "Act East" policies. India's approach to Myanmar is guided by Myanmar being an important land and maritime neighbour with which India shares historical, civilisational, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic ties. A series of high-level visits have helped in sustaining the momentum in bilateral ties, including connectivity projects, energy cooperation, defence and security cooperation and capacity building.

Human Resource Development

Maldivian officials regularly participated in e-ITEC courses in the areas of elections, health, pandemic mitigation, gender, etc.

Customised training programmes (5 modules) on teachers training were organised from October 2020 onwards for more than 125 Maldivian teachers.

Customised training programmes for audit officials, customs officials and healthcare administrators are likely to be held in the first quarter of 2021.

Defence Cooperation

Work progressed on the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPLE) – India's single largest grant project in the Maldives at USD 33 million – despite the pandemic. The project is likely to be inaugurated in March 2021.

Work also continued on remaining works at Composite Training Centre (CTC) for the Maldives National Defence Forces (MDF), the construction of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) building and the Coastal Surveillance Radar System (CSRS).

India provided a Dornier aircraft to the Maldives in September 2020, which will be operated by the MNDF. The aircraft will help in conducting EEZ surveillance, humanitarian and Search and rescue operations, under the control and command of the MNDF.

Defence Minister Mariya Didi, Chief of Defence Forces and senior officials from the Maldives National Defence Forces (MNDF) attended Aero India - 2021 from 3-7 February 2021

Diplomatic/Multilateral

The Maldives continued to support India's positions on the abrogation of Art 370, CAA, and other issues in international forums such as the UN, OIC, etc. Foreign Secretary announced India's support for the candidacy of Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid as the President of the UNGA in 2021 during his visit to the Maldives in November 2020.

Political

The President of Myanmar was on a State Visit to India from 26-29 February 2020. The Chief of Naval Staff visited Myanmar from 17 - 20 February 2020. The Deputy National Security Advisor visited Myanmar in January 2020. In June 2020, on the sidelines of his visit to Moscow, the Defence Minister met with Commander-in-Chief of Myanmar Defense Forces. India-Myanmar Foreign Office Consultations were held virtually on 01 October 2020, which was followed by the visit of Foreign Secretary and Chief of Army Staff to Myanmar from 04-05

October 2020. The delegation called on the State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and Commander-in-Chief Sr. General Min Aung Hlaing. During the visit, the Centre of Excellence in Software Development & Training in Myitkyina was virtually inaugurated and India announced a grant of USD 2 million

for the construction of a bridge in Chin State that will provide increased economic connectivity between Mizoram State and Myanmar. The 7th Ministerial level Joint Trade Committee was held virtually between the countries on 24 November 2020.



Foreign Secretary at the India-Myanmar Foreign Office Consultations on 01 October 2020

The current ruling party, the National League for Democracy led by State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi emerged as the winner during the general elections held in Myanmar on 8 November 2020 by securing 396 seats in the 664 member Parliament.

Covid Cooperation

In April 2020, Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with Myanmar State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss the evolving Covid-19 scenario in the domestic and regional contexts and updated each other on the steps being taken to control the spread of the pandemic. The Prime Minister also conveyed India's readiness to provide all possible support to Myanmar for mitigating the health and economic impact of Covid-19.

In line with its "Neighbourhood First" policy, India has extended Covid related assistance to Myanmar in two tranches. In May 2020, the first tranche consisting of medicines, medical equipment worth Rs 8.526 crores (over USD 1 million) was provided. The second tranche consisting of 3024 vials of Remdesivir was provided during the visit of Foreign Secretary and Chief of Army Staff to Myanmar in October 2020. To date, Rs 9.38 crores has been spent for Covid related assistance to Myanmar.

India and Myanmar have also been cooperating in the repatriation of nationals through the Vande Bharat flights. To

date, 5 Air India flights have operated and repatriated more than 800 Indian nationals from Myanmar.

Under the G-20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative, India extended debt service relief to Myanmar till 31 December 2020. Additionally, India also eased certain restrictions and quota limits for the import of Urad and Tur daal from Myanmar.

1.5 million doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Myanmar in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Development Cooperation

India's development assistance to Myanmar is over USD 1.8 billion, with the majority of the projects being implemented under grant-in-aid.

Connectivity Initiatives

India is undertaking major connectivity and infrastructure projects such as the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project and the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. These initiatives, once operationalised, will enhance bilateral connectivity and trade and will bring benefits to the local communities residing on the two sides.

Border Area Development Programme (BADP)

Both sides signed an MoU in 2012 under which India has

committed for providing grant-in-aid of USD 5 million per annum over a period of five years (Total USD 25 million) for health, infrastructure and education-related projects in Chin State and Naga Self-Administered Zone. More than 100 projects have been implemented till date. 29 projects undertaken under the 4th phase of BADP are nearing completion and work on 24 projects to be implemented under the 5th phase is expected to commence shortly.

Rakhine State Development Programme (RSDP)

India and Myanmar have signed an MoU on RSDP, under which India is committed to providing USD 25 million to Myanmar over a period of five years. Under the first phase, 250 prefabricated houses have been completed and handed over to Myanmar in July 2019. The second phase of 11 projects, which includes solar projects, construction of roads and provision of water supply are being undertaken in Rakhine State. Both sides are considering the proposal of establishing a skills training centre under its third phase. Under trilateral cooperation with Japan, India is providing soft infrastructure for the schools being built by Japan in the Rakhine State.

Defence & Security Cooperation

The signing of an MoU on Defence Cooperation in 2019 has further strengthened defence ties. There has been a significant increase in the high-level visits, training cooperation, capacity building and defence exports from India to Myanmar.

Myanmar is sensitive to India's security concerns and in May 2020, handed over 22 cadres of Indian Insurgent Groups to Indian authorities.

Cooperation in the maritime domain is an important part of India's enhanced engagement with Myanmar and both sides have an MoU on Exchange of White Shipping.

In accordance with our vision of SAGAR – Security and Growth for All in the Region – India handed over a Kilo-class submarine, INS Sindhuvir, to Myanmar Navy in October 2020, which is the first submarine of Myanmar Navy.

India has continued to impart training to Myanmar defence personnel in key areas such as UN Peacekeeping, naval related fields & meteorology squadrons.

The meeting of the 5th Director-General level bilateral talks between Narcotics Control Bureau, India and the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, Myanmar was held on 10 December 2020.

Trade

India is the 5th largest trading partner of Myanmar. India's export to Myanmar during 2019-20 was USD 973.89 million

and import from Myanmar was USD 547.25 million. The major import items from Myanmar are beans and pulses, woods, metal etc. India's export to Myanmar are pharmaceutical items, agro commodities, chemicals, iron & steel, machinery etc.

There exists enormous potential for bilateral trade enhancement and a number of initiatives such as upgrading the Integrated Check Post at Tamu-Moreh, and infrastructure at Rihkhawdar-Zokhawthar, negotiations on signing a coastal shipping agreement, development of Sittwe Port etc., are in various stages of implementation with the aim of increasing trade with Myanmar. Efforts are also ongoing to establish Border Haats to benefit the local communities on two sides.

The 6th India-CLMV (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam) Business Conclave on "Building Bridges for Constructive Development" was held from 3-4 December 2020.

Energy

In recent times, engagement with Myanmar in the energy sector has expanded with Indian investments in Myanmar energy sector being over USD 1.2 billion. Discussions are ongoing to establish a petrochemical refinery at Thanlyin in Yangon Region. The meetings of the 3rd Joint Working Group and the 3rd Joint Steering Committee on India-Myanmar cooperation in the Power Sector were held virtually on 03 September 2020.

Bilateral meetings held in 2020

The Joint Working Group (JWG) meetings on Oil & Gas, Power Sector Cooperation, Trade and Shipping were held virtually this year. Secretary-level consultations on Oil & Gas and Power Sector were also held. The last round of Foreign Office Consultations was held in October 2020. The 7th Ministerial level Joint Trade Committee (JTC) was held between the countries on 24 November 2020.

Training & Capacity Building

As a development partner, India has been investing in a series of skill development and capacity building initiatives in Myanmar in the fields of agriculture research, industrial training, e-learning technology, entrepreneurship development, English language training and IT skills training.

From 01 April – 30 October 2020, 12 e-ITEC online courses were conducted by the various institutes viz. AIIMS, PGI Chandigarh, National Centre for Good Governance, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA), Mussoorie, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences etc. and witnessed participation of Myanmar Government officials and officers.

In order to assist Myanmar in its compliance with FATF obligations, Indian Financial Intelligence Unit concluded training for the Myanmar Financial Intelligence Unit in the

fields of IT and Finance in October 2020.

Scholarships have been offered to Myanmar students to study in various IITs in India under the 5 year Integrated PhD Fellowships awarded for ASEAN students.

Scholarships have been offered by ICCR and the Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra, for a diploma course in the Hindi language for Myanmar students.

An Implementing Arrangement (IA) on Hydrography was signed between the two countries in December 2020.

Culture

Due to the ongoing Covid pandemic, several events such as the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, International

Yoga Day, World Music Day, Hindi Diwas, Ayurveda Day, etc. were commemorated virtually. Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, Yangon also organised events such as the digital exhibition on the occasion of the centennial death anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak (who was imprisoned in Mandalay from 1908-1914) through the virtual platform. Other events such as World Culture Day, World Music Day and Teacher's day etc. were also celebrated virtually.

In line with our civilizational links, India is undertaking the repair and conservation of pagodas/temples damaged by the 2016 earthquake under the India-Myanmar Friendship Project. Earlier in 2018, two historic temples in Bodh Gaya built by Myanmar rulers, King Mindon and King Baygyidaw, were restored and renovated by the Archaeological Survey of India.

Nepal

India's traditionally close and friendly ties with Nepal are based on special people-centric partnership and multifaceted development cooperation. The bilateral relations are

characterized by regular high-level exchanges, extensive trade and economic linkages, a forward-looking development agenda and people-to-people contacts.



EAM and his Nepalese counterpart co-chaired the 6th India-Nepal Joint Commission Meeting in New Delhi on 15 January 2021

High-Level Exchanges

The Prime Minister exchanged views with Prime Minister of Nepal, KP Sharma Oli on jointly combating Covid-19 global pandemic at the SAARC Leaders' Video Conferencing held on 15 March 2020. Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli thanked India for its assistance of essential medicines and supplies to Nepal during a telephone call with the Prime Minister on 10 April 2020. In a special telephone call to the Prime Minister on 15 August, Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli greeted the Government

and People of India on the occasion of 74th Independence Day and congratulated for India's recent election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council.

EAM and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal Pradeep Kumar Gyawali held a telephone conversation on 20 March 2020 and discussed bilateral cooperation in the context of Covid-19 pandemic. They also exchanged views during the SAARC Foreign Ministers informal virtual meeting chaired by Nepal on 24 September 2020. Foreign Secretary visited Nepal from

26 - 27 November 2020. Apart from holding discussions with Foreign Secretary of Nepal, he also called on the President, Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Nepal.

Defence and Security Cooperation

India and Nepal have long-standing and extensive mutually beneficial cooperation in the field of defence and security. In addition to the supply of defence equipment and regular exchange of visits by the military leaders of both sides, the joint training exercises have also been a regular feature of the bilateral defence cooperation.

Chief of Army Staff General MM Naravane visited Nepal from 4-6 November 2020. He was conferred with the Honorary Rank of General of the Nepal Army by President of Nepal Mrs. Bidya Devi Bhandari, in continuation of a unique tradition which reflects strong ties between two countries. During the visit, General Naravane called on President, Prime Minister and his Nepali counterpart General Purna Chandra Thapa. India also gifted several medical equipments like ICU ventilators, ambulances and field hospital equipment for the Nepal Army.

India also has extensive cooperation with Nepal in capacity building and for training Nepal Army which includes courses at the National Defence College (NDC) and Defence Services Staff College (DSSC).

The border guarding forces of the two countries Sashastra Seema Bal and Armed Police Force of Nepal maintained close coordination and regular virtual and physical meetings were held between both sides at various levels.

Trade and economic cooperation

India remains Nepal's largest trade partner and major investor. India also facilitates transit for the majority of Nepal's third-country trade. Despite the economic slowdown due to Covid-19 pandemic, the bilateral trade stood high at USD 7.87 billion in 2019-2020. India also ensured the uninterrupted flow of bilateral trade and supplies, despite the difficulties due to Covid-10 pandemic.

The Commerce Secretaries of India and Nepal co-chaired the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Committee (IGC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade held through video-conferencing on 7 December 2020. The meeting reviewed bilateral trade and economic issues. The two sides also discussed investment promotion, the constitution of Joint Business Forum, harmonization of standards as well as synchronized development of trade infrastructure. The Inter-Governmental Sub-Committee (IGSC) on Trade, Transit and Cooperation to Control Unauthorized Trade at the level of Joint Secretaries met on 3-4 December 2020 in the preparation for the IGC meeting.

The 8th meeting of Joint Steering Committee (JSC) on Cooperation in Power sector co-chaired by Power/Energy Secretaries of India and Nepal was held through video conferencing on 11 December. The Joint Working Group meeting at the level of Joint Secretaries was held on 10 December 2020 in preparation of this meeting. Both sides discussed the development of suitable rules and guidelines for allowing cross border trade of electricity, energy banking, cross border high voltage transmission lines as well as reviewed the progress of 900MW Arun-III Hydro Electric Project.

The 2nd meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Working Group on Oil and Gas cooperation was held via video conferencing on 13 August 2020. During the meeting, both sides discussed issues of mutual interest in the petroleum and energy sector, including possibilities of new pipelines for the supply of petroleum products to Nepal.

Development Partnership

Government of India focused on the expeditious implementation of ongoing bilateral connectivity, physical and social infrastructure development projects. Despite Covid restrictions, work on the ongoing connectivity and developmental projects continued and showed considerable progress. The overall progress in various projects was reviewed during the 8th meeting of the India-Nepal Oversight Mechanism on 17 August 2020, co-chaired by Ambassador of India to Nepal and Foreign Secretary of Nepal.

The 4th Meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Working Group on Railway Cooperation was held on 19 November 2020 wherein both sides agreed to operationalise the first passenger railway line between the countries from Jaynagar to Kurtha via Jankapur in Nepal. In this regard, two state-of-the-art 1600 HP DEMU train sets made in India were delivered to Nepal on the export basis for the operation of passenger train services on the section. The work on Raxaul-Kathmandu broad gauge electrified railway line also progressed as both sides agreed to conduct Final Location Survey of the line for the same.

There has been substantial progress in Government of India funded cross-border infrastructure projects. The Government of India funded Terai Roads project achieved progress with the completion of 8 of the 14 road packages. The progress of the project was monitored during the Joint Project Monitoring Committee meeting held in Kathmandu on 8 March 2020. After completion of two Integrated Check Posts in Birgunj and Biratnagar, work is underway on two new ICPs at Nepalgunj and Bhairahwa. On 12 November 2020, Minister for Commerce and Industry, and Minister for Urban Development of Nepal, Gopal Krishna Shrestha jointly witnessed the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of Integrated Check Post at Nepalgunj.

India had extended USD 1 billion Nepal as part of its long-term assistance for post-earthquake reconstruction in housing, education, health and culture heritage sectors. 46,000 houses out of total 50,000 houses were completed in Gorkha and Nuwakot districts of Nepal. India is also assisting in the construction of earthquake-resilient buildings for 70 schools, 02 libraries and 147 health facilities across different districts of Nepal. India is also assisting Nepal in the restoration of 28 culture heritage sites with modern conservation techniques.

Several other large and medium level development projects are under implementation. These include the Nepal-Bharat Maitri Polytechnic institute at Hetauda and the National Police Academy project in Panauti. 11 High Impact Community Development Projects in priority areas such as education, health, connectivity, sanitation and drinking water, etc. were completed and inaugurated in 2020.

Cultural and People-to-People Ties

India and Nepal have robust cooperation in the area of capacity

Pakistan

In 2020, 22 innocent civilians have been killed and 71 innocent civilians have been injured in more than 5000 unprovoked ceasefire violations carried out by Pakistani forces. This has been the highest number of unprovoked ceasefire violations from Pakistan, since the 2003 Ceasefire Understanding, indicating unflinching attempts by Pakistan to support cross-border terrorist infiltration in J&K. Pakistan's abetment to cross-border terrorism, smuggling of arms and narcotics has also been uncovered along the International Boundary (IB) beyond J&K as tunnels facilitating infiltration and usage of drones to deliver weapons were detected.

On 01 January 2021, India and Pakistan exchanged, through diplomatic channels, the list of nuclear installations and facilities covered under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities. This was the 30th consecutive exchange of such a list between the two countries.

Religious Pilgrimage

On the occasion of 551st Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, despite Covid-19 restrictions, Government facilitated the visit of a Sikh Jatha, in limited numbers, to the Gurdwara Janam Asthan, Nankana Sahib in November-December 2020. A Hindu pilgrimage by Shadani Darbar visited Pakistan in December 2020.

Sri Lanka

India's relations with Sri Lanka, a major maritime partner and close neighbour, were further strengthened, in keeping with

building and human resource development. India offers about 3000 scholarships to Nepalese students every year, providing opportunities to study in Nepal and India. Under ITEC programme, professional training is offered annually to about 250 officials from Nepal at various technical institutes in India. Due to Covid-19 situation, e-ITEC online courses/training/workshops were conducted in 2020 with the participation of more than 100 candidates from Nepal.

Covid-19 assistance

India has provided about 25 tonnes of medical assistance to Nepal including essential medicines like paracetamol, hydroxychloroquine and remdesivir. India also provided RT-PCR Test Kits, ventilators and other essential medical equipment to assist Nepal in its efforts to contain the Covid-19 pandemic. Despite the difficulties due to the pandemic, India ensured an uninterrupted flow of bilateral trade and supplies to Nepal.

In January 2021, India sent one million doses of the Covishield vaccine, as grant assistance to Nepal.

Humanitarian issues of prisoners and fishermen

Government attaches high importance to the issue of prisoners held in Pakistan custody and consistently takes up the matter of their early release and repatriation to India. In keeping with the understanding reached under the 2008 bilateral Agreement on Consular Access, lists of prisoners and fishermen in each other's custody were exchanged on 1 July 2020 and 1 January 2021. As per the lists exchanged on 01 January 2021, there are 263 Pakistan civilian prisoners and 77 fishermen in India's custody. Pakistan acknowledged custody of 49 civilian prisoners and 270 fishermen who are Indians or believed-to-be Indians.

As a result of persistent efforts, India has been successful in securing the release and repatriation of more than 2144 Indians including fishermen, from Pakistan's custody since 2014. This includes 364 Indians who returned in 2019 and 30 Indians who returned in 2020. India has sought early consular access and release and repatriation of the remaining Indian nationals in Pakistan's custody.

Government also facilitated the return of Pakistani and Indian nationals stranded on either side of the border due to Covid-19 induced border restrictions. Since March 2020, over 1400 Indian nationals and Long-Term Visa holders (NORI visa) from Pakistan have been repatriated to India and over 1250 Pakistan nationals stranded in India were repatriated to Pakistan.

the "Neighborhood First" policy and the SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) doctrine. Restrictions imposed due

to Covid19 were overcome with innovative solutions including virtual interactions. A Virtual Bilateral Summit held between Prime Minister and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on 26 September 2020 reviewed progress in all major aspects of the

bilateral relations. India continued its assistance to Sri Lanka in various spheres including Covid19 response, trade and investment, defence, development cooperation and culture, as per the requirements of Sri Lanka.



India-Sri Lanka Virtual Bilateral Summit (26 September 2020)

Following the Parliamentary Elections of August 2020 in Sri Lanka, Prime Minister hosted Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa who was sworn in as Prime Minister for the 4th time, for a Virtual Bilateral Summit on 26 September 2020 amidst Covid-19 pandemic. Both leaders reviewed the entire range of bilateral matters and ex-changed views on regional and international issues of common concern. A Joint Statement titled Mitratva Magga (Path of Friendship) outlining the two Prime Ministers' shared vision for the relationship was a significant outcome. Prime Minister announced a USD 15 million grant to Sri Lanka for promotion of Buddhist ties between the two countries.

Other high-level interactions included Prime Minister's telephone calls to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in May 2020, EAM's telephone call to his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena in August 2020 and the telephone call of Sri Lankan President and Prime Minister to wish Prime Minister on his birthday on 17 September 2020.

National Security Advisor visited Sri Lanka from 27-28 November for Maritime Security NSA Trilateral Meeting in Colombo.

In his first overseas visit of the year, EAM visited Colombo from 5-7 January 2021 upon the invitation of his Sri Lankan

counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena. During the visit, EAM met President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa and various other dignitaries including Opposition Leader Sajith Premadasa and former PM Ranil Wickremesinghe among others. He also had a business interaction with industry captains from Sri Lanka during the visit.

EAM reiterated the message that India was a reliable friend and dependable partner who is also keen on strengthening bilateral ties on the basis of mutual trust, mutual interest, mutual respect and mutual sensitivity. He also highlighted the positive impact of Government of India's development projects in Sri Lanka and India's willingness to take this engagement forward. India's well known and consistent position on the issue of reconciliation was underlined by stressing that fulfilling expectations of the Tamil people in a united Sri Lanka was in their own interest. In this context, the need to take forward the process of broader dialogue with all parties and show concrete movement on their earlier commitments towards a meaningful devolution of powers, including the implementation of the 13th Amendment, was emphasized. The need to retain the system of Provincial powers, including the implementation of the 13th Amendment, was emphasized. The need to retain the system of Provincial Councils was also highlighted. In addition, remarks by EAM at the Joint Press Conference with his Sri Lankan counterpart also alluded to Sri Lanka's leadership role in BIMSTEC.



EAM met his counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena, Foreign Minister of Sri Lanka in Colombo on 06 January 2021

The 4th Meeting of the Secretary-level India-Sri Lanka Joint Working Group on Fisheries was held on 30 December 2020 through virtual mode. The Indian side was led by Secretary, Department of Fisheries, and the Sri Lankan side was led by his counterpart R.M.I. Rathnayake. Key stakeholders on both sides including Governments of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard took part in the meeting. The meeting covered the entire gamut of issues that has been on the bilateral agenda for years. Indian side emphasized that issues concerning fishermen and their livelihood had to be dealt with in a humanitarian manner in line with the past understandings.

Covid Cooperation

India and Sri Lanka joined hands to fight challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. India gifted four consignments of essential medicines/medical gloves and other items weighing over 25 tons in total to Sri Lanka. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa participated in the SAARC leaders' Video Conference on combating Covid-19 steered by India on 15 March 2020. Sri Lanka pledged USD 5 million to the SAARC Covid Emergency fund that was decided to be set up at this Video Conference. Both India and Sri Lanka also closely coordinated in ensuring smooth repatriation of their stranded citizens from each other's territory. Under the Vande Bharat Mission 11 flights, one ship (INS Jalashwa) and several chartered flights have repatriated around 3500 stranded Indians from Sri Lanka to India. Sri Lanka's repatriation of several hundreds of its citizens from various Indian cities was facilitated by Indian authorities.

In January 2021, India sent 500,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine as grant assistance to Sri Lanka.

Development Cooperation

Development cooperation is one of the most important aspects of India - Sri Lanka relations. The Indian Housing project in Sri Lanka is the largest grant project of India in any country, wherein India has committed over 60,000 houses in Sri Lanka. Of this commitment, about 49,112 houses have already been completed. In addition, India undertook multiple High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDP) across Sri Lanka. Construction of the Jaffna Cultural Centre was completed. Several other projects such as construction of buildings for the Faculty of Kandian Dancing at Pallekelle, upgradation of Saraswathy Central College in Pussellawa, constructions/ supply and delivery of equipment and vehicles at Vocational Training Center Hatton, construction of a 5000 MT Temperature Controlled Warehouse in Dambulla, renovation of 27 Schools in Northern Province and Construction of 2400 houses under Grama Shakthi Housing Project etc. are under progress. India and Sri Lanka also finalized an MOU for implementation of HICDPs for the period 2020 - 25.

Trade and economic cooperation

Bilateral trade and investment between India and Sri Lanka continued to grow. India is Sri Lanka's largest trading partner with bilateral trade in 2019 amounted to USD 4.59 billions of which exports from India to Sri Lanka amounted to USD 3.83 billion, while imports into India were USD 0.76 billion. India is one of the major foreign investors in Sri Lanka, with cumulative investments of more than USD 1.2 billion in 2019. Leading Indian IT firm HCL's first Development Centre in Sri Lanka was inaugurated online by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on 07 September 2020. India is the top source for tourist inflow into Sri Lanka with more than 3,55,000 Indian tourists in 2019. Several online interactions on post Covid-19 economic

recovery and development were held between the business chambers of both countries.

Defence Cooperation

Under defence cooperation, the 8th edition of the annual bilateral maritime exercise SLINEX between Indian Navy and Sri Lankan Navy was conducted from 19-21 October 2020. A virtual expert level interaction between Indian Army and Sri Lankan Army was organised on Covid-19 management on 27 August 2020. Under Operation Sagar Araksha Indian Navy and Coastguard rushed to assist their Sri Lankan counterparts in dousing the fire on board the ship MT New Diamond off the Coast of Sri Lanka in September 2020 and in preventing a potential major oil spill.

In the sphere of culture, the 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated at Army Headquarters led by Sri Lankan Chief of Defence Staff and Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva. The event, held under strict observance of Covid-19 protocol, also saw participation of several Army units online. The 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and 159th Birth Anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore were commemorated in Sri Lanka.

The USD 15 million grant to Sri Lanka announced by Prime Minister during the Virtual Bilateral Summit is expected to assist in deepening people – to – people linkages between the two countries in the sphere of Buddhism including through construction/renovation of Buddhist monasteries, capacity development, cultural exchanges, archaeological cooperation, reciprocal exposition of ‘The Buddha’s relics, strengthening engagement of Buddhist scholars and clergy etc.

Swami Vivekananda Cultural center (SVCC), Colombo organised various events to mark “poya” (full moon) days that are revered in Buddhism including a webinar of Buddhist Scholars from Sri Lanka and India on the topic “Dhamma for Global well-being” (July 2020) and an online workshop “Buddhist Heritage Management and Conservation: from Mountain to Ocean” (August 2020).

28 Sri Lankans availed capacity building under the e - Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (eITEC) programme, during the period.

2

INDIAN OCEAN REGION

Comoros

India and Comoros share friendly and cordial bilateral ties. This relationship received a strong impetus by the visit of the Vice President of India to Comoros in October 2019 during which an MoU on Defence Cooperation was signed between both sides.

In 2020, India-Comoros bilateral relationship gained further momentum. EAM had a telephone call with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Comoros on 25 April 2020 to express solidarity with the Government and people of Comoros against the Covid crisis. In response to a request for medical assistance from the Comorian side during telephonic conversation, a 14-member

Indian Medical Assistance Team visited from 1 to 18 June 2020 as India’s support to Comoros in its fight against the spread of dengue in the country. The medical team visited three islands of Comoros Anjouan, Moheli and Grand Comore during this visit and held camps along with Comorian health authorities for diagnosis and treatment of Dengue and Covid-19 patients. Besides, a consignment of medicines which included Hydroxy-chloroquine was also donated by India to Comoros in support of its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. This year, the International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Moroni on 21 June, 2020 through online platforms due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Madagascar

India and Madagascar enjoy cordial bilateral relations. Pursuant to the visit of the President to Madagascar in March 2018 during which an MoU on Defence Cooperation was signed, the bilateral relations gained further momentum in the year 2020-21.

Responding to the requests for assistance in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic, the Government of India provided humanitarian and medical assistance to Madagascar. This included supply of 100,000 tablets of HCQ and 43,950 tablets of Azithromycin.



INS Airavat visited port of Antsiranana under Operation Vanilla

INS Airavat visited the port of Antsiranana under ‘Operation Vanilla’ and delivered the relief material from India on 01 February 2020 for the flood-affected regions of the northern region of Madagascar. INS Shardul visited the port of Antsiranana from 10-14 March 2020 to deliver 600 tonnes of rice as humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) to Madagascar to deal with the situation arisen due to the heavy floods in the Northern region of Madagascar. INS Kesari visited the port of Antsiranana from 26-28 May 2020 to deliver the consignment of medicines meant for treatment of Covid-19 as per the request received from the Malagasy side.

The 6th edition of International Day of Yoga was celebrated by the Mission on 21 June 2020. There was an appreciable

increase in the participation by the Malagasy community in addition to the international community present in Antananarivo. The 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated with the inauguration of a 8KW Solar Power Plant at the Embassy building by the Malagasy Prime Minister Christian Ntsay.

150 solar lamps were donated by the Government of India for high school students of Lycee Jean Joseph Rabearivelo as part of the promotion of import of renewable energy from India to Madagascar in February 2020. 100,000 NCERT books donated to the Government of Madagascar as grants reached Madagascar in 2019 and were handed over to the Government authorities on 14 January 2020.

Mauritius

India and Mauritius share a unique relationship that is strategic, reliable and time-tested on one hand, and is based on historical, cultural and ties of kinship on the other. The relationship has been further strengthened by the close engagement between the leadership and strong people to people ties. India’s engagement with Mauritius has evolved into a multi-faceted relationship encompassing cooperation in key priority areas including people oriented development partnership, defence and maritime cooperation, trade & commercial ties, capacity building through scholarships and ITEC programmes etc.

India’s relationship with Mauritius got further cemented and strengthened in 2020. India was among the first responder countries to Mauritius providing about 14 tonnes of Covid related essential medicines, including 500,000 tablets of HCQ and a special consignment of Ayurvedic medicines. As part of Mission Sagar, Medical Assistance Teams were deployed in Mauritius helping their Governments deal with Covid emergencies. Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with Prime

Minister Pravind Jugnauth on 23 May 2020. Prime Minister Jugnauth thanked Prime Minister for sending the Indian Naval Ship ‘Kesari’ to Mauritius as part of ‘Operation Sagar’. Prime Minister conveyed his appreciation for the effective Covid-19 response mounted by Mauritius.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the Governments of Mauritius and India cooperated with each other in offering assistance in repatriation of their nationals from each other’s countries. Both Governments offered all assistance to their national air operators as part of the Vande-Bharat mission.

100,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Mauritius in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Jugnauth jointly e-inaugurated the new Supreme Court building in Mauritius through video conference on 30 July 2020. The landmark project has been completed with grant assistance of USD

30 million from the Government of India. The project has been implemented under the ‘Special Economic Package’ of USD 353 million offered by the Government of India to Mauritius in 2016. The project is a testimony to the importance of hu-

man-centric approach as the underlying philosophy of India’s development cooperation, and role of people-oriented infrastructure projects in further cementing the close ties between India and Mauritius.



Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Mauritius jointly inaugurated the new Supreme Court Building of Mauritius on 30 July 2020

The High Commission of India in Mauritius, in partnership with the Ministry of Health and Wellness of Mauritius organised various activities to mark the International Day of Yoga 2020. Minister of Health and Wellness, along with High Commissioner launched a series of activities in the context of the International Day of Yoga 2020, on 22 June 2020. On IDY 2020, 4 Ministers of the Government of Mauritius: Minister of Health and Wellness, Kailash Kumar Singh Jagutpal; then Minister for Tourism, Georges Pierre Lesjongard; Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint; and Minister for Arts and Culture, Avinash Teeluck shared special video messages talking about the benefits of Yoga.

Following oil spilling in the sea due to the beaching of Japanese bulk carrier ship, MV Wakashio in South-East of Mauritius on 25 July 2020, India was again one of the first responders during the crisis. Responding to the request of the Government of Mauritius for assistance in dealing with the environmental crisis due to the oil spill, India sent 30 tonnes of specialized technical equipment and a 10-member Technical Response Team consisting of Indian Coast Guard (ICG) personnel for dealing with containment of the oil spills. The Government of India deployed ‘INS Nireekshak’, a diving support vessel to Mauritius in two phases: from 24-30 August 2020; and from

4-6 September 2020. The ship had over 30 diving specialists for underwater assistance.

Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth presided over as the Chief Guest at an event jointly organised by the Government of Mauritius and the High Commission of India to mark the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Mauritius. Earlier that day, the Vice Prime Minister of Mauritius, Leela Devi Luchoomun Dookun and Minister of Arts and Culture, Avinash Teeluck garlanded the statue of Mahatma Gandhi at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute in Mauritius. Earlier, as part of the Gandhi@150 celebrations, a cycling event was organised by the Ministry of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation of Mauritius in collaboration with the High Commission on 12 September 2020. Minister of Youth Empowerment, Sports and Recreation, Jean Christophe Stephan Toussaint and Minister of Public Service, Administrative and Institutional Reforms, Mr. Teeruthraj Hurdoyal participated in the event along with around 400 local cyclists.

The existing MoU between Government of Mauritius and Government of India in the Field of Hydrography was extended for a period of five years after mutual agreement on 24 October 2020.

Seychelles



EAM met the Foreign Minister of Seychelles in Victoria on 27 November 2020

India and Seychelles have traditionally enjoyed close and friendly relations. Seychelles is a key partner for India in the Indian Ocean Region. Seychelles views India as a partner of preference in meeting its developmental and national priority goals. The main areas of cooperation include developmental partnership, defence cooperation, capacity building through scholarships and ITEC programmes, cultural cooperation, etc. India has expanded the scope and spread of its development assistance in Seychelles by committing support in helping Seychelles in its national developmental priorities.

EAM visited Seychelles from 27 November to 28 November 2020. During his visit, he called on President Wavel Ramkalawan. EAM also held talks with his counterpart Sylvestre Radegonde, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Tourism of Seychelles.

India's relations with Seychelles gained further momentum in 2020 through successful implementation of people oriented and demand driven projects. Seychelles became an important beneficiary of India's Covid-19 assistance and was among the first few countries to receive life-saving medicines in the fight against Covid-19. The first such consignment of 4 tonnes of life saving medicine arrived on 15 April 2020, on board a chartered Air India flight from New Delhi. The 2nd such consignment arrived on 07 June 2020 aboard Indian Naval Ship Kesari as part of Mission Sagar. During the Covid-19 crisis, the Governments of Seychelles and India cooperated with each other in offering

assistance in repatriation of their nationals from each other's countries.

50,000 doses of Covishield vaccine were sent to Seychelles in January 2021 as grant assistance.

Developmental cooperation has been one of the strongest pillars of India's bilateral relations with Seychelles. 12 projects under the High Impact Community Development Project were inaugurated during this period. 7 more projects have been completed and are awaiting formal handing over and contracts for another 5 were signed on 07 September 2020. Seychelles also formally joined the E- VidyaBharati and E-ArogyaBharati (Telemedicine & Tele-Education) project with grant assistance from the Ministry on 02 September 2020.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated at the High Commission on 20 June with high level participation. A six part series on different types of Yoga was shot and broadcasted on the national television channel SBC in the month of June. The High Commission in partnership with the Seychelles National Parks Authority planted endemic Palms 'Nephrosperma vanhoutteana' to mark the International Environment Day on 05 June 2020. The 151st Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was celebrated by organising a photo exhibition, a painting and an essay competition and a Symposium on the life and works of Mahatma Gandhi in partnership with the University of Seychelles.

3

SOUTH EAST ASIA AND OCEANIA

Act East policy is now a central element in our Indo-Pacific (IP) outlook and its logical extrapolation. India encourages greater movement of people for study, research, trade and tourism by committing to strengthen our partnership with the IP region through stronger surface, maritime & air-connectivity, digital-link; through capacity building & partnerships in areas such as agriculture, science, research, ICT and engineering.

Indian trade promotion bodies partnered with their ASEAN countries' counterparts in organising a series of virtual conferences and business-to-business meetings to explore new opportunities in a post-pandemic situation. India used multi-lateral, regional and plurilateral mechanisms to strengthen and diversify supply chains for critical health, technology and other goods and services while earning the name of 'Pharmacy of the World' by supplying Covid-19 medicines and protective equipment/material towards countries in the IP region.

Our efforts to acquaint India's partners in Southeast Asia with Indian heritage and modern manifestations of its culture continued, through restoration and renovation of heritage cultural

sites in the region (Ta Prohm temple in Cambodia, Vat Phou temple in Laos, and Cham monuments in My Son in Vietnam). A study was awarded to Jakarta-based think-tank "Economic Research Institute for ASEAN and East Asia (ERIA)" in March 2019 on India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway and its Possible Eastward Extension to Lao PDR, Cambodia, Vietnam: Challenges & Opportunities'; ERIA, submitted the final report in July 2020.

Defence cooperation, which has progressed through regular high-level visits, staff talks, joint exercises and capacity building programmes, through LOCs of USD 500 million and USD 100 million for Vietnamese armed forces. India's efforts to hold the 3rd Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC) in Papua New Guinea in 2020 could not materialize due to Covid-19. India endeavoured to provide 'development assistance and Covid-19 assistance under India-UNDP Fund' to tackle issues like climate change through projects in Solar, Renewable energy, inter alia. India bilateral relations with each of the countries, under the Southern and Oceania Divisions are discussed below.

Australia

2020-21 was a defining year in bilateral ties as both countries agreed to further deepen bilateral ties in the areas of defence, maritime safety and security, supply chain resilience, cyber security, critical minerals, water resources, clean energy, R&D, skills and governance. As the scheduled visit of Australia's Prime Minister Scott Morrison to India got postponed twice during 2020-first in January 2020 due to unprecedented bushfires in Australia and again in May 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemic – Prime Ministers of both the countries held a bi-

lateral Virtual Leaders' Summit on 4 June 2020. The Summit proved a milestone in the bilateral relations of India and Australia as both nations agreed to elevate their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) - 11 years after forging Strategic Partnership in 2009. To pursue CSP, Foreign and Defence Ministers of both the countries agreed to meet in a '2+2' format to discuss strategic issues at least every two years. With Australia, India already has a 2+2 Foreign and Defence Secretaries Dialogue.



India- Australia Virtual Summit was held on 4 June 2020

In addition to the landmark Joint Statement on a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" and "Joint Declaration on a Shared Vision for Maritime Cooperation in Indo-Pacific", Prime Minister-level Summit delivered Seven important MOUs/ agreements to drive cooperation with Australia. It included (i) Arrangement concerning Mutual Logistics Support (MLSA); (ii) Framework Arrangement on Cyber & Cyber-Enabled Critical Technology Cooperation. (iii) MoU on Cooperation in Mining and Processing of Critical and Strategic Minerals; (iv) Implementing Arrangement concerning cooperation in Defence Science and Tech(S&T) to MoU on Defence Cooperation; (v) MoU on Cooperation in Public Administration and Governance Reforms; (vi) MoU on Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training; and (vii) MoU on Water Resources Management.

Despite constraints due to Covid-19, high-level engagement continued throughout the year. On 6 April 2020, Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with the Prime Minister of Australia. Both leaders discussed ongoing pandemic, and domestic response strategies being adopted by their respective Governments. On 8 April 2020, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne had a teleconference with EAM. Both Foreign Ministers met in Tokyo on 06-07 October 2020 for Austr-

lia-India-Japan-US QUAD Foreign Ministers' Meeting. Both Ministers also held bilateral talks on the sidelines of the QUAD meeting. Before Covid-19, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne participated in the Raisina Dialogue in January 2020 and also had a bilateral relations review meeting.

Bilateral defence engagement continued to grow. Indian Navy conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the Royal Australian Navy in the East Indian Ocean Region on 23 and 24 September 2020. Australian Navy participated in 1st phase of Malabar Exercises - 2020 from 3-6 November 2020 in the Bay of Bengal, off Visakhapatnam, after an invitation from India in October 2020. Defence Ministers of both nations held a teleconference on 26 May 2020 to expand defence cooperation. Both countries also held senior official level Defence Policy Talks on 10 September 2020 through virtual mode.

The 12th meeting of the India-Australia Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism was held on 17 December 2020. 5th JWG meeting between India and Australia on Cooperation in Agriculture was held on 03 December 2020.

In view of the growth in trading relationship, both sides decided to reengage on a bilateral Comprehensive Economic Coop-

eration Agreement (CECA). On 30 July 2020, Commerce and Industry Minister held a teleconference with Australia's Trade Minister Simon Birmingham to discuss CECA and other trade related issues. Both sides committed to enhance cooperation in the Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector and decided that major industries of both countries should endeavour to integrate SME/MSMEs of the other country into their supply chains, thereby diversifying bilateral trade. On 01 September 2020, Commerce and Industry Minister held Trilateral Ministerial VC with Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism & Investment, Simon Birmingham and Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry, Kajiya Hiroshi to discuss the launch of a Supply Chain Resilient Initiative (SCRI). On 11 September 2020, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs, Minister of Mines and Minister of Coal had a virtual meeting with Keith Pitt, Minister for Resources, Australia.

Virtual Global Investor Roundtable 2020, presided over by the Prime Minister on 05 November 2020 saw participation of Australian Superannuation Funds. Scott Morrison, the Prime Minister of Australia virtually addressed the inaugural session of the Bengaluru Tech Summit on 19 November 2020 which was inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

The first meeting of the Joint Working Group under MoU between India and Australia on cooperation in the field of Mining and Processing of Critical and Strategic Minerals was held on 26 November 2020 whereby both sides agreed on inter alia mechanisms and roadmap for collaboration between the Indian Government owned enterprise, Khanij Bidesh India Ltd and the Critical Minerals Facilitation Office (CMFO) of Australia. The first meeting of India-Australia Joint Working Group on Vocational Education and Training was held on 26 November 2020.

Minister of Commerce and Industry launched the CII Australia Economic Strategy on 18 December 2020. The virtual meeting was also addressed by the Australian Trade Minister Simon Birmingham. The report captured Indian Industry's response to the India Economic Strategy 2035, released by Australia in 2018. The report provides an overview of business environment, market opportunities and investment potential in Australia and also gives a template for future cooperation in form of various implementation strategies and action points.

Australia reiterated its support for India's candidacy for permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council (UNSC). It also supported India's candidature for a non-permanent UNSC seat for 2021-22 term. Australia has also reiterated its 'strong

support' for India's membership of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). In order to work cooperatively in the multilateral fora, Foreign Offices of India and Australia initiated the senior official level consultation on multilateral issues through virtual mode on 17 August 2020.

India also engages with Australia in trilateral, quadrilateral & plurilateral formats. 2020 saw the establishment of a new annual trilateral mechanism with Australia & France. Inaugural Foreign Secretary-level India-France-Australia Trilateral Dialogue was held virtually on 09 September 2020 for synergising their respective strengths to ensure a peaceful, secure, prosperous and rules based Indo-Pacific. It was decided to elevate the level of existing India-Australia-Indonesia Trilateral dialogue from official to Ministerial level. Foreign Secretary held regular weekly Indo-Pacific coordination calls between 20 March 2020 and 15 May 2020 on Covid-19 with his counterparts from Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Korea, Vietnam and US. A Video Conference between Foreign Ministers of India, US, Australia, Japan, Israel and Korea took place on 11 May 2020 to discuss the importance of international cooperation, transparency, accountability in combating Covid-19 and in addressing its causes.

Australia is an important partner in the implementation of the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative tabled by India, as well as in various plurilateral frameworks such as the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI), the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Coalition on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Indian community in Australia continues to grow in size and importance, with a population of nearly 7 lakhs (2.8 % of total population). Indian diaspora in Australia is now the fastestgrowing diaspora. India emerged as the top source of immigrants to Australia during 2019-20. India also remains Australia's largest source of skilled migrants and 2nd largest source of international students. More than 21,000 stranded Indians in Australia were repatriated to India through 47 Vande Bharat Mission (VBM) flights and 51 chartered flights (as on 31 October 2020).

Covid-19 related research projects were approved for funding under the Australia-India Strategic Research Fund (AISRF). EAM and the Australian Foreign Minister had a teleconference on 1 December 2020 to exchange views on bilateral and regional issues. NITI Aayog and Australia's Commonwealth and Scientific and Industrial Research Organization together launched a Hackathon on circular economy, which culminated in February 2021.

Brunei Darussalam

Bilateral relations continue to be warm and friendly. Brunei is an important part of India's energy security architecture with export of almost 22%, by value, of its crude oil to India; its membership of ASEAN; partnership in India's Act East Policy(AEP) and Indo-Pacific(IP) Concept and the presence of

around 10,000 Indian nationals in Brunei. Brunei has generally been supportive of India's candidature to various international bodies. Brunei had supported our candidature to a non-permanent seat in UNSC and recently to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) in 5th

Committee of UNGA). Efforts for upgradation and relocation of Telemetry Tracking & Telecommand (TTC) Station (established by ISRO in Brunei since 1998) to support tracking of its Geo-synchronous Satellite Launch Vehicles(GSLV), are ongoing. A 3-member ISRO Team is currently in Brunei. It arrived in Brunei on 8 November 2021 to support the launch of ISRO satellite. The ISRO team will also assess the suitability of the new site proposed at Telisai by the Government of Brunei Darussalam,

for relocation of ISRO's TTC Station.

As part of India's commitment to assist Brunei in capacity building, 14 Brunei officials attended an online Training Course conducted by Human Settlement Management Institute (HSMI) under ITEC Program. Another course on cyber-security was attended by 2 Bruneian officials from Brunei's Internal Security Department.

Cambodia

Bilateral relations between India and Cambodia remained cordial, friendly and continued to grow stronger. In the context of India's Act East Policy and ASEAN, Cambodia continues to be an important interlocutor and a positive and forthcoming partner. Teleconversation between Prime Minister and Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen on 10 June 2020, cemented bilateral relations. Prime Minister Hun Sen spoke highly of India's important international role and humanitarian gesture as well as India's capacity to produce and supply medicines to 130 countries in the world. Prime Minister conveyed his appreciation for confidence that has been placed on India's co-chairmanship of International Coordinating Committee(ICC) for Restoration and Development of Preah Vihear Temple.

Joint Commission Meeting (JCM), held at the level of Minister of State/Secretary of State, has since been elevated in 2020 to the level of Foreign Ministers. In Defence Cooperation, Agreement on provision of USD 1.5 million Indian Grant Assistance to Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF) for procurement of Demining Equipment, was signed on 10 August 2020. Defence Cooperation continued with conduct of annual training capsules for RCAF in Peacekeeping, Demining modules by expert trainers from Indian Army. RCAF also continued to receive training from Indian Defence establishments under ITEC. Development cooperation, Human resource development, capacity building activities continued to play pivotal roles in furthering the bilateral relationship. India continued its assistance to Cambodia in provision of safe drinking water to people in rural areas, restoration, preservation of temples and capacity building.

The project for supply and installation of 1,500 Afridev Hand Pumps for augmentation of rural water supply in Cambodia, which started in 2017 with the objective to provide safe drinking water in the target communities in Kampong Cham and the bordering Banteay Meanchey Provinces, was completed by WAPCOS in August 2020. The project, which was executed with the financial assistance to the tune of USD 12 million extended by Government of India, received widespread appreciation from beneficiaries in both provinces. Quick Impact Project (QIP) Scheme, launched under the Mekong Ganga Cooperation

Initiative in 2015, progressed well in Cambodia. So far, 19 QIP Projects have been implemented in the areas of health, education, agriculture, women empowerment, sanitation, environment & skill development, etc., and 15 more projects are under various stages of implementation.

Despite Covid-19, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) continued to undertake, as planned, the 3rd phase of the restoration and preservation work at the Ta Prohm Temple in the Angkor Wat Park, which had started in November 2016. Pursuant to signing the MoU on restoration of Preah Vihear, a UNESCO world heritage site of Lord Shiva, in August 2018, India, which is also the co-chair of prestigious International Coordination Committee of Preah Vihear (ICC), is starting the restoration and preservation work at Preah Vihear temple soon through ASI at a total cost of USD 5.55 million.

Provision of training programs for Cambodian officers under ITEC progressed smoothly in pre-Covid-19 phase. Till date, 1750 Cambodians benefited from ITEC programs since its launch in Cambodia in 1981. Tailor-made courses as per requirements of Cambodian government brought about qualitative change in utilization of ITEC slots by Cambodia. Even during Covid-19, Cambodian officials attended some e-courses organised under ITEC during 2020. Besides, 25 scholarships for UG/PG & higher studies in India are available to Cambodian students under MGC (10), GCSS (13) and CEP(2) every year. During 2020-21, 7 slots have been accepted by Cambodian students so far. Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce attended the first Indo-ASEAN Oceanic Business Summit & Expo organised by CII on 5 August 2020 in the virtual format. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), in partnership with M/o Commerce and Industry, Government of India, organised the 6th India-CLMV Business Conclave : Building Bridges for Constructive Development in virtual format with Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar & Vietnam on 3-4 December, 2020. Minister of State participated in the event while Secretary of State, Ministry of Commerce represented Cambodia in the Conclave.

Indonesia

Covid-19 pandemic did not slow down the pace of overall co-operation with Indonesia in 2020-21. Indonesian Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi had a telephonic conversation with EAM on 01 April 2020 and discussed a range of issues related to dealing with Covid-19 pandemic, including importing Active Pharma Ingredients (API) and unhindered flow of cargo from India to Indonesia. India exported 2425 kgs of APIs for local manufacturing of Chloroquine Phosphate and APIs of Osel-tamivir to Indonesia.

The Prime Minister spoke on the phone with President of Indonesia Joko Widodo on 28 April 2020. The Prime Minister assured Indonesian President that India would do its best to prevent disruption in supplies of medical products or other commodities traded between two countries. Under VBM, more than 2500 Indians were repatriated from Indonesia to different cities in India in May 2020. More than 900 Indonesian nationals were repatriated to Indonesia since Covid-19 related restrictions were imposed.

In defence cooperation, India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) along International Maritime Boundary between India and Indonesia was conducted on 15-16 June 2020, which sought to build on the robust mutual cooperation that has been strengthened over the last 18 years of cohesively executing these CORPATs. Both countries reached another important milestone by signing an MoU on Maritime Safety and Security Cooperation between Indian Coast Guard and its Indonesian counterpart BAKMLA on 6 July 2020. Defence Minister of In-

donesia Gen (Retd.) Prabowo Subianto visited India on 26-27 July 2020 and met with his Indian counterpart Raksha Mantri and National Security Adviser to discuss bilateral and regional issues of defence cooperation. He was the first Minister of any country that was received in India during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Bilateral trade in 2019-20 was USD 19 billion, which made Indonesia the second largest trading partner of India in ASEAN. Further cementing and advancing strong economic partnership, 3rd India-Indonesia Biennial Trade Ministers' Forum was held through video conference on 29 June 2020. Indian side was led by Commerce & Industry Minister and Indonesian side was led by Agus Suparmanto, Minister of Trade. Both ministers discussed ways and means to achieve trade targets of USD 50 billion by 2025.

The 4th DG Level Joint Working Group Meeting between NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau) and BNN (Indonesia National Narcotics Agency) took place virtually on 17 December 2020 where renewed MoU between NCB and BNN was signed during the meeting.

The 2nd JWG on Health Cooperation between India and Indonesia is scheduled to take place virtually during the period upto 31 March 2021 when, Plan of Action for implementation of MOU on Health Cooperation would be signed virtually, inter alia.

Lao PDR

On 12 June 2020, Prime Minister spoke on phone with Thongloun Sisoulith, Prime Minister of Lao PDR. India also gifted medicines and medical supplies to support the fight of Lao PDR against Covid-19. Bounkong Sihavong, Lao Health Minister thanked India in his letter. Under ITEC, 7 officers from Laos medical military Dept participated in 1st CLMV e-ITEC defence medical course on Covid-19 organised from 6-9 July 2020. In 2020, Indian Army Training Team completed its 25 years in Lao PDR.

In 2019-20, Lao-India Center for Excellence in Software Development & Training (CESDT) Vientiane imparted training to

90 participants in 4 different courses from 11 different organizations of Laos including government officials. The umbrella agreement on Indian Grant Assistance for Quick Impact Projects (QIP) in Laos was extended for another 5 years. A QIP Project for establishment of Fertilizers Analysis Laboratory was completed. The 2nd season of Phase- II of restoration of UNESCO world heritage site at Vat Phou, an ancient Shiva Temple, was completed in July 2020; the 3rd season of restoration work is likely to commence soon.

Malaysia

India and Malaysia share warm bilateral relations based on people to people linkages, shared history and well-established trading relations. Despite Covid-19 pandemic affecting trade across borders during April-August 2020, Malaysia emerged as the 12th largest trading partner for India globally with a total trade of USD 4.75 billion (Exports - USD 2.54 billion: Imports USD 2.21 billion). Malaysia was India's 13th largest trading

partner in 2019-20. India has so far registered a surplus trade balance of USD 332 million (April-August 2020) compared to trade deficit of USD 3.42 billion in 2019-20.

EAM had a telephone conversation with Malaysian Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein on 13 April 2020. In April 2020, India agreed to Malaysia's request for export of 1.2 mil-

lion tablets of Hydroxychloroquine sulphate(HCQS) and 24 tonnes of Paracetamol to Malaysia. India also permitted the export of 400,000 bottles of Chlorhexidine (Hand Sanitizers), 6000 packs of Ketamine HCl 10mg/ml and 370,785 pieces of 3-ply disposable face masks to Malaysia.

Following travel restrictions due to Covid-19 and India's decision to operate VBM flights from May 2020, 89 VBM flights have operated from Malaysia repatriating 15,223 Indians so far.

New Zealand

The strong desire to further strengthen bilateral relationship was reflected in the visit from New Zealand of Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Winston Peters accompanied by Minister for Trade and Export Growth David Parker and a high-level business delegation in end February 2020. On the eve of the visit, New Zealand released a Strategy Paper “India-New Zealand 2025 – Investing in the Relationship”, envisioning a more “enduring strategic relationship” with India over the next five years. During the visit, the Deputy Prime Minister met EAM and reviewed the state of bilateral relations. He also delivered a keynote address titled ‘The Indo Pacific: From Principles to Partnership’ organised by Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), expressing support for India’s leadership on Indo-Pacific Ocean’s Initiative (IPOI). He called for stronger maritime cooperation and conveyed New Zealand’s desire to join ISA. He also inaugurated ‘New Zealand Centre’ at IIT, Delhi on 26 February 2020 that will serve as a nodal point of academic collaboration between all 8 New Zealand universities and Indian institutes of higher learning. Trade Minister Parker met Commerce and Industry Minister and others. He also attended India-New Zealand Business Forum organised by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry(FICCI).

India and New Zealand regularly deliberated telephonically on Covid-19 situation as part of 7 country group including US, Australia, Japan, South Korea and Vietnam at FS level. Both sides also cooperated very closely for repatriating each other's stranded nationals resulting in repatriation of more than 3000 citizens of New Zealand and residents from India and about 3700 Indian nationals from New Zealand under VBM. In a telephonic conversation on 16 April 2020, New Zealand’s Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Winston Peters thanked EAM for the cooperation in repatriation of New Zealand nationals and for assuring to supply essential

Philippines

Building on momentum generated by the State Visit of the President to the Philippines in October 2019, leadership level exchanges continued with telephonic conversation between Prime Minister and President Duterte on 9 June 2020. President Duterte also appreciated the steps taken by India to maintain supply of essential pharmaceutical products to the Philippines. The 4th Meeting of the India-Philippines Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation, co-chaired by EAM and Teodoro Locsin Jr., Secretary, Department of Foreign Affairs

Institute of Chartered Accountants of India & Malaysian Institute of Certified Public Accountants signed Mutual Recognition Agreement on 4 December 2020 following Cabinet’s approval of October 2020.

Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas participated in Virtual Ministerial Roundtable of the 7th IEF-IGU (International Energy Forum-International Gas Union) Ministerial Gas Forum hosted by Malaysia on 3 December 2020.

pharmaceuticals.

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern won a 2nd tenure with an overwhelming majority for her Labour Party in elections held in October, 2020. The Prime Minister congratulated her through a tweet and a formal message. Priyanca Radhakrishnan, a person of Indian origin created history by becoming the first Minister of Indian origin in New Zealand’s government. Sukhi Turner was the first person of Indian origin to occupy the position of Mayor in 1995.

On 6 December, 2020 the Waitakere Indian Association and High Commission of India published a report titled ‘Economic Contributions of NZ Indians’. As per this report the people of Indian origin now contribute more than USD 10 billion to the NZ economy. There are about 250,000 persons of Indian origin, contributing to about 5% of NZ’s population. They are primarily engaged in sectors like retail, hotels, logistics, health, business support, finance, IT, and professional services.

Covid-19 adversely affected bilateral trade in goods and services. During January to June 2020, New Zealand’s exports to India stood at NZ\$ 741 million whereas imports from India were worth NZ\$ 486 million. The culmination of 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi was marked in a befitting manner on 02 October 2020 at the site of Mahatma Gandhi’s statue in front of Wellington Railway station, with the participation of dignitaries including Minister of Finance Grant Robertson, former Governor General of New Zealand Anand Satyanand and Mayor of Wellington Andy Foster.

The Foreign Office Consultation between India and New Zealand took place virtually on 16 February 2021.

of Republic of Philippines, was held virtually on 06 November 2020. Both sides reviewed recent developments in India-Philippines bilateral relations and discussed the future trajectory of their wide-ranging engagement for strengthening trade and investment and cooperation in the fields of health and pharmaceuticals, agriculture, tourism, energy, ICT, science & technology including that of the defence sector.

The 13th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Trade and Investment was held on 17 September 2020. The meeting dis-

cussed cooperation in vaccine development; PPE and pharmaceutical industry; textiles; electronics; ICT and IT-BPM; renewable energy; infrastructure; agriculture; traditional medicine; automobiles; agreement on cooperation and mutual assistance in Customs matters; sharing mechanism of preferential trade data etc. The 2nd meeting of Joint Defence Industry & Logistics Committee (JDILC) was held on 17 September 2020. Meeting identified areas to strengthen cooperation including capability

Singapore

India and Singapore stood together during Covid-19 to face challenges in the wake of the crisis. Prime Minister and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong had a telecon on 23 April 2020 during which Prime Minister promised to provide all possible support for maintaining supplies of essential goods, including medical products to Singapore. The Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for support being extended to Indian citizens in Singapore. On 11 July, on successful completion of General Elections in Singapore, Prime Minister tweeted congratulations to Prime Minister Lee.

India purchased 30,000 test kits from Singapore in April which was facilitated by the Temasek Foundation. They donated an additional 40,000 PCR testing Kits on 29 April 2020. 78 tons of Cargo containing a part of 1 million PPE kits acquired through a Singapore based company was delivered to India on 25 and 26 April 2020. A consignment of high-tech components was acquired through Bharat Electronics Limited for local manufacturing of ventilators and patient monitoring systems in India was shipped on 02 May 2020.

India approved export of 2.5 million HCQ tablets; 4.8 million pieces of surgical masks; 1.4 million bottles of hand sanitizers; 39,750 kg of melt-blown polypropylene material; 25,000 kg of SSMMS textile to Singapore for handling Covid-19 . Till 30 October 2020, a total of 33,099 passengers were repatriated in 209 flights. More than 5000 Singapore nationals and Perma-

Thailand

Bilateral relations continued to grow including cooperation within the framework of ASEAN, Mekong Ganga Cooperation(MGC) & BIMSTEC during 2020. Thailand as the Country Coordinator for India-ASEAN Strategic Partnership was actively engaged in facilitating the 17th ASEAN-India Summit and Related Meetings held through video conference from 12-15 November 2020 under the Chairmanship of Vietnam. Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Thailand General Prayut Chanocha on 01 May 2020 and agreed for collaboration in research and development in the field of medical sciences and vaccine development.

EAM and Don Pramudwinai, Deputy Prime Minister and Thai-

enhancement, transfer of advanced systems and co-production of defence equipment. The 1st meeting of India-Philippines JWG on Tourism Cooperation was held on 08 October 2020. Both countries also held the 1st round of negotiations on a Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) in October 2020. With leadership of both countries keen to strengthen the bilateral partnership, this is a strategic phase for deepening & diversification of bilateral relationship, especially in the economic arena.

ment Residents were also repatriated from India to Singapore since Covid-19 related restrictions were put in place.

In 2020-21 (till August 2020), bilateral trade stood at USD 7.2 billion. Exports to Singapore for the corresponding period stood at USD 3.6 billion, recording a decline of 24.3 % while imports stood at USD 3.6 billion, a decline of 45.0 %. Outward Indian FDI to Singapore was USD 0.84 billion in FY 2020-21 till August 2020) while it was USD 4.39 billion in FY 2019-20.

The 13th meeting of India-Singapore Defence Working Group took place virtually on 30 June 2020. The 12th IAF-RSAF Air Force Staff Talks (AST) was held via Video-Conference on 3 July 2020. Defence Policy Dialogue (August 2020) and Defence Industry Working Group meeting (October 2020) were held.

While annual exercises for Army and Air Force could not be conducted in 2020, 27th edition of the Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise (SIMBEX) was conducted in no-contact format for November 2020. Similarly, the 2nd edition of the Trilateral Maritime Exercise between India, Singapore and Thailand (SITMEX) was also conducted in November 2020. Defence engagements was enhanced through signing of a bilateral agreement in Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Heng Swee Keat and Minister S. Iswaran joined Deepawali Light up Ceremony in Little India on 03 October 2020.

land’s Foreign Minister co-chaired ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on 12 September 2020 via video conference where ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-25) was adopted. 22nd ASEAN-India SOM was held on 16 July 2020 through a video conference, co-chaired by Secretary (East) and Busaya Mathealin, Permanent Secretary of Thailand MFA. The 6th Round Table of ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT) on the theme “ASEAN-India: Strategic Partnership in Post-Covid-19 Era” was jointly inaugurated by EAM and Deputy Prime Minister Don Pramudwinai on 20 August 2020.

The 30th cycle of Indo-Thai CORPAT was held from 18-20 November 2020 as a ‘non-contact at sea only’. The Singapore-In-

dia-Thailand Trilateral Maritime Exercise SITMEX-2020, hosted by Singapore was held from 21-22 November 2020 as a ‘non-contact at sea only’ in Andaman Sea. First phase of Ex Cobra Gold is scheduled from February to 05 March 2021. Indian Armed Force Personnel are scheduled to participate in the Exercise in Observer Plus category. Annual Staff Talks between Indian Air Force(IAF) and Royal Thai Air Force were held on 21 August 2020 through VC. It is proposed to hold the 4th meeting of the Joint Task Force on Legal & Judicial Cooperation and Maritime Cooperation on 17 February 2021 between India and Thailand by video conference.

Timor Leste

India has cordial relationship with TL with continued cooperation in international fora, including through their expression of consistent support for elections to various bodies in the UN. The IT Innovation Lab Project in OêCusse region of Timor-Les-

12th session of India-Thailand Joint Trade Committee(JTC) Meeting was held on 4 December 2020 through video conference at Joint Secretary level from M/o Commerce of India and Thailand. Indo-ASEAN Oceanic Business Summit and Expo was organised by CII from 4-6 August 2020. An MoU between ICCR and Silpakorn University for one-year extension of ICCR Chair for Sanskrit Studies at Silpakorn University was signed on 29 May 2020. During April-October 2020, a total of 3275 Indian nationals and OCI card holders stranded in Thailand returned to India by 18 VBM flights.

te, flagged off in April 2019, is making remarkable progress and the work is likely to be finished soon. The project aims at enhancing IT literacy in schools, with a coverage of 12 schools, both through IT innovation labs and mobile IT innovation vans.

Vietnam

India reinvented strategies to remain actively engaged with Vietnam to keep momentum of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during Covid-19. Ongoing cooperation in the fields of trade & commerce, defence & security, development partnership, and capacity building remained active. Prime Minister exchanged views with Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Xuan Phuc on 21 December 2020 at a Virtual Bilateral Summit on wide-ranging bilateral, regional and global interests and issued a ‘Joint Vision for Peace, Prosperity and People’ to guide the future development of India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. They reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen cooperation against common global challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Exploring new and practical collaborations in the maritime domain based on convergences between India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and the ASEAN’s Outlook on Indo-Pacific to achieve shared security, prosperity and growth for all in the region were also agreed.

The Prime Minister had a telecon with Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc on 13 April 2020 to discuss global health and economic challenges emerging out of Covid-19 pandemic.

The 17th Joint Commission Meeting (virtual) was co-chaired by EAM and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh on 25 August 2020. They agreed to add new momentum to the economic and defence collaboration and to explore cooperation in emerging areas such as civil nuclear energy, space, marine sciences and new technologies. EAM appreciated Vietnam for successfully providing a leadership role to ASEAN during a challenging year and ably discharging responsibilities as a non-permanent member of UNSC for the term 2020-2021.

Minister of State delivered the keynote address at the International Conference entitled ‘New Horizons in India-Vietnam

Relations,’ organised by Indian Council of World Affairs(ICWA) and Vietnam Institute for South and Southwest Asian Studies (VIISAS) on 07 October 2020. 1st Foreign Policy Dialogue between the Ministry’s PPR Division and Policy Planning Division of Vietnam’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs was held online at the JS/DG-level on 15 September 2020.

India-Vietnam engagement in multilateral domain was further strengthened with active participation by India at all important ASEAN events, including virtual Ministerial Meetings of India-ASEAN, East Asia Summit(EAS), ASEAN Regional Forum(ARF) organised by Vietnam as ASEAN chair in 2020, and consultations on UN related matters in preparation for concurrent non-permanent membership of India and Vietnam in UNSC.

Cooperation in Defence, maritime security with Vietnam continued with regular exchanges. Raksha Mantri held online talks with Minister of National Defence, General Ngo Xuan Lich on 27 November 2020. An Agreement on Hydrography cooperation was signed. Defence Secretary held the 13th round of India-Vietnam Annual Security Dialogue with Deputy Defence Minister of Vietnam, Sr Lt Gen Nguyen Chi Vinh through Video Conference on 29 December 2020. Indian Naval Ship INS Kiltan visited Vietnam in December 2020 to deliver flood relief material to Vietnam for assisting flood affected people in Central Vietnam. Defence Secretary held telephonic talks with Deputy Defence Minister of Vietnam, Sr. Lt. Gen. Nguyen Chi Vinh on 6 July 2020 to review on-going defence partnership and identify new areas of cooperation. Military Medical Departments of India and Vietnam held an online conference on Covid-19 prevention and control on 1 July 2020 to learn from each other’s best practices. Separately, the first e-ITEC program in the field of Military Medical Services to train the staff of the Department of Military Health from CLMV coun-

tries was held in July 2020 in which eight military officers from Vietnam participated.

Bilateral economic engagement was impacted by Covid-19, even as both sides explored new partnerships to cope with the ongoing disruptions. Ministry of Finance of the Government of Vietnam agreed to accept electronic certificates of Origin issued by Government of India to facilitate trade engagement during Covid-19 related disruption. Bilateral trade in the first 6 months of 2020-21 reached USD 4.73 billion (31.26% decrease YoY basis). During this period, Vietnam’s exports to India reached USD 2.50 billion (42.38% decrease YoY basis), while India’s exports to Vietnam was USD 2.23 billion (12.28% decrease YoY basis). Top 5 commodities of Indian exports to Vietnam include iron & steel, meat products, marine products, motor vehicles and cotton. Top 4 commodities of Indian imports from Vietnam are electrical machinery & equipment, copper, inorganic chemicals and steel. According to Foreign Investment Agency of Vietnam, total investment by Indian companies in Vietnam reached USD 937.5 million, with new investment of USD 17 million in 2020. New private investments were made by Indian companies in Vietnam in the IT and energy sectors.

Development Partnership is an important pillar of India-Vietnam bilateral cooperation. As of now, total 26 Quick Impact

Pacific Island Countries

Fiji: Project Document on a regional solarization project funded by Government of India under India-UNDP Fund was signed on 1 June 2020 between UN Development Program (UNDP, Suva) & Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF), which entails solarisation of Heads of State Residences in 11 countries of the Pacific and PIDF headquarters in Suva. Out of the total cost of USD 1,310,000, Government of India will provide USD 400,000 via India-UN Development Partnership Fund(UNDPF) and USD 700,000 via the Commonwealth Window under India-UNDPF. Target sites for the Project include Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Palau, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. High Commissioner handed over USD 143,125 to Gujarat Education Society of Fiji on 15 July 2020 as India’s assistance towards upgradation of IT facilities at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School of Suva in the presence of Ms. Rosy Sofia Akbar, Fiji Minister of Education Arts and Heritage,

Government of India approved USD 850,000 funding for Fiji’s project proposal “Developing Climate Disaster Risk Financing Framework & Parametric Insurance” on 19 May 2020, through India-UNDPF, managed by UN Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC).

The Project aims to alleviate economic damage caused by climate & extreme weather events through financing instruments for Fijians. The initiative, led by the Climate Change & International Cooperation Division of Fiji Ministry of Economy, will be jointly implemented by the UN Capital Development Program,

Projects(QIP) were undertaken, of which 13 were already completed. In 2020-21, 12 new QIPs have been approved and are under implementation, including 7 QIPs in water management in the Mekong Delta region. An addendum to Agreement for setting up an Advanced IT Training Centre at Post and Telecommunications Institute of Technology(PTIT) in Ho Chi Minh City, to be set up with Indian assistance of over USD 1 million to create a state-of-the-art facility for IT training and skilling, was signed on 7 August 2020, which will enhance Vietnam’s IT training capabilities. Vietnamese students enrolled under program for ASEAN students to avail 1000 doctoral scholarships for higher studies at IITs in India.

Support to conservation of archaeological heritage sites in Vietnam is an important part of India’s cultural outreach as well as development partnership with Vietnam. The Archaeological Survey of India’s ongoing 5-year project of conservation and restoration of UNESCO World Heritage Site at My Son in central Vietnam continued to progress as per schedule. During the 4th session of restoration work in 2020-21, ASI team found a monolithic sandstone Shiva Linga of the 9th century, which further highlighted rich civilizational and cultural connections between India and Vietnam.

together with the UN Development Program (UNDP) and United Nations University (UNU)-managed Munich Climate Insurance initiative (MCII). During the 3rd General Assembly of International Solar Alliance(ISA) held virtually on 14 October 2020, Fiji and Nauru were elected as Vice Presidents for the Asia Pacific Region. Both countries are ISA Founding Members.

Fiji was hit by a Category 5 Tropical Cyclone Yasa on 17-18 December 2020, which caused extensive damage and destruction of critical infrastructure. The first consignment of relief materials from India for the cyclone-affected people reached Fiji in the first week of January 2021. The relief material was handed over to Inia Seruiratu, Minister of Defence and Disaster Management of Fiji on 11 January 2021 in Suva by the Acting High Commissioner of India. Early response to Fiji’s need postdisaster highlighted India’s commitment to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) support to Friendly Foreign Countries under the Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative (IPOI).

Nieu: India-Niue Centre of Excellence in IT, set up with financial and technical assistance of India was launched in August 2020 at the University of South Pacific in Alofi, capital of Niue to support the development and promotion of Information & Communication Tech in Niue. Earlier, a grant-in-aid of USD 346,085 was released to Niue on 03 March 2020 for the second phase of 4G telecom services, taking India’s total support for the project to USD 12,56,785 for extending 4-G telecom services to the entire population of Niue.

Kiribati: Government of India approved USD 1million fund- ing for support to Kiribati’s response to Covid-19 pandemic on 28 August 2020, approved through India-UNDPF, managed by UNOSSC.

Republic of Marshall Islands: Development Assis- tance from India to RMI continues to be an important pillar of bilateral relationship. In August 2020, funds worth USD 200,000 were disbursed to RMI for “Coral & Calm Project Phase II”, which made significant positive impacts on the lo- cal community by making contributions towards women’s em- ployment and sustainable aquaculture farming. In September 2020, 7,500 tablets of Hydroxychloroquine were sent to RMI in response to their request as medical assistance. Subsequent to the signing of Agreement between India and RMI on Ex- emption from Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic and Official passports on 18 February 2020, RMI has concurred with India’s proposal for entry into force of the Agreement on 30 October 2020. The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) ratified the Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance on 24 December 2020. The Agreement was signed by RMI on 8 August 2019.

Palau: During 2020, India partnered with Palau under UN- DPF in establishing Global Village conference facilities, ren- ovation of Palau Civic Hall, Palau Community College which will provide critical institutional support to Ocean Conference 2020 slated to be held in Palau. President of Palau, Tommy Re- mengesau Jr. while addressing 75th UNGA on 24 September 2020 thanked Government of India for helping Palau to im- prove its healthcare system through India-UNDPF.

Papua New Guinea: India and PNG enjoy a warm and friendly relationship. PNG leadership has conveyed consis- tently its desire to focus on India and deepen ties in political, cultural & economic fields. Both countries have been work- ing closely supporting each other in international fora, includ- ing Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and the United Nations Organization. During 2020, significant progress was achieved towards Line of Credit (LoC) of USD 100 million ex- tended by EXIM Bank of India to the PNG Government for construction of Madang-Baiyer and Hoskins-Kimbe Roads in PNG. A grant-in-aid of USD 1 million was approved for PNG under India-UN Cooperation Development Fund for purchase of much needed 10 fully equipped ambulances. Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Excellence in Information Technology in Port Moresby has become fully functional and a second batch of students are studying at the Centre. Government of India approved a MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants

of India (ICAI) & Certified Practicing Accountants, PNG which would strengthen institutional arrangements between the two professional bodies.

Samoa: On 12 March 2020, Samoa Prime Minister and High Commissioner of India to Samoa signed a ‘Tax Information Ex- change Agreement’, that will facilitate exchange of information relevant to administration and enforcement of the domestic tax laws of both countries.

On 13 March 2020, Samoa Prime Minister and High Commis- sioner jointly inaugurated the Centre of Excellence in IT, set up in Samoa’s capital Apia with financial & technical assistance from Government of India for conducting short term training courses in IT for Samoan officials and the general public. Earlier in the year, the ‘Samoa Knowledge Society Initiative’, Samoa’s capital Apia, became operational. The USD 1 million project is funded by India under the aegis of India-UN Development Partnership Fund, and is aimed to promote knowledge-based sustainable development in Samoa. India extended a financial support of USD 250,000 to Samoa to help in relief and rehabil- itation after one of its worst ever measles epidemics in the last quarter of 2019 that took 82 lives and affected almost 6000 others.

Solomon Islands: India-Solomon Islands relations are friendly. Both countries have been working closely supporting each other in international fora, including the Commonwealth, Non-Aligned Movement and UN. Both sides signed MoU for establishment of Centre of Excellence in IT in Honiara on 17 February 2020. A Grant-in-Aid of USD 1 million under In- dia-UN Cooperation Development Fund to Solomon Islands was finalized to support Solomon Islands in its fight against Covid-19. Solomon Islands agreed to sign MoU on Exemption of Visa for Official & Diplomatic Passport Holders.

Tonga: Government of India approved funding of USD 1,018,844 for support to Tonga’s response to Covid-19 pan- demic on 28 August 2020, approved through India-UNDPF, managed by UNOSSC

On 8 January 2021, Tonga ratified the amendments to the In- ternational Solar Alliance Framework Agreement, paving the way for all UN-Member countries to apply for the ISA mem- bership.

Tuvalu: Government of India approved funding of USD 370,353 for support to Tuvalu’s response to Covid-19 pan- demic on 28 August 2020, approved through India-UNDPF), managed by UNOSSC.

4

EAST ASIA

China

Over the past three decades, peace and tranquility in the border areas had provided the basis for expanded co- operation in other domains of the relationship. While the year 2020 marked the 70th anniversary of the establish- ment of diplomatic relations between India and China, the year also witnessed heightened tensions in the Western Sector of the India-China border areas.

Since April 2020, there was a buildup of troops and armaments by the Chinese side along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the border areas adjacent to Eastern Ladakh. In mid-May the Chinese side made several attempts to transgress the LAC in other parts of the Western Sector. This included Kongka La, Gogra and North Bank of Pangong Lake. Given the growing friction along the LAC, the Senior Commanders of the two sides in a meeting on 6 June 2020 agreed on a process of dis- engagement that involved reciprocal actions. Both sides also agreed to respect and abide by the LAC and not undertake any activity to alter the status quo. However in violation of this the Chinese side engaged in a violent face off on 15 June 2020 at Galwan. Our brave soldiers laid down their lives and also inflict- ed costs including casualties on the Chinese side. EAM had a telephone conversation with State Councillor and Minister of

Foreign Affairs of China, Wang Yi on 17 June 2020 and strongly conveyed India’s concerns. EAM also stressed that the Chinese side needed to take appropriate action so as to restore peace and tranquility along the LAC.

The Special Representatives (SRs) of India and China on the Boundary Question - National Security Advisor of India and Wang Yi, State Councillor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China had a telephone conversation on 5 July 2020. They agreed on the need to have complete disengagement along the friction areas and to restore peace and tranquility. Even as diplomatic and military engagement was maintained with the Chinese side, the Chinese side again engaged in provocative military manoeuvres on the night of 29 and 30 August 2020 in an attempt to change the status quo in the South Bank area of Pangong Lake. These attempts were met with precautionary action by Indian forces.

Subsequently Raksha Mantri met General Wei Fenghe, State Councillor and Defence Minister of China on 04 September 2020 in Moscow on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting. On 10 September 2020, EAM also held a detailed discussion with the State Councilor and

Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi in Moscow on the side-lines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting regarding the current tensions in the India-China border areas. The Ministers reached an agreement on five points to guide the approach to the current situation, ensure disengagement from all friction areas and restore peace and tranquility. During the leadership level engagements, the two sides agreed to maintain close communication at the diplomatic and military level to achieve a peaceful resolution to the situation along the LAC.

The 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th and 20th meetings of the Working Mechanism for Consultation & Coordination on India-China Border Affairs (WMCC) were held through video-conference on 24 June 2020, 10 July 2020, 24 July 2020, 20 August 2020, 30 September 2020 and 18 December 2020 respectively. Nine rounds of meetings between the Senior Commanders (headed by Commander of 14th Corps on Indian side) were also held with the last round being held on 24 January 2021.

During these diplomatic and military level meetings, the two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the situation along the LAC in the India-China border areas. They reaffirmed that the two sides will continue to sincerely work towards complete disengagement of the troops at all friction points along the LAC in the Western Sector. The two sides were in agreement that restoration of peace and tranquility in the border areas would be essential for the overall development of bilateral relations.

As on date, the military and diplomatic engagements to resolve the situation and restore full peace and tranquility are continuing.

Covid-19 Related International Cooperation

Prime Minister wrote to Chinese President Xi Jinping on 8 February 2020, in view of the coronavirus outbreak in China, conveying the solidarity of the people and Government of India

Democratic People’s Republic of Korea

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

The year saw further strengthening of the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership that was announced by Prime Minister and former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2014. The bilateral relationship has today become multifaceted and there is growing convergence of economic and strategic interests between the two countries.

with the people of China and the readiness of the Government of India to provide assistance. The Government of India also provided 15 tonnes of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other emergency medical equipment to China on 26 February 2020. These medical supplies cost approximately Rs. 2.11 crores. They were handed over to the Hubei Charity Federation in Wuhan, China.

EAM had a telephone conversation with China’s State Councilor and Foreign Minister Wang Yi on 24 March 2020. EAM discussed working together in combating Covid-19 and agreed to build further on our bilateral efforts in this domain. Separately, procurement of essential medical equipment such as Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs), ventilators related to Covid-19 through commercial imports from China was also facilitated.

The Government of India organised three special flights on 31 January 2020, 1 February 2020 and 26 February 2020 to evacuate 766 persons, including students from the city of Wuhan as well as other cities of Hubei Province in China in view of the continuing lock down of the Hubei Province because of coronavirus. The evacuated persons included 723 Indian nationals and 43 foreign nationals. The foreign nationals included 23 from Bangladesh, 9 from Maldives, 2 from Myanmar, 1 from South Africa, 1 from Madagascar and 1 from the United States of America who was a partner of an Indian national. In addition, 6 Chinese citizens who were spouses and/or children of Indian nationals were also evacuated.

As Covid-19 related restrictions were imposed on regular air travel and cargo movement between India and China, several Vande Bharat Flights were organised from cities in China and Hong Kong to repatriate stranded Indian nationals. In all till 31 December 2020, 2,734 Indian citizens were brought back from China and Hong Kong on these Vande Bharat Flights. These flights were also used to facilitate movement of Indians to China and Hong Kong. Besides this, 170 seafarers were repatriated in charter flights from Hong Kong to India.

The Government of India extended medical assistance worth USD 1 million to DPR Korea in the form of anti-Tuberculosis medicines. The medical assistance is under the aegis of an ongoing WHO anti-tuberculosis programme in DPRK.

While the Covid-19 pandemic caused disruption in regular visits and exchanges, the two sides still maintained the momentum of their ties through virtual meetings and phone calls. Prime Minister spoke to former Prime Minister Abe in April 2020 to exchange views on the response of each country for managing Covid-19 and for strengthening cooperation in

the post-Covid world. The two leaders also held a telephone conversation just before Prime Minister Abe stepped down as Prime Minister of Japan in September 2020. On 25 September 2020, Prime Minister held a telephone conversation with the newly appointed Prime Minister of Japan, Suga Yoshihide. The two leaders expressed their intention to further strength-

en the relationship based on mutual trust and shared values. On 21 December 2020, the sixth edition of the SAMVAD dialogue was held in Tokyo in the hybrid format. Prime Minister delivered a video message while Prime Minister Suga delivered remarks in person.



13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue on 07 October 2020

EAM visited Tokyo for the 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers’ Strategic Dialogue with Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu on 07 October 2020. The two ministers reviewed the progress made in the India-Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership and in this context discussed cooperation in various areas, including maritime security, trade and investment, manufacturing and skill development, connectivity and infrastructure, cybersecurity etc. Japan also conveyed its agreement to be the lead partner in the connectivity pillar of the Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative (IPOI), which was announced by Prime Minister in November 2019. Earlier in May 2020, EAM held a telephone conversation with Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi where they discussed India-Japan cooperation in the post-Covid scenario.

The year witnessed further strengthening of bilateral security and defence cooperation. Raksha Mantri held a telephone conversation with the then Japanese Defence Minister Kono Taro on 08 May 2020 and with the new Defence Minister of Japan, Kishi Nobuo on 22 November 2020. National Security Advisor and his Japanese counterpart Kitamura Shigeru also had a telephone conversation to discuss bilateral defence and security ties on 18 September 2020. The two countries concluded and signed the Agreement on Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between the Self-Defense Forces of Japan and the Indian Armed Forces (so called “Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement” or ACSA) on 09 September 2020. The agreement will help in enhancing cooperation in the areas of maritime se-

curity and maritime domain awareness. Joint operational engagements continued in 2020 with the completion of the 4th edition of the maritime bilateral exercise JIMEX between the Indian Navy and the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force from 26-28 September 2020. Japan, India, the U.S. and Australia also participated in Malabar 2020 which was conducted in two phases. Phase-1 was conducted in the Bay of Bengal from 3-6 November 2020 and Phase-2 was conducted in the Arabian Sea from 17-20 November 2020. General Izutsu Shunji, Chief of Staff, Japan Air Self Defense Force visited India on an official visit from 9-10 December 2020.

On the economic front, Japan continued to be a key partner in India’s growth and socioeconomic development. In the financial year 2019-20, Japanese Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) was USD 3.23 billion. Cumulative investment since 2000 has been USD 33.49 billion, ranking Japan fourth among major investors. The number of Japanese companies registered in India rose to 1454. Japan continued to be India’s largest donor of bilateral Official Development Assistance (ODA), with an ODA commitment of JPY 374.44 billion (approximately USD 3.7 billion) in 2019-20. In August 2020, a loan agreement was signed for JICA to provide a Japanese ODA loan of up to JPY 50 billion (approximately USD 500 million) as Covid-19 emergency support. Japan also provided grant assistance worth JPY 1 billion to aid India’s efforts in combating the Covid-19 pandemic. On 8 January 2021, another loan agreement was signed for JICA to provide a Japanese ODA loan of up to JPY 30 billion (approx-

mately USD 300 million) for social protection.

Minister of Commerce and Industry held a video conference with his Japanese counterpart Kajiyama Hiroshi on 08 May 2020 to discuss bilateral economic and commercial relations. Minister of Commerce and Industry along with Japan's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry and Australia's Minister for Trade, Tourism and Investment launched the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) on 01 September 2020. The initiative seeks to diversify supply chains in the Indo-Pacific region to ensure resiliency in light of the Covid-19 crisis and the recent global-scale changes in the economic and technological landscape. Further progress was made in the implementation of the flagship Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) project. The 11th Joint Committee Meeting on MAHSR, co-chaired by Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog and Hiroto Izumi, Special Advisor to Prime Minister of Japan, was held in the virtual format on 25 September 2020.

Several bilateral Memorandums of Cooperation (MoCs) have also been concluded in 2020 to further strengthen bilateral

economic relations. These include the MoC in the field of ICT, an MoC to set up the India-Japan Steel Dialogue and also an MoC for the establishment of Basic Framework for movement of Specified Skilled Workers.

Due to Covid-19, travel and people-to-people contacts were disrupted. However, both countries assisted each other to ensure travel of their nationals to each other's countries. Relief flights were organised between India and Japan to not only repatriate stranded individuals, but to also enable working professionals and businessmen to resume their jobs and operations. The Ministry along with the Indian Embassy in Tokyo was involved in the evacuation of 119 Indian crew members on board the cruise liner "Diamond Princess" in February 2020. An Air Bubble was established in November 2020 to facilitate smooth movement of people between both countries. 22 Air India flights under the Vande Bharat Mission and the India-Japan Air Bubble successfully repatriated 4,702 Indians and 132 foreign nationals from Japan to India. Movement of Indian nationals from India to Japan was also facilitated by these flights.

Mongolia

India and Mongolia enjoy warm and cordial bilateral relations. Mongolia regards India as a 'Spiritual Third Neighbour'. The bilateral relationship was upgraded to a Strategic Partnership in 2015 during the historic visit of Prime Minister which has proven to be a watershed event in our bilateral relations with Mongolia.

Minister & Chief Cabinet Secretary (CCS) of the Government of Mongolia, Oyun-Erdene led a group of 18 Governors and 7 high officials from all 21 provinces of Mongolia in January 2020 for a special capacity building programme at IIM, Indore under

the ITEC Executive initiative. During the visit, the delegation also called on EAM and the Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. Though due to Covid-19 and ensuing travel restrictions, physical meetings could not take place during most part of the year, exchanges were conducted through VC and telephone conversations. In May 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with his Mongolian counterpart, Damdin Tsogtbaatar and discussed rapid response and medical interoperability during pandemic and reviewed the progress of development partnership projects of USD 1.236 billion Oil Refinery and USD 20 million Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre of Excellence in IT.



EAM at the 7th Meeting of India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation on 03 December 2020

The 7th meeting of the India-Mongolia Joint Committee on Co-operation was held virtually on 03 December 2020. The meeting was chaired jointly by EAM and Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Government of Mongolia. The two Ministers held comprehensive discussions on the entire range of issues covering bilateral cooperation including reviewing the progress of the Oil Refinery project which is being developed through a line of credit of USD 1.236 billion extended by India. The two Ministers agreed that successful completion of this project would contribute immensely to energy security of Mongolia. Mongolia confirmed joining the International Solar Alliance. As part

Republic of Korea

The momentum of bilateral relationship between India and the Republic of Korea (RoK) intensified with several high-level visits, including the State visit of the Prime Minister to Seoul in February 2019, the visit of President Moon Jaein to India in July 2018 and the visit of First Lady of RoK in November 2019. The relationship continued to gain traction this year through regular high-level interactions of senior leadership.

The Prime Minister had telephone conversations with President Moon during the Covid-19 pandemic on 08 April 2020 and on 21 October 2020 and discussed issues related to bilateral cooperation and also exchanged views on global developments, particularly the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

EAM held a video conference with RoK Foreign Minister on 19 May 2020 to discuss bilateral relations, Covid-19 related cooperation and easing of travel restrictions. Through a video conference, Secretary (East) also held a meeting with First Vice-Foreign Minister of the Republic of Korea on 23 December 2020. The two sides discussed issues related to bilateral cooperation and also international issues of mutual interest including high-level bilateral exchanges, defence and security cooperation, COVID19 response, and coordination in multilateral fora.

of the celebration of the 65th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations, EAM released 25 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur and jointly unveiled a commemorative stamp printed by Mongol Post. The President, Vice President and Prime Minister exchanged congratulatory letters.

The Election Commission of India and the General Election Commission of Mongolia signed a Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in the field of Elections on 30 August 2020.

Jeong Kyeong-doo, Minister of National Defence of RoK visited India from 04-06 February 2020 during which he also attended the opening ceremony of DEFEXPO 2020 in Lucknow. Raksha Mantri had a telephonic conversation with RoK Minister of National Defence on 10 July 2020 on issues pertaining to bilateral defence cooperation. Chief of Army Staff led a 7 member delegation to Seoul from 28-31 December 2020 on a goodwill visit for enhancement of defence cooperation through interactions at the highest military level.

On 20 August 2020, the India-Republic of Korea Consultations on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation were held virtually during which the two sides exchanged views on global developments and contemporary issues of mutual interest in the field of disarmament and non-proliferation.

Both countries also facilitated the travel of their stranded citizens to each other's countries. India also facilitated the travel of essential personnel of RoK business enterprises to resume operations in India. By 2 VBM flights, 242 Indians were repatriated from RoK to India and 234 Indians were facilitated to travel from India to RoK. In addition, around 1350 Indians traveled between India and RoK by chartered flights.

5

EURASIA

Russian Federation

Prime Minister held 3 telephone conversations with President Vladimir Putin of the Russian Federation. On 01 July 2020, Prime Minister congratulated President Putin on the successful completion of the national vote in Russia on constitutional amendments. On 17 September 2020, President Putin called to congratulate Prime Minister on his birthday, while on 07 October 2020 Prime Minister called to congratulate President Putin on his birthday.

Raksha Mantri visited Moscow from 22-24 June 2020 to participate in the celebrations of the 75th Anniversary of the victory in the Second World War, while a Tri-Service Indian contingent participated in the military parade in Moscow. Raksha Mantri visited Moscow again from 02-04 September 2020 for the joint meeting of Defence Ministers of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization), CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States), and CSTO (Collective Security Treaty Organisation) to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the victory in the Second World War. On the sidelines, Raksha Mantri had a bilateral meeting with Defence Minister of the Russian Federation Sergey Shoigu.

EAM participated in the video-conference meeting of the BRICS Foreign Ministers on 04 September 2020.

From 9-10 September 2020, EAM visited Moscow for the meeting of the Council of SCO Foreign Ministers. On the sidelines, EAM had a bilateral meeting with the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, and also participated in the Russia-India-China (RIC) Foreign Minister's meeting.

Defence Secretary visited Moscow from 19-22 October 2020, to discuss important issues of bilateral military-technical co-operation.

Russia and India cooperated closely in facilitating the repatriation of citizens under the Vande Bharat Mission. In April 2020, India allowed export of Hydroxychloroquine to Russia which was greatly appreciated by the Russian leadership. BIRAC (Biotechnology Research Assistance Council), a Public Sector Enterprise under the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), is working with the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) regarding testing and production of Sputnik-V vaccine in India. RDIF also signed agreements with some Indian companies to

cooperate on clinical trials and supply of Sputnik V vaccine.



EAM met Foreign Minister of Russia in Moscow on 9 September 2020

Armenia

In April 2020, India provided Hydroxychloroquine tablets as humanitarian medical assistance to Armenia in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. The return of Indian nationals stranded in Armenia was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

In May 2020, the Government of Armenia as well as the Municipality of Yerevan granted approval for installation of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Yerevan.

Azerbaijan

On 04 May 2020, Prime Minister participated in the online Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group

themed "United Against Covid-19 Pandemic", under the chairmanship of the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.



Prime Minister at the Virtual Summit of NAM Contact Group (04 May 2020)

On 20 May 2020, Minister of Health and Family Welfare attended the NAM Health Ministers’ meeting chaired by the Minister of Health of Azerbaijan Ogtay Shiraliyev.

The return of Indian nationals stranded in Azerbaijan was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

An 8-member Working Group on Azerbaijan-India Inter-Parliamentary Relations headed by Member of Parliament Nagif Hamzayev was set up in Azerbaijani Milli Majlis (Parliament) in May 2020.

As part of the 6th International Day of Yoga celebrations themed on ‘Yoga at Home, Yoga with Family’, 11 online events were organised by the Mission in Azerbaijan on 21 June 2020.

Expert level negotiations on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) between India and Azerbaijan were held in the digital video-conference format on 17 August 2020 while negotiations on India-Azerbaijan Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) were held on 21 September 2020. Despite Covid-19, business delegations from India and Azerbaijan continued their active engagement in the online format.

Belarus

In May 2020, the return of Indian nationals stranded in Belarus was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission. On 02 October 2020, our Mission in Minsk organised a cultural event to

mark the closing ceremony of Gandhi@150 celebration at the Belarusian State Medical University (BSMU), Minsk.

Georgia

In May 2020, The Government of Georgia issued a stamp to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gand-

hi. The return of Indian nationals stranded in Georgia was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

Kazakhstan

EAM met the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdi on 10 September 2020 in Moscow on the sidelines of the

meeting of the Council of SCO Foreign Ministers.



EAM met Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan on 10 September 2020

EAM participated in the special video-conference meeting of Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) on 24 September 2020, chaired by the Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan.

The Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan Mukhtar Tleuberdi participated in the 2nd meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue held in video-conference format on 28 October 2020, under the chairmanship of EAM.



The 2nd meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue on 28 October 2020

Raksha Mantri met the Defence Minister of Kazakhstan Lt. Gen. Nurlan Yermekbayev in Moscow on 04 September 2020, on the sidelines of the SCO Defence Ministers meeting. In April 2020, India provided Hydroxychloroquine tablets as humanitarian assistance to Kazakhstan in the fight against Covid-19. The return of Indian nationals stranded in Kazakhstan was facilitated during May-August 2020 under the Vande Bharat Mission.

On 27 October 2020, the 1st Joint Working Group on Space Cooperation between Aero Space Committee of Kazakhstan and ISRO was held in the digital video-conference format.

The Fourth rotation of Kazakh Peacekeeping Company deployed with Indian Battalion at United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) began in two phases on 1 August and 20 August 2020 respectively.

The 7th Session of India-Kazakhstan Joint Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held virtually on 10 September. Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry led the Indian delegation while the Kazakh delegation was led by Vice-Minister of Trade Kairat Torebayev.

Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) under the Mission in Nur-Sultan organised several events to celebrate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Hindi version of the famous Kazakh author and poet Abai Kunanbaev’s ‘Book of Words’ was released on 10 August 2020. Rabindra Jayanti was celebrated on 08 May 2020 with rendition of his songs, poems and solo dance performances. 6th International Day of Yoga was observed on 21 June 2020 with performance of yoga protocol and discourses on yoga in various cities.

Kyrgyz Republic

EAM met the then Foreign Minister of the Kyrgyz Republic Chingiz Aidarbekov on 09 September 2020 in Moscow on the sidelines of SCO Council of Foreign Ministers’ meeting.

Kyrgyz First Deputy Foreign Minister Nuran Niyazaliev participated in the 2nd Foreign Ministerial level India-Central Asia Dialogue held virtually on 28 October 2020.

In April 2020, India donated Hydroxychloroquine tablets as humanitarian medical assistance to the Kyrgyz Republic in the fight against Covid-19. The return of about 14,000 Indian nationals in the Kyrgyz Republic was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated by abiding with the social distancing norms at the Embassy premises on 21 June 2020.

On 25 September 2020, Indian Ambassador in Bishkek handed over IT hardware and equipment (personal computers, tablets and notebooks) worth over Rs 27 lakh to the Kyrgyz Central Commission for Elections and Referenda (CEC), as India’s assistance for smooth conduct of parliamentary elections.

Celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi were held in Bishkek on 25 September 2020 with the participation of the Chairperson of Kyrgyz Central Election Commission, Nurzhan Shaildabekova.



EAM met Foreign Minister of Kyrgyz Republic on the sidelines of SCO on 09 September 2020

Tajikistan

On 06 May 2020, EAM had a telephone conversation with the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin to discuss issues related to cooperation in the fight against Covid-19, and other bilateral and regional issues.

Defense Minister met the Defense Minister of Tajikistan Col. Gen. Sherali Mirzo in Moscow on 03 September 2020, on the sidelines of joint meeting of the Defense Ministers of the CIS, SCO and CSTO to commemorate the 75th Anniversary of the victory in the Second World War.

On 09 September 2020, EAM met the Foreign Minister of Tajikistan, Sirojiddin Muhriddin in Moscow, on the sidelines of the Council of SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting.

The Foreign Minister of Tajikistan, Sirojiddin Muhriddin participated in 2nd India-Central Asia Dialogue chaired by EAM on 28 October 2020 in digital video-conference format.

On 05 May 2020, India provided humanitarian assistance of tablets of Hydroxychloroquine and Paracetamol to Tajikistan. On 28 May 2020, India airlifted medicines to Tajikistan which was received by Tajik First Deputy Minister of Health. Another consignment of critical medicines was handed over to Tajik authorities on 15 June 2020. India also sent medicines to India-Tajikistan Friendship Hospital in Tajikistan.

The return of Indian nationals stranded in Tajikistan was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

On 31 August 2020, the 2nd Meeting of India-Tajikistan Joint Working Group on Peaceful Use of Space Technology was held through digital video-conference.

Tajik experts participated in an online webinar "Weaving Relations: Textile Traditions" organised by ICCR on 03 October 2020 to mark the culmination of Gandhi@150.

Turkmenistan

On 15 October 2020, President held a telephone conversation with the President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov to discuss the state and prospects of India-Turkmenistan relations.

Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers and Foreign Minister of Turkmenistan Rashid Meredov participated in the 2nd India-Central Asia Dialogue held in digital video-conference format on 28 October 2020.

The 3rd India-Turkmenistan Consular Dialogue was held on 09 July 2020 in digital video-conference format to discuss issues related to the signing of consular documents, visa facilitation etc.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Turkmenistan with a series of virtual events, in view of Covid-19 related restrictions. A Quiz on India and Yoga was organised as a curtain-raiser for the event at the Yoga and Traditional Medicine Centre in Ashgabat on 13 June 2020. A special virtual session on the benefits of Yoga was held for elderly people on 18 June 2020. A live online session on the immunity-boosting benefits of Yoga was conducted on 19 June 2020. Yoga practitioners from all over Turkmenistan joined the Yoga Day celebrations online on 20 June 2020.

The return of Indian nationals stranded in Turkmenistan was facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission.

Ukraine

In April 2020, India provided humanitarian medical assistance in the form of Hydroxychloroquine, Oseltamivir and Atazanavir tablets to assist Ukraine in the fight against Covid-19.

On 05 May 2020, India provided vaccines for Cholera, Typhoid, Meningococcal and Mefloquine tablets for Malaria to assist the Ukrainian contingent going on a United Nations Peacekeeping Mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

On 21 June 2020, hundreds of Yoga enthusiasts across Ukraine participated in the Common Yoga Protocol to mark the 6th International Day of Yoga.

During May- August 2020, India and Ukraine worked closely to ensure the safe and timely repatriation of more than 8,000 Indians from Ukraine under the Vande Bharat Mission flights. These flights also facilitated the return of hundreds of

Ukrainian citizens back to Ukraine.

From 14 August 2020, Ukraine extended electronic visas facility for the citizens of India for the purpose of business, private visit, tourism, treatment, activities in the field of culture, science, education, sports, as well as for representatives of foreign media.

First Deputy Foreign Minister of Ukraine Emine Dzhaparova was the Chief Guest at the ceremony to unveil the statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Kyiv on 02 October 2020, to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

On 14 October 2020, India and Ukraine initiated an Air Bubble arrangement to further widen the scope of international air connectivity.

Uzbekistan



Prime Minister at the India-Uzbekistan Virtual Bilateral Summit on 11 December 2020

Minister of Commerce and Industry held a video-conference meeting with Deputy Prime Minister for Investments and Foreign Economic Affairs of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov on 21 April 2020, to discuss issues relating to trade, investment and connectivity.

EAM held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov on 08 May 2020 to discuss the ongoing cooperation during the pandemic crisis, bilateral relations and developments in Afghanistan. EAM met the Uzbek Foreign Minister in Moscow on 10 September 2020 on the sidelines of the Council of SCO Foreign Ministers' meeting.

The first-ever joint meeting of the respective National Coordination Committees of India and Uzbekistan to follow up on implementation of bilateral projects co-chaired by the Minister of State and the Deputy Prime Minister of Uzbekistan Sardor Umurzakov was held in digital video-conference format on 24 August 2020.

Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov participated in the 2nd India-Central Asia Dialogue chaired by the EAM on 28 October 2020 virtually.

In April 2020, India gifted Hydroxychloroquine tablets to Uzbekistan in its fight against Covid-19. During May- September

2020, e-ITEC programmes were conducted by India in which medical professionals from Uzbekistan participated.

An India Room providing Indian multimedia educational material has been opened in Bukhara State University in April 2020 under the grant assistance provided by the Ministry of External Affairs.

During April-October 2020, Uzbekistan arranged 7 special flights of “Uzbekistan Airways” which helped in the repatriation of 624 Indian nationals stranded in Uzbekistan. These flights also helped stranded Uzbek nationals in India to return to their homeland.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)



Vice President chaired the 19th session of the SCO Council of Heads of Government on 30 November 2020

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a permanent intergovernmental international organisation, established on 15 June 2001. In June 2017, during the meeting of Head of State Council (HCS) in Astana, the status of a full member of the Organization was granted to the Republic of India. On 30 November 2020, on the completion of one year of its chairmanship, India hosted the 19th meeting of SCO Council of Heads of Government. The meeting was chaired by Vice President. During the coronavirus pandemic, the member states hosted various meetings virtually.

Major Achievements

On 30 November 2020 India successfully hosted the 19th Meeting of SCO Council of Heads of Government in virtual format, that was chaired by Vice President.

On 13 May 2020, EAM participated in a video-conference meeting of SCO Ministers of Foreign Affairs. The video conference was convened in the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis and discussions centered around the efforts to deal with its trade, economic and social consequences.

From 09-10 September, EAM led the Indian delegation in the meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization held in Moscow. The

meeting reviewed the preparations for the forthcoming SCO Summit and also exchanged views on international and regional issues.

Events in Detail

On 24 July 2020, Minister of Health and Family Welfare participated in the 3rd Meeting of Health Ministers of SCO member States. The Indian side proposed to set up a new sub- Group of Traditional Medicine under the SCO Health Ministers Meeting for achievement of SDG-3.

On 11 August 2020, Preparatory Seminar for the first ever SCO Start-up Forum hosted by Invest India. From 20-21 August 2020, 1st virtual Meeting of Consortium of Economic Think Tanks of SCO was hosted by the Centre for Regional Trade.

On 04 September 2020, Raksha Mantri led an Indian delegation to the joint Meeting of Defence Ministers of the SCO, CIS and CSTO countries held in Kubinka, a town situated in Odintsovsky district of Moscow Oblast. The ministers exchanged views on current international and regional security topics, the consolidation of efforts to prevent wars and armed conflicts, as well as the further strengthening of military cooperation.

On 10 September 2020, the Minister for Culture participated in the 17th SCO Culture Ministers Meeting through virtual mode. The participants discussed the development of cooperation in culture and arts in the preceding period, exchanged views on the implementation of the agreements reached at previous SCO Culture Ministers' meetings and discussed measures taken in their countries to support cultural facilities during the coronavirus pandemic.

On 15 September 2020, National Security Advisor led the Indian delegation at the 15th Meeting of Secretaries of Security Councils of SCO. In preparation for the meeting of the Council of Heads of SCO Member States, the Secretaries of the Security Councils exchanged views on the situation in the field of ensuring security and stability in the SCO region.

On 22 September 2020, the Minister for AYUSH inaugurated the Webinar on the topic “Role of Ayurveda and other Traditional Medicine to achieve Sustainable Development Goal (SDG-3) in SCO Countries”. The Minister emphasized that the cooperation in the field of Traditional Medicine can act as a force multiplier in providing access to low-cost, safe and effective coverage for promotion of health and prevention of diseases in all Member states.

On 16 October 2020, Minister of Law and Justice chaired the 7th Session of the Ministers of Justice of the SCO Member States.

On 20 October 2020, during the 18th Prosecutor Generals' virtual meet, Solicitor General of India led the Indian delegation.

On 21 October 2020, the Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare participated in the SCO Agriculture Ministers' Meeting. In the meeting, he elaborated on India's measures for ensuring continued food security and farmers' welfare.

On 27 October 2020, Minister of Commerce and Industry launched the first ever online SCO Start-up Forum. The Forum saw registration from 2500 plus participants from 60 countries.

On 28 October 2020 during the 8th virtual meet of the SCO Transport Ministers, Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways represented India.

On 28 October 2020, Minister of Commerce and Industry, chaired the 19th Virtual Meeting of the Ministers of the SCO Member States responsible for Foreign Economic and Foreign Trade activities. The Heads of Delegations approved the Draft Action Plan for 2021-2025 for Implementation of the Program for Multilateral Trade and Economic Cooperation of the SCO and other outcome documents.

On 30 November 2020 India successfully hosted the 19th Meeting of the SCO Council of Heads of Government in virtual format, that was chaired by Vice President. Various initiatives proposed by India as a part of its year-long Chairmanship were widely appreciated. India has offered to create and Chair a new Special Working Group on Startups and Innovation and to set up a new Expert Working Group on Cooperation in Traditional Medicine.

On 23 November 2020, during the B2B format, FICCI convened the first SCO Business Conclave with special emphasis on Cooperation in MSMEs through the national chapters of the SCO Business Council.

From 24-28 November 2020, India also organised the first-ever SCO Young Scientists Conclave in the virtual format in which more than 200 young scientists' participated. The first-ever Consortium of SCO Economic Think Tanks and the first-ever SCO Startup Forum was also organised.

6

GULF, WEST ASIA AND NORTH AFRICA

India's engagement with Gulf countries continued through virtual meetings and physical visits. The Prime Minister participated in the virtual G-20 Summit under the presidency of Saudi Arabia in November 2020. He also had telephone conversations with virtually every GCC country during the pandemic. EAM visited UAE and Bahrain in November 2020 and held virtual meetings with his counterparts from UAE as well as GCC Troika during the year. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas visited Kuwait in October 2020 to convey condolences on behalf of India to Kuwait on the sad demise of the Amir of Kuwait. India welcomed the decision of UAE and Bahrain to normalise relations with Israel.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic there was a sharp drop in trade between India and the Gulf countries during the year. However, there was mutual confidence that trade will be back to normal levels and an upward trajectory post Covid. India continued to attract investments from Gulf countries and remained a major buyer of energy from the Gulf. Both sides kept looking for new vistas to further strengthen their energy relationship. There was also a contraction of the number of Indian workers in the Gulf countries as employment opportunities diminished due to the pandemic. However, the Gulf countries and India remained confident that Indian workers will be able to return back once the economic situation improves. The traditional trade and investment and cultural ties between

India and the Gulf countries also continued to diversify in various areas including strategic areas such as defence and security, space and counter-terrorism.

On 3 November 2020, the annual Political Dialogue between India and the GCC Troika was held in virtual mode. The Indian delegation was led by EAM and the GCC was represented at the Troika-level by Secretary General of GCC, Bahraini Foreign Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, UAE. Senior representatives from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar also participated in the meeting. They held a detailed review of their ties spanning all domains, including the pending FTA and the proposal for a Strategic Partnership Dialogue.

On 11 December 2020, two virtual Panel Discussions on GCC-India were organised in the run up to the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention held on 9 January 2021. The topics of these Panel Discussions were: (i) India and the Gulf: Leveraging energy partnerships, investment opportunities and emerging technologies for 'Atma-nirbhar Bharat'; and (ii) Skill sets of the future for Indians in the Gulf. The first Panel Discussion discussed the ways and means in which the historic people-to-people ties and excellent political and economic relations between India and GCC could be used to contribute to the vision of a self-reliant India on the path towards a USD 5 trillion economy. The discussions also focussed on the role that

the large and successful Indian diaspora in the GCC can play in realising this vision. The second Panel Discussion deliberated harmonising of the skill sets of our workforce in keeping with the pace of technological developments and economic changes in the Gulf region. It also discussed the various steps taken by

Government of India to safeguard the interests of Indian workers especially those in the Gulf region. Panellists from Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE participated in the discussions besides the panellists from India.

Bahrain

India-Bahrain bilateral relations are characterised by civilisational links, age-old cultural and trade ties, and close people-to-people contacts. The presence of a sizeable Indian community in Bahrain remains the cornerstone of bilateral ties. The close and friendly relations between the two countries have continued to be on an upward trajectory, following the historical visit of Prime Minister to Bahrain in August 2019. Our bilateral cooperation has diversified to include new areas of co-operation including defence and maritime security, space technology, health, fintech, IT and solar/renewable energy. The bilateral trade in 2019-20 was close to USD 1 billion of which exports from India to Bahrain were over USD 550 million and imports from Bahrain over USD 400 million.

The high level political interaction continued during the year. On 06 April 2020, Prime Minister and the King of Bahrain held a telephone call during which they reviewed the bilateral relations. The King lauded distinguished ties binding both countries, describing them as strategic, deep-rooted and based on common interests as well as mutual respect and understanding. The King praised the pivotal role of India at the region-

al and international level and its constructive contribution to maintaining international peace, security and stability. Both leaders discussed ways of boosting cooperation in combating Covid-19. Prime Minister commended Bahrain's diligent efforts to combat the pandemic and for providing all support and care for the Indian community in Bahrain.

On 3 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with the Bahraini Foreign Minister and discussed ways to promote bilateral cooperation to serve the two countries' common interests. EAM expressed India's gratitude to the Bahraini government for providing constant care to the Indian community in the Kingdom and hailed the success achieved by Bahrain in its continuous efforts to combat Covid-19.

Former Prime Minister of Bahrain, Prince Khalifa bin Salman al-Khalifa, one of the world's longest-serving Prime Ministers and a key figure in the Ruling family of Bahrain, passed away on 11 November 2020. Prime Minister sent condolence letter to the King on demise of the former Prime Minister of Bahrain.



EAM called on the Crown Prince, Deputy Supreme Commander and Prime Minister of Kingdom of Bahrain in Manama on 25 November 2020

EAM paid an official visit to Bahrain on 24-25 November, 2020. During the visit he called on HRH Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain; Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa, Deputy Prime Minister of Bahrain and held delegation level talks with his counter-

part. During the visit, EAM personally conveyed Government of India's condolences on the sad demise of former Prime Minister of Bahrain.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, over 36,000 Indian nation-

als were repatriated to various states of India through 127 special Air India flights and 115 Gulf Air special flights. Air bubble arrangement between India and Bahrain was operationalised on 11 September 2020. Over 11,000 Indian nationals travelled back to Bahrain from India after the operationalisation of Air bubble arrangement. Bahrain provided medical and other necessary support to the Indian community in fighting Covid-19. Bahrain also received a shipment of 1.5 million Hydroxychloroquine tablets from India in April 2020 for use in its treatment protocol for active Covid patients. Both sides explored possibilities of cooperation in Covid-19 vaccine, par-

Iraq

India and Iraq share historic and civilisational ties. Iraq has been an important partner for India's energy security. It was the largest supplier of crude oil to India for the past three years and continues to be amongst large suppliers of crude oil. India-Iraq bilateral trade during 2019-20 amounted to USD 25.6 billion, registering a growth of 6% compared to the previous year. Oil imports constitute approximately 88% of bilateral trade. Bilateral trade amounted to USD 7.41 billion during April-October 2020, witnessing a decrease due to Covid-19 pandemic and reduced off-take of crude oil in the month of April 2020.

All 8253 Indians registered with the Mission were repatriated during April 2020-January 2021 through chartered flights facilitated under the Vande Bharat Mission. India and Iraq entered into an Air Bubble arrangement in September 2020 to facilitate air travel in the wake of Covid-19. India remained a preferred destination for Iraqis to undergo medical treatment

Kuwait

The historically close relations between the two countries continued to grow during the year and Covid-19 pandemic brought the two countries together to face the challenge. India expressed its deep sorrow on the sad demise of the Amir of Kuwait, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. Prime Minister and President sent condolence messages to the leadership of Kuwait. A day of national mourning was observed in India on 04 October 2020. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas paid a visit to Kuwait on 11-12 October to convey condolences on behalf of India to Sheikh Nawaf Al-Amed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, the new Amir of Kuwait.

As Sheikh Nawaf Al-Amed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumed the office of Amir of Kuwait and Sheikh Mishaal Al-Ahmed Al-Jaber Al-Sabah assumed the office of Crown Prince of Kuwait, congratulatory messages to them were sent by the Prime Minister.

In April 2020, Prime Minister held a telephonic conversation with Prime Minister of Kuwait Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad

ticularly for supply of vaccines being developed in India to Bahrain.

The other important events expected to take place during January-March 2021 include:

- i. The 3rd HJC meeting between India and Bahrain is scheduled to take place in New Delhi in March 2021.
- ii. Visit of Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) to Bahrain in February/ March 2021.

and approximately 8354 medical visas were issued after relaxation of visa norms as compared to 48,000 medical visas were issued in 2019-20. Out of about 30,000-40,000 Indians who used to visit Baghdad, Karbala, Najaf and Samarra in Iraq for pilgrimage annually, only 575 pilgrims visited Karbala during the period of Ashura in 2020.

India continued to assist Iraq in capacity building. For the year 2020-21, a total of 200 slots were allotted under the ITEC programme. Iraqi officials participated in the online e-ITEC programmes especially on Covid-19 pandemic management. 6th International Day of Yoga, Independence Day and Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti were celebrated following the Covid-19 safety protocols. Iraq's Minister of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities was the Chief Guest at the grand finale to mark the culmination of two year long 150th birth anniversary celebration of Mahatma Gandhi.

Al-Sabah and discussed, inter-alia, mutual efforts to counter the Covid-19 pandemic. EAM also had a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Kuwait, Sheikh Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah in April 2020 regarding Covid-19. In July 2020, a virtual meeting was held between Commerce and Industry Minister and Khaled Nasser Al-Roudan, Minister of Commerce & Industry of Kuwait.

In order to support the efforts of the Kuwait government to fight the spread of Covid-19, a 15-member Indian Rapid Response Team, consisting of doctors and healthcare professionals, was deployed to Kuwait for a two week period in April 2020. Under the Vande Bharat Mission, as on 31 October 2020, repatriation of over 100,000 Indians had been facilitated from Kuwait to India and their repatriation was also facilitated aboard special flights operated for the Amnesty beneficiaries. In September 2020, Mission launched a series of business promotion events under the theme of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat".

Oman

India and Oman share deep bonds of friendship rooted in thousands of years of historical contacts. The relationship has now evolved into a vibrant and multifaceted strategic partnership. High-level exchanges in recent years have helped to move forward and strengthen cooperation in key areas, including trade and commerce, defence and security, technology, health, education and people-to-people ties.

Long time ruler of Oman and architect of India-Oman strategic partnership, Late Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said passed away on 10 January 2020 after a prolonged illness. Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik was announced as the new Sultan of Oman on 11 January 2020. Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik was Minister of Heritage and Culture since February 2002. Minister of Minority Affairs visited Oman on 14 January 2020 and conveyed condolences on the passing of Sultan Qaboos on behalf of the Government and people of India. The Government of India also announced one day's official mourning on 13 January 2020 to pay tribute to the departed dignitary.

Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the resilience of India-Oman relations. Even during the peak Covid-19 lockdown, when supply chains all over the world were disrupted, supply chains between India and Oman remained functional. Both countries cooperated in the repatriation of respective citizens. Oman bought 1 million Hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) tablets from India and India facilitated the return of Indian healthcare professionals to Oman, when international flights were severely disrupted. Prime Minister spoke with Sultan Haitham Bin Tarik over telephone in April 2020. Both leaders discussed the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic and reaffirmed their commitment

to work together.

EAM called newly appointed Foreign Minister of Oman, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Al Busaidi in August 2020 and congratulated him on his appointment and discussed bilateral relations. The Health Minister of Oman, Ahmed Mohammed Al Saeedi and India's Minister of Health and Family Welfare had a telephone conversation in September 2020 and discussed co-operation in combating Covid-19.

A Joint Commission Meeting was held virtually in October 2020. The meeting was co-chaired by Qais bin Mohammed al Yousef, Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion of Oman and Union Minister (Independent Charge), Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs; Ministry of Civil Aviation and Minister of State, Ministry of Commerce & Industry. The JCM discussed enhancing cooperation in economic, trade, investment and service fields, and increasing trade exchange between both the countries. It was also decided to hold the JCM annually.

A virtual meeting to discuss bilateral, regional and multilateral issues including healthcare, Covid-19 vaccine development was held between EAM and Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, Foreign Minister of Oman on 2 December 2020.

Minister of State paid an official visit to the Sultanate of Oman from 16 - 17 December 2020 and met Oman's Foreign Minister, Minister of Labour and Minister of Commerce, Industry & Investment Promotion.



Minister of State met with the Foreign Minister of Oman in Muscat on 16 December 2020

The 7th session of India Oman Strategic Consultative Group meeting was held on 14 January 2021 in New Delhi. The Indian

delegation was led by Secretary (CPV&OIA). Sheikh Khalifa bin Ali al-Harthy, Undersecretary for Diplomatic Affairs, Foreign

Ministry of Oman, who is leading the delegation also called on EAM and National Security Advisor during his visit.

During the peak Covid period, India facilitated the return of a large number of Indian healthcare professionals from India to Oman to augment Oman's healthcare capacity.

Oman India Friendship Association, comprising prominent Omani and Indian origin businessmen was established in November 2020. Oman also announced visa free entry for certain categories of Indian passport holders in December 2020.

Qatar

India's deep-rooted historical, cultural and people-to-people ties with Qatar have further strengthened progressively in the past few years. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the momentum of bilateral exchange was maintained in virtual mode. Prime Minister held telephone conversations with the Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on 26 March 2020 and on 26 May 2020, during which they reviewed bilateral relations and discussed the efforts of both countries to combat Covid-19 and ways to cooperate to contain the spread of the virus.

EAM held a telephone conversation with his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs on 24 April 2020, and discussed the bilateral cooperation and cooperation in containing the spread of Covid-19. EAM also virtually participated in the inaugural session of the Intra-Afghan negotiations held in Doha on 12 September 2020 and delivered a statement.



EAM called on the Amir of Qatar in Doha on 28 December 2020

On the side-lines of the 4th edition of India Energy Forum by CERA Week, the Qatari Minister of State for Energy Affairs and the President and CEO of Qatar Petroleum, Mr. Saad Sherida

Oman joined the International Solar Alliance during the year. It also ratified the Maritime Transport Agreement (signed in December 2019), Agreement on Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial Matters between India and Oman (signed in February 2018) and Agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, special and service passports (signed in February 2018).

Defence cooperation continued to remain strong as several Indian Navy ships visited various Omani ports for Operational Turnaround.

EAM paid a two day visit to Qatar from 27 & 28 December 2020. During the visit he called on the Amir and Father Amir of Qatar, as well as the Prime Minister and Interior Minister of the State of Qatar and held detailed discussions with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister.

The total volume of bilateral trade in 2019-20 was USD 10.94 billion which was a decrease of about 11% over the previous year. Exports from India to Qatar were USD 1.26 billion and India's imports from Qatar were USD 9.68 billion. Qatar Investment Authority (QIA), the sovereign wealth fund of Qatar invested USD 450 million for acquiring a 25.1% stake in Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd. The Chief Executive Officer of QIA, Mansoor Bin Ebrahim Al Mahmoud, participated in the Virtual Global Investors' Roundtable chaired by the Prime Minister and hosted by the Ministry of Finance and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) on 5 November 2020.

Al-Kaabi had a virtual interaction session with our Prime Minister on 26 October 2020.

Official from NITI Aayog and Abdullatif Al-Khal, Chairman of the National Strategic Group on Covid-19 of Qatar held a virtual meeting on strengthening bilateral cooperation in areas of

research, diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccine development for Covid-19 on 27 October 2020.



EAM met the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Qatar in Doha on 28 December 2020

On 8 December 2020, PM held a telephone conversation with Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar. Both leaders decided to create a special Task-Force to further facilitate investments by Qatar Investment Authority into India, and also resolved to explore Qatari investments in the entire energy value-chain in India.

On 10 December 2020, PM had a virtual meeting with Mansoor Bin Ebrahim, Al-Mahmoud, Chief Executive Officer, Qatar Investment Authority and discussed investment opportunities for QIA in India.

On 10 December 2020, EAM held a telephone call with Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, following up on the recent telephonic conversation between the Prime Minister and Qatar's Amir Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani.

On 11 December 2020, Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas had a telephone call with Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi, Qatar's Minister of State for Energy Affairs and President and Chief Executive Officer Qatar Petroleum on promoting Qatari investments in the entire energy value chain in India.

The 4th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India

and Qatar was held on 01 February 2021.

The 6th Meeting of India-Qatar Joint Committee on Labour and Manpower Development was held virtually on 09 December 2020.

The 2nd meeting of Joint Committee on Cooperation on Security and Law Enforcement Matters between India and Qatar is proposed to be held virtually in February 2021.

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, more than 1 Lakh Indians have been repatriated from Qatar to India by Vande Bharat Mission flights till December 2020. Air Bubble arrangement between India and Qatar has been in place since 18 August 2020 for flights to and from either side.

At over 700,000 the Indian community is the single largest expatriate community in Qatar. Until December 2020, the Mission rendered a total 83,320 consular related services which includes issuance/renewal of passports, Miscellaneous Consular Services and Visa/OCI related services. The Monthly Open House for addressing urgent labour and consular issues are held virtually and the grievances of the community addressed suitably.

Saudi Arabia

Following the impetus provided by the Prime Minister's visit to Saudi Arabia in October 2019, the cordial and friendly relations between India and Saudi Arabia have transformed into a Strate-

gic Partnership and are further strengthened by increased frequency of virtual meetings and commercial exchanges which have continued despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Custodian of the two Holy Mosques, King Salman of Saudi Arabia called Prime Minister on 09 and 29 September 2020. The leaders discussed bilateral relations and the G20 summit, in addition to regional and international developments of mutual interest. On 22 July 2020, Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan called EAM. They reviewed bilateral relations and the strategic partnership between the two friendly countries. On 24 September, the two Ministers again discussed joint co-operation in all fields, focusing on the G20 agenda as well as regional and international issues of mutual concern. Commerce and Industry Minister spoke to his Saudi counterpart Dr. Majid Al Qasabi over telephone on 12 June and 05 August to discuss bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

Prime Minister participated virtually in the 15th G20 Summit on 21 November 2020. He congratulated the Kingdom for its successful presidency of the G20 this year and termed the pandemic as an important turning point in the history of humanity.

Chief of Army Staff visited Riyadh from 12-14 December 2020. This was the first-ever visit by an Indian COAS to Saudi Arabia.

On 04 January, EAM spoke with Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan to review bilateral relations and discussed regional and international issues of mutual interest.

2nd Senior Officials' Meetings of Economic and Investment Committee of Strategic Partnership Council (SPC) is expected before March 2021, which would be followed by Ministerial engagement of this committee.

Senior Officials' Meetings of the Political-Security-Socio-Cultural Committee of the Strategic Partnership Council expected to be held during January-March 2021.

Saudi Arabia is home to 2.6 million Indian expatriates and is

the second largest supplier of crude oil to India. Being an important partner in India's extended neighbourhood, Saudi Arabia took care of the large Indian diaspora during the Covid-19 pandemic. As of end October 2020, around 232,500 Indians had been repatriated from Saudi Arabia to India. This included 47,000 people on 276 VBM flights and 183,000 on 1011 charter flights. With the coordination of Saudi Government, 2199 Indian deportees were repatriated to India by 8 special flights of Saudi Airlines.

After the signing of Strategic Partnership Council Agreement during Prime Minister's visit of October 2019, the two verticals of the council i.e. Economic and Political began formalizing their respective structures. The Economic and Investment vertical finalized (i) Agriculture and Food Security; (ii) Energy; (iii) Technology and IT; and (iv) Industry and infrastructure as its four Joint Working Groups (JWGs). NITI-Aayog and SCISP conducted regular interactions, both at the Senior Officials-level and at the Joint Working Group-level. The first Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) of the Committee was held in July 2020 and the second SOM is scheduled for November 2020.

The Political-Security-Socio-Cultural (PSSC) Committee finalized four JWGs:

(i) Political; (ii) Security; (iii) Culture; and (iv) Education. The inaugural Senior Officials' Meeting of the Political-Security-Socio-Cultural (PSSC) Committee is expected to be held towards the end of 2020.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was held virtually and a seminar was organised through a webinar including the participation of Minister of Ayush. Two officers from Saudi Arabia attended courses at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington and another two at College of Defence Management, Secunderabad during the year.

2020 to review the bilateral relations. Anwar Gargash, UAE's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs also held discussions with EAM during his transit visit in Dubai on 08 October.

At the level of institutional mechanism for bilateral cooperation, India and UAE convened the 13th Session of the India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) and the 8th meeting of India-UAE High Level Task Force on Investments (HLTFI). The 13th Session of JCM, held virtually on 17 August 2020, was co-chaired by EAM and Foreign Minister of UAE. Bilateral cooperation in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, cooperation at the UN and other multilateral fora and investment were among the key issues that were discussed under the aegis of JCM.

The 8th meeting of HLTFI was held virtually on 03 November 2020. The meeting was co-Chaired by Minister of Railways and Commerce and Industry and Sheikh Hamed bin Zayed Al Nahy-

an, Member of Executive Council of Abu Dhabi. India and UAE agreed to further explore ways to facilitate investments in key Indian and UAE sectors having potential for economic growth particularly in view of the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. Investment by UAE-based funds and cooperation in civil aviation, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, food and agriculture, energy and utilities were other key points of discussion during

the meeting.

Minister for Culture had a telephonic interaction with his counterpart from UAE, Noura Al Kaabi on 28 April 2020 to discuss the bilateral cooperation in the field of Culture with specific emphasis on the various initiatives taken by the respective Govt. for tackling Covid-19 in the cultural domain.



EAM met the Foreign Minister of UAE in Abu Dhabi on 26 November 2020

EAM paid a 2-day official visit to UAE on 25-26 November, 2020. EAM met with Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and his counterpart, the Foreign Affairs Minister, Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed. During the meeting with UAE leadership, EAM discussed regional and global issues of mutual interest. EAM also met Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, Prime Minister of UAE and Ruler of Dubai on 29 November 2020 during his transit in Dubai on the way back from Seychelles and discussed ongoing bilateral cooperation.

Minister of Education had a virtual meeting with his UAE counterpart, Hussain bin Ibrahim Al Hammadi, on 09 December 2020 to discuss the ways to enhance the cooperation between India and the UAE in the field of education.

Minister of State visited UAE from 19-21 January 2021 and held meetings with Indian diaspora and his counterparts and

various authorities in the UAE government.

As the UAE authorities took initiatives and efforts towards containing the spread of Covid-19 epidemic, the collaboration in the fight against Covid-19 emerged as another area for the India-UAE bilateral cooperation. The increasing cooperation between India and the UAE in the fight against Covid-19 resulted in UAE supporting India by dispatching seven tons of medical supplies and India in turn, helping in augmenting the UAE's health system by allowing Indian health-care professionals to join health services in the UAE. To repatriate stranded Indians from across the globe, Government of India launched its 'Vande Bharat Mission' from Abu Dhabi with a flight to Kochi on 07 May 2020. India subsequently created an Air Bubble arrangement with the UAE in July 2020 that was extended till 31 December 2020. By the end October 2020, more than 600,000 Indians had travelled back from UAE to India.

Yemen

India and Yemen enjoy a long history of close and historical people-to-people contacts. Due to the deterioration of the political and security situation in Yemen, the Embassy of India to Yemen has been temporarily relocated to Djibouti since 14 April 2015. The Embassy continued to render its services from its Camp Office in Djibouti during the year.

India hoped that parties to the conflict in Yemen will be able to resume negotiations for a comprehensive ceasefire for peace to prevail. India also expressed its commitment to provide humanitarian help to Yemen as it has done in the past.

GCC



India-GCC Political Dialogue held on 03 November 2020

India and the GCC Troika held their annual Political Dialogue on 03 November 2020 in virtual mode. The Indian delegation was led by EAM. The GCC was represented at the Troika-level by Nayef Falah M. Al-Hajraf, Secretary General of GCC, Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Bahrain and Anwar bin Mohammed Gargash, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, UAE. Senior representatives from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Qatar also participated in the meeting.

The leaders undertook detailed review of India-GCC ties and

appreciated the upward trajectory in ties witnessed in the last few years. They expressed satisfaction that India and GCC countries have continued their close cooperation even during the Covid-19 pandemic. EAM mentioned that a large number of Indian workers and professionals were eager to return to the GCC countries to resume their work and urged the GCC leaderships to facilitate this through sustainable travel bubble arrangements with India. The leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual concern.

Iran

India-Iran bilateral relations during 2020-21 were warm, cordial and cooperative. Raksha Mantri visited Iran on 05 September 2020 and met the Iranian Defence Minister Brigadier General Amir Hatami. EAM visited Iran on 09 September 2020 and held comprehensive bilateral discussions with his counterpart Javad Zarif on issues of bilateral and regional importance. The two Ministers also discussed matter pertaining to bilateral trade and connectivity projects.

EAM and Foreign Minister Zarif also held a telephonic conversation on 13 April 2020 and discussed respective responses to the Coronavirus challenge along with exchange of views on regional developments.

The year 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, which was observed in a limited manner due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

India-Iran bilateral trade during the period April-September 2020 was USD 1.12 billion, a drop of 64.8% as compared to the same period last year. The trade was dominated by India's agri-

cultural exports. Steps which ensured the forward momentum of bilateral commercial and trade engagement included ratification of the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) by Iran's Majlis in September 2020 advanced discussions on the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and increased activity by the Chambers of Commerce of India and Iran.

Chabahar port has emerged as the "connecting point" for the region to deliver humanitarian assistance during the Covid pandemic. Chabahar port is a symbol of our people centric approach in diplomacy. India shipped its full consignment of 75,000 MT of wheat given as humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan through Chabahar in September 2020.

The Chabahar Port saw a steady increase in bulk and general cargo traffic (over 12,399 TEUs and over 1.54 million tons respectively till 31 October, 2020). In June 2020, Chabahar loaded 30 refrigerated containers and nine conventional ones (a total of 76 TEUs) for the Indian ports. This is a record single loading and is a milestone in the growth path of Chabahar Port.

The port has been used to transship food items to Southeast Asian nations for the first time. Afghanistan's first transit shipment of dried fruits reached Tianjin Port in China and the first shipment of Iran's aquatic products was shipped to Thailand via Chabahar Port.

This year, Iran experienced its worst ever locust invasion in the last 25 years. India supplied about 25 Metric tonnes of Malathion (95 per cent ULV) in June 2020 to help it control the locust menace. This assistance not only ensured food security for Iranians but also contained the migration of locusts from Iran to India via Pakistan. Malathion is an environment friendly pesticide which can be used with minimal amount of water and is best suited for arid regions like Sistan Baluchistan of Iran.

Second batch of 20 MT of Malathion (95% ULV) is expected to reach Chabahar Port in December 2020.

In our joint fight against Covid-19, India provided assistance to Iran by supplying PPE and testing equipment such as real-time diagnostic PCR reagents, PCR machine, bio-safety cabinet, RNA extraction kits and PCR machines in April 2020. Despite a ban on its export, surgical masks worth USD 3 Million were supplied to Iran.

In cooperation with the Government of Iran, more than 4000 Indian nationals stranded in Iran due to Covid-19 were repatriated via the Vande Bharat Mission special flights and two Indian Naval ships, INS Shardul and INS Jalashwa, as part of Operation Samudra Setu. The Indian nationals included more than 1100 pilgrims, mostly from the UTs of J&K and Ladakh, and more than 900 fishermen from Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Gujarat.

Similarly, the return of Iranians who were stranded in India due to the pandemic was also facilitated.

WEST ASIA & NORTH AFRICA

The countries in West Asia and North Africa are grappling under the stress of the protracted Covid-19 pandemic with cases increasing on a daily basis, posing severe challenges to their health infrastructure and economy. To alleviate the suffering of these friendly countries, Government of India sent medical aid to Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt among others; facilitated import of medicines to Jordan, Israel, and Egypt; sent food aid and relief materials in the aftermath of 04 August 2020 Beirut explosions to Lebanon and following the devastating floods in Sudan and South Sudan in September 2020, to Sudan, South Sudan, and upon request from Djibouti and Eritrea. Stranded Indian nationals in various WANA countries and foreign nationals were repatriated under the Vande Bharat mission.

Despite the restrictions of the pandemic, high level interactions continued to keep the momentum of our bilateral relations up through telephone calls with Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Djibouti and Algeria. Bilateral interactions moved to the virtual mode including the virtual meeting of EAM with the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates Nasser Bourita; virtual meeting of Minister of State with the Syrian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates Faysal Mekdad; and Foreign Office Consultations with Palestine. EAM inaugurated the 15th CII-EXIM Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership virtually on 22 September 2020 in New Delhi.

Algeria

The diplomatic relations between India and Algeria remained warm and cordial despite the challenging times posed by Covid-19. There was a telephonic conversation between the Algerian Foreign Minister, Sabri Boukadoum and EAM on 09 April 2020 to discuss medical cooperation and evacuation of Algerian nationals stranded in India. The commercial export of

India welcomed the normalisation of relations between Israel and the countries of UAE (15 September 2020), Bahrain (18 October 2020) and Sudan (23 October 2020). The Revitalized Peace Agreement for the resolution of conflict in South Sudan signed in 2018 and the historic peace accord reached between Sudan and the rebels in October 2020 are expected to usher in lasting peace in the region. The ceasefire in Syria since March 2020 and the permanent ceasefire clinched in Libya under the framework of 5+5 Joint Military Commission talks in Geneva (23 October 2020) give hope for peace in the region.

In support of the Palestinian refugees, during the Extraordinary Virtual Ministerial Pledging Conference for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) on 23 June 2020, Minister of State announced that India will contribute another USD 10 million to UNRWA over the coming two years. India also continued to contribute to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).

The 6th International Day of Yoga, India's 74th Independence Day, the 150th Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi and the unveiling of new ITEC logo were celebrated by our Missions in all WANA countries in partnership with local communities and Indian diaspora, and in conformity with local Covid restrictions.

Paracetamol API and Hydroxychloroquine API to Algeria were facilitated in April and May 2020 respectively. Eight private chartered flights flew to India carrying distressed Indians from Algeria to India. More than 1600 Indians have been repatriated to India during this period (April - November 2020).

Djibouti

EAM had a telephone call with his Djiboutian counterpart, Mahmoud Ali Youssouf, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in April 2020 to discuss the Covid situation in Djibouti.

INS Sumedha, deployed for anti-piracy patrol in the Gulf of Aden, visited Djibouti port in January 2020 on the occasion of the first Republic Day celebration of the newly established

Embassy of India at Djibouti. Under Vande Bharat Mission, a total of 95 Indians including an 88-member film crew were repatriated by chartered flight from Eritrea to India, which also evacuated 28 Djiboutians stranded in India.

INS Airavat undertook an HADR mission to Djibouti port and delivered 50 MT of food aid to Djibouti on 10 November 2020.

Egypt

Despite the impact of Covid-19, high level engagements between Egypt and India continued virtually. Prime Minister held phone conversations with Egyptian President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi on 17 April 2020 to discuss efforts to halt the spread of Covid, and again on 26 April 2020 to exchange Eid-ul-Fitr greetings. India gifted two tranches of medicines and medical

equipment to support Egypt's efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic on 05 May 2020 and 29 May 2020. Under the Vande Bharat Mission, 03 repatriation flights with 631 passengers were operated in May - June 2020 and stranded Indian nationals were also evacuated on special chartered flights operated for seafarers.

Eritrea

A delegation from All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) headed by Director, AIIMS, visited Eritrea on 26-29 January 2020, to explore possibilities of forging partnership in capacity building of Eritrean medical practitioners.

More than 20 Eritreans attended various training courses conducted in India under ITEC/IAFS Programmes. 6 Eritreans were also nominated for ICCR scholarships for undergraduate and postgraduate/PhD courses. Three stranded Eritrean students were flown back to Eritrea in August 2020 by special flights operated by Ethiopian Airlines from Delhi to Addis Ababa and from Addis Ababa to Asmara. Likewise, two stranded Indian nationals in Eritrea were repatriated to Dubai and India in August 2020 by Ethiopian Airlines special flight. 33 Indians stranded in

Eritrea were also facilitated to return to India by special flight.

Eritrean participation was facilitated in various virtual summits/ events such as First World Solar Technology Summit held on 08 September 2020, 15th CII-EXIM Bank Digital India-Africa Project Partnership Conclave held from 22-24 September 2020, International webinar organised by ICCR and UP Institute of Design on "Weaving Relations: Textile Traditions" on textiles and weaving to celebrate 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi etc.

INS Airavat undertook an HADR mission to Port Massawa and delivered 50 MT of food aid to Eritrea on 8 November 2020.



INS Airavat delivered 50 MT of food aid to Eritrea on 8 November 2020

Israel

The 35th Government of Israel, headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, was sworn in on 17 May 2020, following three unprecedented elections within a year during April 2019-March 2020. The Knesset was dissolved on 22 December 2020. The two Prime Ministers have spoken four times since March 2020, while EAM and Foreign Minister Gabi Ashkenazi have been interacting bilaterally and as part of aid-focused conferences chaired by the then US Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, along with Foreign Ministers of South Korea, Australia, Japan, New Zealand and Vietnam.

Close to 550 Indian nationals were repatriated from Israel by three flights under the Vande Bharat Mission on 25 May 2020, 26 August 2020 and 22 October 2020.

Plan of Cooperation in Electric Propulsion for Small Satellite between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the Israel Space Agency (April 2020); MoU on Operational Collaboration on Cyber Security between CERTs of India and Israel (15 July 2020); Cultural Exchange Programme for 2020-23 (20 August 2020) and Plan of Cooperation in the field of Water Utility on the India-Israel Bundelkhand Water Project

between the Government of Uttar Pradesh and Ministry of Water Resources (Israel) (20 August 2020) were signed during this period.

Israel normalized relations with UAE by signing a Treaty of Peace, Diplomatic Relations and Full Normalization (15 September 2020) and with Bahrain by signing the Joint Communiqué on the Establishment of Diplomatic, Peaceful and Friendly Relations (18 October 2020). India welcomed the agreements, while reiterating "our traditional support for the Palestinian cause and hope for early resumption of direct negotiations for an acceptable two-state solution". On 23 October 2020, Israel, the United States and Sudan issued a joint statement announcing that Israel and Sudan have agreed to normalisation of relations. Israel and Lebanon commenced negotiations on the maritime border on 14 October 2020.

The 16th round of India-Israel Foreign Office Consultations was held through video conference on 7 December 2020, led by Secretary (CPV&OIA) and Alon Ushpiz, Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Israel.

Jordan

National Security Advisor visited Jordan in January 2020 to move forward bilateral security dialogue. Despite Covid restrictions, high level engagements continued in the virtual mode with the Prime Minister's telephonic call with King Abdullah-II on 16 April 2020. EAM also had a telephone conversation with Jordanian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Ayman Al Safadi, on 05 October 2020, wherein bilateral cooperation, regional developments and Covid cooperation were discussed.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, 812 stranded Indian na-

tionals in Jordan (including a 58-member Malayalam film crew who were stranded in Jordan due to the Covid-19 crisis) were repatriated to India via four Special Air India Flights operated on 21 May, 29 June, 04 September, and 07 September 2020 which also evacuated stranded Jordanian nationals from India.

In July 2020, IRCON International Ltd. appointed Jordan Panorama for Consultancy & Development (JPCD) as its representative to explore possibilities for IRCON in the railways sector in Jordan.

Lebanon

Following a massive explosion on 04 August 2020 in Beirut which left nearly 200 dead, thousands injured and nearly 300,000 homeless amid a worsening economic situation, Government of India provided 58 MT of emergency humanitarian aid to the Lebanese Government on 14 August 2020. The aid was brought by a special Indian Air Force C-17 plane from India to Beirut. The consignment of medical aid containing 70 boxes of PPEs was also provided by Government of India to the Gov-

ernment of Lebanon. Three special community charter flights for repatriating Indians were organised between June-August 2020.

In December 2020, the Government of India donated office equipment (computers, printers and photocopiers) to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lebanon on their request.

Libya

India continued to maintain contacts with both the Libyan administrations in the east and west, mainly for welfare of the

Indians residing in Libya.

Morocco

Relations between India and Morocco remained vibrant, reinforced by the close cooperation in the face of common challenges arising due to Covid-19 pandemic. A virtual meeting between EAM and Nasser Bourita, Minister of Foreign Affairs,

African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco was held on 22 October 2020, wherein various facets of bilateral relationship were discussed.



EAM held a virtual meeting with the Foreign Minister of Morocco on 22 October 2020

Import of 6 million tablets of Hydroxychloroquine Sulphate by Morocco from India was facilitated in April 2020. Around 100 Indian nationals stranded in Morocco were repatriated by a special evacuation flight under Vande Bharat Mission on 5 June 2020. A Cooperation Agreement between Supreme Court of India and Supreme Council of Judicial Power of Morocco was signed in Rabat on 24 July 2020.

A two week specialized training course on “Cyber Security and Malware Analytics” is proposed to be organised for 20 officials of the Ministry of Economy, Finance and Administrative Reform of the Kingdom of Morocco by C-DAC Noida under Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme in February 2021.

Palestine

The 3rd round of bilateral Foreign Office Consultations was held through video conference on 10 September 2020, led by Secretary (CPV & OIA) and Amal Jadou Shakka, Deputy Foreign Minister of the State of Palestine.

As part of India’s developmental partnership with Palestine, protocols to extend previously signed agreements for projects funded by the Government of India were signed between the Representative Office of India and the Government of Palestine on 29 September 2020 at the Office of the Prime Minister in Ramallah in the presence of Prime Minister Dr. Mohammad

Shtayyeh.

On request from Palestine, India supplied anti-cancer drugs and PPEs to Palestine in June 2020. In July and September 2020, India facilitated the return of 19 Palestinians through Vande Bharat Mission flights.

Government of India has contributed the third tranche of USD 2 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) with a total of USD 5 million in the year 2020.

Somalia

Somalia operated 6 chartered flights to evacuate its citizens from India on 07 June, 20 June and 23 June, 01 July, 25 July and 29 August 2020. Around 1500 Somali nationals were repatriated on these charter flights from Hyderabad to Mogadishu.

23 stranded Indians in Garowe (Puntland) and Hargesia (Somaliland) were repatriated on a chartered flight to Hyderabad on 22 June 2020. 19 Somalis attended online e-ITEC courses during the period April-October 2020.

27 mini buses being donated by Government of India to Somalia at a cost of Rs.5.48 crore left India by ship on 20 January 2021.

South Sudan

Four evacuation flights repatriated stranded Indians and South Sudanese nationals under Vande Bharat Mission. To alleviate the sufferings of the South Sudanese due to recent flooding, Government of India donated 70 MT of food aid to the country. The food aid was transported through INS Airavat from

Mumbai to Mombasa port (Kenya) on 20 November 2020 for onward transportation by road to Juba.

We expect to send a 10MT consignment of life-saving drugs to South Sudan by end-January 2021.

Sudan

India welcomed the announcement to remove Sudan from the list of State Sponsors of Terrorism and congratulated the Transitional Government and the people of Sudan for signing the Juba Peace Agreement. It is hoped that these developments would usher in democratic changes and contribute to enhancing Sudan’s development, peace, security and stability. India also welcomed Sudan’s normalisation of relations with Israel. It is hoped that this step would lead to peace and stability in West Asia

Under ITEC, a group of 6 Sudanese illiterate women from the remote villages of South Kordofan state of Sudan underwent 5 months long training course on Solar Electrification and Rain-

water Harvesting at Barefoot College (Social Work and Research Centre) at Tiloniya, Rajasthan. Several special repatriation flights of Fly Dubai and Badr Air during June and July 2020 evacuated 501 stranded Indians, 5 Bhutanese nationals and 1 Sudanese national to India and hundreds of Sudanese nationals from India during June and July 2020. INS Airavat undertook an HADR Mission to Port Sudan and delivered 100 MT of food aid to Sudan on 02 November 2020.

Minister of State and the Acting Foreign Minister of Sudan, Omar Gamar Aldin Ismail held a meeting through video conference on 14 December 2020.

Syria

Minister of State had a wide-ranging conversation with the Syrian Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs & Expatriates, Faysal Mekdad, in a virtual meeting on 03 September 2020. During the meeting, Minister of State agreed to increase the number of annual ITEC slots from 90 to 150; offered 250 fresh scholarships under “Study in India” Programme during the academic year 2020-21; offered to continue annual training programme for the Syrian diplomats at SSIFS; to extend tele-education and tele-medicine services through connecting Syria into e-Vidya and e-Arogya Bharti Projects, etc.

India sent 10 MT medical aid to Damascus on 02 July 2020, to assist Syria in their fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. At the request of Syrian side, and as part of the Government of India’s commitment to extend humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people, a 2000 MT consignment of rice to Syria is expected to be delivered in the first quarter of 2021.

The first Artificial Limb Fitment Camp was organised in Damascus under the theme “India for Humanity” during December 2019- January 2020 in association of BMVSS (Jaipur Foot).

Tunisia

On 21 May 2020, 25 stranded Indian nationals were repatriated via a Tunisian military flight which was heading to India to bring back Tunisians from India and other countries.

The first India-Tunisia JWG on Trade and Investment was held

on 15 December 2020 in virtual mode. It was led by JS(FT-WA-NA), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, and Chadli May, Director of Cooperation with Arab and Asian countries at the Ministry of Trade and Export Development of Tunisia.

7

AFRICA



15th CII Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership in September 2020

CENTRAL & WEST AFRICA

The region covers 25 countries in west, northwest, central and southwest Africa. The region is home to Africa's largest population and fastest growing economies with huge reserves of energy resources and minerals. India sources about

18% of its crude oil requirement from this region. All 25 West African countries continued to support India's candidature in various elections in the United Nations and related international bodies.

During 2020-21, despite the outbreak of the Covid pandemic and the resultant travel restrictions, the spirit of development and progress continued to dominate India's relations with countries in Central and West Africa which were constantly expanding and diversifying gradually.

India is currently implementing a flagship project in tele-education and tele-medicine for Africa called e-VidyaBharati ArogyaBharati Network Project (e-VBAB). So far, 17 African countries have signed agreements including the countries from the Central and West Africa region. The enrolments for graduate and post-graduate programmes commenced in February 2020.

The travel restrictions did not hinder India's dynamic Africa Outreach Policy. India actively engaged with the countries in the region virtually, to conduct its scheduled engagements. EAM held telephonic conversations with his counterparts from

several countries.

The diplomatic presence in Africa further increased with the opening of two more Missions during the year in Sao Tome Principe and in Sierra Leone. Diplomatic Missions in Mauritania, Liberia, Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde are likely to be opened shortly as the requisite approvals for them have already been obtained.

India continued its development partnership association with Africa by announcing various lines of credit. India assisted 14 African countries in overcoming the pandemic by providing Covid medicines worth approximately USD 1.8 million. Several flights were organised to bring back thousands of stranded Indian nationals from different African countries to India and also for evacuating stranded African nationals to their home countries in Africa.

Angola

Relations with Angola gained further impetus during the year. EAM and the Foreign Minister of Angola, Tête António, co-chaired the 1st India-Angola Joint Commission Meeting in September 2020. Both sides comprehensively reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and agreed to diversify trade rela-

tions in the areas of health, pharmaceuticals, defence, agriculture, food processing, digitization & telecom. Three MoUs on Health, Training of Diplomats and Visa facilitation were signed during the meeting.



India-Angola Joint Commission Meeting held on 07 September 2020

Earlier during the year, a high-level delegation headed by General Afonso Carlos Neto, Secretary of State for Material Resources and Infrastructure, participated in DEFEXPO 2020.

The Secretary of State also participated in the India-Africa Defence Ministers Meet held alongside the DEFEXPO.

Benin

India-Benin bilateral engagement gained in substance with the landmark State visit of President of India to Benin in July 2019. During the visit, he met President of Benin Patrice Talon, and

reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. 4 Agreements/MoUs were signed during the visit -

- Cultural Exchange Programme for 2019-23
- MoU on Telemedicine and Tele-education
- Agreement on mutual exemption from visa requirement for holders of diplomatic, official/service passports
- MoU on cooperation in the field of export credit and investment insurance.

An LoC of USD 100 million to Benin for its national priority projects has also been announced.

India is the largest trading partner of Benin. The bilateral trade between India and Benin recorded USD 686 million in 2019-20. Primus Diagnostic Centre, an Indian investment in Benin, was inaugurated in Cotonou on 08 September 2020. During

the year, the Beninese defence forces were provided various training programmes in India under ITEC as well as other platforms. Beninese officials continued to benefit from the ITEC programme, ICCR scholarships, as well as scholarships under the e-VBAB Network project.

India donated a 6 tonne-consignment of essential medicines to Benin in July 2020 in order to combat Covid-19. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 293 stranded Indian nationals in Benin were repatriated to India in 3 flights.

Indian community in Benin as well as Beninese nationals participated in the 6th International Day of Yoga in June 2020 and the closing ceremony of commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi organised by the Mission in virtual mode.

Burkina Faso

India and Burkina Faso have warm and cordial bilateral relations. To help the people and Government of Burkina Faso tide over the crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic, medicines

including tablets of hydroxychloroquine and other essentials were handed over. The Ministry of Health of Burkina Faso appreciated this gesture of Government of India.

Cameroon

With the opening of our Mission in Yaoundé in September 2019, relations between India and Cameroon further strengthened. After a gap of 12 years, Foreign Office Consultations are likely to be held in Yaounde in the first quarter of 2021. The Minister of External Relations of Cameroon attended the 15th CII-Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership held from 22-24 September 2020 on a virtual platform.

Bilateral trade, which stood at USD 904.81 million during 2019-20, increased by 73% as compared to 2018-19. India's exports registered an increase of 28% reaching USD 228.45 million as against USD 179 million during 2018-19. India's imports registered an increase by 97% reaching USD 676.36 million as against USD 343.30 million during 2018-19.

The project for construction of 225KV Nkongsamba Bafoussam and Abong Mbang - Yaounde transmission line under the Government of India LoC of USD 93.50 million progressed well during the year. The project is expected to be completed on schedule in February 2022.

Cameroon supported India's candidature for non-permanent seat of the UNSC for the term 2021-22. Cameroon also supported India's candidature for the post of President of the In-

ternational Solar Alliance (ISA) for the period 2020-22.

The 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi was marked with the issuance of six figurative commemorative postal stamps by the Cameroonian government. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Minette Libom Li Likeng, Minister of Posts and Telecommunications. From the Foreign Office (MINREX), Felix Mbayu, Minister-Delegate to the Minister of External Relations in-charge of Commonwealth, representing the Minister of External Relations, attended the function.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, about 100 Indian nationals, stranded in Cameroon due to Covid-19, were evacuated by chartered flights. The Mission also facilitated/ extended its support to Cameroonian authorities in the evacuation of 109 Cameroonian nationals stranded in India due to the pandemic.

The Mission celebrated the 6th International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2020. Emilia Monjowa Lifaka, Deputy Speaker, National Assembly of Cameroon and Chairperson of the CPA Executive Committee, was the Chief guest on the occasion.

6th International Day of Yoga celebrated by our Mission in Cameroon

Cabo Verde

Cabo Verde supported India's candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat for the term 2021-2022.

India-Cabo Verde bilateral trade remained unchanged at USD 4.5 million. To improve the trade interaction between the busi-

ness communities of India and Cabo Verde, and to explore new avenues of bilateral trade, our Mission organised various online seminars in various sectors, such as dairy, textiles, artificial jewellery, engineering goods, etc which were well attended.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, India donated medicines to Cabo Verde in September 2020. India also continued to offer a large number of slots to Cabo Verdean officials under ITEC programme, including ICCR scholarships, to pursue various courses in India. ITEC Day was virtually celebrated on 11 September 2020.

The 6th International Day of Yoga 2020 was celebrated virtu-

Central African Republic

Relations between India and Central African Republic (CAR) remained friendly and cordial. The Government of India has initiated steps to revive two stalled projects under the LoCs viz., setting up a cement plant of 400 TPD capacity (USD 29.95 million) and Development of Mining Project (USD 20 million).

ally. As part of commemoration of 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi gifted by ICCR was installed by the City Hall of Praia on 02 October 2020. 'Story of Gandhi' narrated by the Chief Functionary of the Gandhian Forum for Ethical Corporate Governance, was live streamed on Facebook on 24 September 2020.

CAR continued to support India in all the multilateral fora.

Mission has facilitated repatriation of many Indian nationals stranded in CAR due to Covid-19 by organising special chartered flights.

Chad

India's bilateral relations with Chad has gained momentum following the visit of the Prime Minister of Chad, Pahimi Padacke Albert, to India in March 2018 to attend the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Solar Summit in New Delhi.

Chad opened its resident embassy in New Delhi in early 2020 and India is likely to open one in 2021.

The bilateral trade recorded USD 329.44 million in 2019-20. The 'Extension of Spinning Mill Project', under the USD 15.90 million Government of India LoC to Chad has been fully completed.

India donated a 6 tonne-consignment of essential medicines to Chad in July 2020 in order to combat Covid-19. During the Covid-19 pandemic, a total of 37 stranded Indian nationals in Chad were repatriated to India.

India continued to offer slots to Chadian officials under ITEC programme including ICCR scholarships to pursue various courses in India.

Indian community in Chad as well as Chadian nationals participated in the 6th International Day of Yoga in June 2020 and the closing ceremony of the commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, organised by the Mission in virtual mode.

Cote d'Ivoire

India's friendly relations and cooperation with Cote d'Ivoire continued to grow during the year. Cote d'Ivoire supported India's candidacy for various elections in international organizations, including the non-permanent membership at the UNSC for the term 2021-22.

India's engagement with the host government intensified with a focus on strengthening our business linkages for trade and investment. Bilateral trade between India and Cote d'Ivoire for the period April to August 2020 was USD 307.32 million. 100 ITEC training slots and 10 ICCR scholarships are offered to Cote d'Ivoire which are being utilized satisfactorily each year.

With the onset of Covid-19 pandemic in March 2020, the general focus shifted towards containing the pandemic. Mission's activities during the period were focused on engaging with the Indian community who were stranded due to travel restrictions. 3 chartered flights were organised and 631 stranded NRIs were repatriated from Cote d'Ivoire and Liberia. Mission

along with the Indian community in Cote d'Ivoire launched an India-Cote d'Ivoire 'Covid-19 Response Fund' and donated relief material worth 40 million CFA and subsequently donated 5,000 Covid-19 test kits worth USD 25 thousand to aid the local government in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mission also organised the 6th International Yoga Day on 21 June 2020 which was live streamed on social media highlighting the benefits of practicing yoga in boosting self-immunity in the current situation of pandemic. To mark the conclusion of the commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Mission organised a series of events over two days, paying floral tribute at the Mahatma Gandhi Bust in VITIB, tree plantation and the commencement of commercial production of the Computer Assembly line installed by an Indian company under Government of India line of credit at Mahatma Gandhi IT & Biotechnology Park (MGIT-BP) in VITIB.

Democratic Republic Of Congo

Bilateral relations with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) continued to remain cordial during the year. Government of India has approved 6 solar power projects totalling 74MW, under fresh LoC, worth USD 223.44 million. Work on the Power Distribution Project worth USD 34.50 million for generating power from the Kakobola Hydropower project in the Bandundu Province is underway and is likely to be completed soon. India continues to provide capacity building support

to DRC, under e-Vidya Bharti and e-Arogya Bharti (e-VBAB). DRC extended support to India's candidates at the elections to UN and related international bodies.

Mission facilitated repatriation of 1329 Indian nationals who were stranded in DRC due to the Covid Pandemic by organising special chartered flights.

Equatorial Guinea

India-Equatorial Guinea bilateral relations continued to expand during the period. In June 2020, India gifted consignment of essential medicines in its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. Agreement between India and Equatorial Guinea on visa exemption for the holders of diplomatic and official/service passports came into effect from 01 August 2020. During the year, e-Visa facility was introduced for Equatoguinean nationals.

Equatoguinean Vice-Minister of Industry and Energy, César Augusto Hinestrosa Gómez, participated in 15th CII - Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership held from 22-24 September 2020 on virtual platform. Equatorial Guinea continued its support to India's candidatures in all multilateral fora.

Gabon

Gabon continued to support India's candidatures at various international bodies. Oil India Ltd. (OIL) in partnership with Indian Oil Ltd. is conducting oil exploration in the Shakti Block over an area of 3761 sq. km. OIL is in Phase II of exploration which

is projected to continue till 2023. Gabonese Minister of Higher Education, Iwangou Moukagni paid a private visit to India to explore the education facilities available in India in the private universities.

The Gambia

India and The Gambia have historically had warm and cordial relations, sharing English as a common language. Gambia supported India's candidature for the Presidency of International Solar Alliance for the period 2020-22.

EAM had a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of the Gambia, Mamadou Tangara in July 2020. Both leaders had fruitful and productive discussions touching upon bilateral, multilateral and regional issues of mutual interest.

Sheikh Omar Faye, Minister of Defence, had participated in India-Africa Defence Ministers' Meet and International Defence Exhibition (DefExpo 2020) in February 2020 in India.

India-Gambia bilateral trade stood at USD 176 million, showing a slight decrease over the previous year, however, there was a significant increase in export of clothing and cotton from India to The Gambia.

In Developmental Assistance, two LOC projects for USD 22.5 million each for replacement of Asbestos Water Pipes with UPVC pipes and Electricity Expansion Project in Greater Banjul Area are likely to be completed in the first quarter of 2021.

President Adama Barrow inaugurated the Government of India funded Electricity Expansion project in the Gambia on 28 November 2020. The project upgrades, strengthens and expands electricity supply and brings qualitative improvement in the lives of the residents of Greater Banjul Area. President Barrow described the project as a key milestone in his Government's drive towards achieving universal access to electricity in The Gambia by 2025. President Barrow expressed his gratitude to the Government of India for providing funds through Exim Bank of India.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, India has donated a large quantity of essential medicines to The Gambia. India also continued to offer a large number of slots to The Gambian officials under ITEC programme including ICCR scholarships to pursue various courses in India. ITEC Day was virtually celebrated on 11 September 2020.

The 6th International Day of Yoga 2020 was celebrated virtually. 'Story of Gandhi' narrated by the Chief Functionary of the Gandhian Forum for Ethical Corporate Governance was live streamed on Facebook on 24 September 2020.

Ghana

Bilateral relations between India and Ghana continued to strengthen. Joe Ghartey, Minister of Railways and Carlos Kingsley Ahenkorah, Deputy Trade Minister of Ghana participated at the inaugural session of the 15th CII-EXIM Bank India-Africa Project Partnership Conclave held in September 2020. Bilateral trade was recorded at USD 2390.97 million in 2019-20. India exported goods worth USD 617.42 million and India's imports amounted to USD 1773.55 million. During the period between April-July 2020, bilateral trade amounted to USD 557.17 million with India's exports amounting to USD 204.04 million and India importing goods worth USD 353.13 million.

India's developmental partnership made significant strides. 3 LoCs, viz., USD 150 million for 'Strengthening of Agriculture Mechanisation Service Centres' in Ghana, USD 30 million for Rehabilitation & Upgradation of Potable Water System in Yendi and USD 7 million for construction of Foreign Service Institute are currently under implementation. On 30 July 2020, President Akufo-Addo cut sod for the construction of Yendi Water Supply Project to provide the Yendi Municipality and its environs with 15,000 cubic metres of water daily. On 29 September 2020, Ghana Railways Development Authority and Afcons Infrastructure Ltd, India, signed a contract valued at USD 419 million, to construct a railway line from Eduadin to Obuasi in the Ashanti Region.

The High Commission launched the 'India Business Forum in

Ghana (IBF)' on 23 November 2020 in the presence of Deputy Minister for Trade & Industry of Ghana, Robert Ahomka-Lindsay and prominent business houses in Ghana as part of its efforts to promote bilateral trade and investment.

An MoU between the Governments of India and Ghana on co-operation in the Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy and another MoU for Cooperation between the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India and the Ghana Atomic Energy Commission are ready for signatures and likely to be signed in the first quarter of 2021.

India continued to support Ghana in capacity building. Ghana utilised slots under ITEC programme (Civilian & Defence), India-Africa Forum Summit decision and ICCR scholarships. More than 200 students from Ghana enrolled to attend the courses offered under e-VBAB network project.

1500 Indian nationals stranded in Ghana were repatriated to India during Covid-19 by chartered flights.

6th International Day of Yoga and Hindi Day was organised on 21 June and 14 September, respectively. The closing ceremony of the commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi included live streaming of the 'Gandhi Katha' on Facebook on 02 September 2020 and programme on 02 October 2020.

Republic Of Guinea

Following the visit of the President to Guinea in August 2019, the bilateral relations have received a big boost. India has gifted 6 tonnes of essential medicines to Guinea to fight against

Covid pandemic in July 2020. Two charter flights were arranged to repatriate 160 stranded Indian nationals to India in the months of June and July 2020.

Guinea Bissau

India continued to develop its existing cordial relations with Guinea-Bissau during the year. Guinea Bissau supported India's candidature for the UNSC non-permanent seat for the term 2021-2022.

India-Guinea-Bissau bilateral trade remained steady at USD 133 million, despite the global downtrend witnessed due to Covid-19. Mission regularly organised online seminars to promote bilateral trade in various sectors, such as dairy, textiles, artificial jewelry, engineering goods, etc which were well attended and helped explore new avenues of cooperation.

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, India has donated a large quantity of medicines to Guinea Bissau in August 2020. India also continued to offer a large number of slots to the Bissau-Guinean officials under ITEC programme including ICCR scholarships to pursue various courses in India. ITEC Day was virtually celebrated on 11 September 2020.

The 6th International Day of Yoga 2020 was celebrated in a virtual format. The Prime Minister of Guinea Bissau Nuno Gomes Nabiam gave a special message for Doodarshan on Mahatma Gandhi on 02 October 2020.

Liberia

India and Liberia continued to enjoy warm and friendly relations although no high-level visits took place during the year. Liberia has been supportive of India's position at the international fora and India's candidacies for various elections includ-

ing India's candidature for the non-permanent membership at the UNSC for the term 2021-22.

India gifted 4.2 tonnes of life saving drugs to Liberia to aid in

its fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. A significant bilateral cooperation project has been the completion of the 14-military hospital which is being used as the only Covid-19 hospital. The Government of India had contributed USD 2 million for the construction of the 14-military hospital as grant. India gifted 45

Tata passenger buses and 5 Ashok Leyland fire trucks.

India offered 70 ITEC slots and 10 ICCR scholarships to Liberia annually which are being utilized satisfactorily.

Mali

India’s relationship with Mali continued to prosper despite the unprecedented challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. EAM had a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Mali, Tiébilé Dramé on 25 April 2020. They discussed the bilateral relationship, including further cooperation in the fields of health, security and solar energy.

India responded to Mali’s request for support in its fight against Covid-19 pandemic. The Government of India donated a large consignment of various lifesaving medicines for the people of Mali which were handed over to the Ministry of Health and Social Development of Mali.

President, Prime Minister, and EAM wrote letters to their Malian counterparts extending India’s support for the success of the transitional government of Mali and reiterated India’s commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations.

In keeping with India’s commitment to development partnership, construction started for the 393 km of 225-Kilowatt Double Circuit Power Transmission Line from Sikasso-Bamako on 26 October 2020, which was inaugurated by Lamine Seydou

Traoré, Mali’s Minister for Mines, Energy and Water. The project cost of USD 100 million was provided by the Government of India under LoC.

Prime Minister, in his Mann Ki Baat programme on 27 September 2020, highlighted the role of Seydou Dembélé of Mali in promoting people-to-people friendship and understanding between the two countries. Dembélé is popularly known as ‘Hindustan ka Babu of Mali’ for his love for Indian music which he has been promoting in Mali for several years.

The bilateral trade continued to grow despite the Covid-19 pandemic and stood at USD 184.21 million in 2019-20.

India continued to offer educational, training and capacity building opportunities in various fields through its ITEC programme and ICCR scholarships in India.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated in Mali in a virtual format due to Covid-19 pandemic. A Gandhi Katha by acclaimed Gandhian speaker was organised to celebrate Gandhi Jayanti.

Mauritania

India and Mauritania continued to work closely despite the challenges posed by Covid-19 pandemic. 219 Indians from Mauritania returned to Delhi in three charter flights.

The bilateral trade stood at USD 94.53 million in 2019-20. Five ITEC slots and three ICCR scholarships have been offered to

Mauritania during 2019-20.

India and Mauritania continued to work closely at the United Nations and other multilateral fora. Mauritania supported India’s candidatures to various UN and international bodies.

Niger

India and Niger continued to engage in spite of the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic. EAM had a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Niger Kalla Ankourao on 24 April 2020. Both leaders discussed the existing state of bilateral relationship and avenues of enhancing bilateral cooperation further.

India and Niger maintained close cooperation at the United Nations and other international fora. Both countries have supported each other’s candidature in the UN Security Council. India and Niger will have the opportunity to work together as non-permanent members of the Security Council in the year 2021.

The bilateral trade in 2019-20 was USD 74.50 million. Despite

the slowdown induced by Covid-19, bilateral trade was recorded at USD 20.64 million in the first four months of 2020-2021.

The developmental assistance projects in rural electrification made progress. Contracts were awarded for electrification of 40 villages under the unutilized USD 7.69 million available from an earlier LoC of USD 34.54 million. A USD 10 million Solar Rural Electrification Project of 50 villages in the regions of Dosso, Tillabery and Tahoua in Niger funded through an LoC extended to EBID is under implementation.

Additional projects for electrification of resettlement sites of the Kandadji Dam and upgrading of Power Distribution Network in the dam area worth USD 10.5 million, Potable Water Supply Networks Extension and Upgrading work of the

three Capital Cities of Maradi, Dosso and Diffa regions worth USD 56.7 million and Agriculture Irrigation Project for the Resettlement Sites of the Kandadji Dam amounting to USD 14.6 million were allocated to Niger out of the USD 500 million LoC extended to EBID.

India donated 6.4 tons of life-saving and other essential medicines to support the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. India

continued its support to Niger in providing educational and capacity building opportunities in diverse disciplines through the ITEC programme and ICCR scholarships.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was held in June 2020 and Gandhi Jayanti on 02 October 2020 with the closing ceremony of 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.

Nigeria

High-Level engagements continued to impart momentum to the bilateral relations. EAM held a bilateral review meeting on 01 September 2020 with his Nigerian counterpart Geoffrey Onyeama. EAM also had telephonic conversations with Onyeama in April, August and October 2020.

Minister of State visited Nigeria in June 2019 to participate in Democracy Day celebrations of Nigeria. During the visit, he called on the Vice President of Nigeria, Yemi Osinbajo. The Vice President of Nigeria also participated at the inaugural session of the 15th CII-EXIM Bank India-Africa Project Partnership Conclave held in September 2020.

Minister of Commerce and Industry had a telephonic conversation with his Nigerian counterpart Otunba Richard Adeniyi Adebayo and held a bilateral review meeting in virtual mode in the first week of October. Both sides reviewed the trade and commercial ties that exist between the two countries.

The bilateral trade continued to grow during the period despite pandemic disruption and recorded USD 14 billion. The interactions between business communities of India and Nigeria also continued and further impetus was provided in this segment as well.

India’s defence engagement has also seen furthering and diversifying cooperation during the year. The Nigerian defence forces were provided various training programmes in India under

ITEC as well as other platforms. Our partnership with Nigeria has expanded in all aspects including new avenues such as co-operation in ship design and construction, defence research & development, maritime training etc. India also continued to offer a large number of slots to Nigerian officials under ITEC programme including ICCR scholarships to pursue various courses in India.

India had donated a 7.8 tonne-consignment of essential medicines to Nigeria in order to combat Covid-19. During the Covid pandemic, a total of 29 flights were organised between India and Nigeria, and repatriated about 7500 Indian nationals stranded in Nigeria and similarly Nigerian Nationals stranded in India. An Air Transport/ Bubble arrangement with Nigeria was also signed in September which will facilitate in continuing the special flights operations between the two countries.

An MoU for cooperation in outer space was signed in August 2020 and the MoU envisages cooperation in applications in agriculture, environment, mining, micro and mini satellites and capacity building.

Mission had organised the 6th International Day of Yoga in June 2020. Mission also organised Gandhi Jayanti with the closing ceremony of commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in which the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria addressed the audience as the Chief Guest of the event.

Republic Of Congo

India and the Republic of Congo enjoy cordial and warm relations. India is an important development partner of the Republic of Congo. There are three projects - Rural Electrification, Development of an Urban Transportation System, and establishment of a Cement Plant – currently being executed in the country under Line of Credit (USD 250 million) extended by the Government of India. India also continued to offer slots to Congolese nationals to pursue various courses in India under capacity building programmes.

India donated over 6 tonnes of medical aid in June 2020 to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. The Congolese Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Health appreciated the gesture of friendship and acknowledged that this was one of the largest consignments of medical aid received to combat the pandemic.

The Indian community also donated edible items worth USD 100,000 to local authorities in May 2020 to support vulnerable families affected by the pandemic. Earlier in March 2020, Government of India donated USD 100,000 as humanitarian assistance for flood relief to the Republic of Congo.

Mission celebrated 6th International Day of Yoga in June 2020, the first such celebration by the Mission after its establishment in November 2019. Mission also celebrated the concluding ceremony of 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi on 02 October 2020 in which officials from Congolese Ministries and the resident regional coordinator of United Nations participated. A photo exhibition on the work & life of Mahatma Gandhi was mounted on the occasion.

The Embassy, in association with the Association of Indians, managed to evacuate 100 Indian nationals under Vande Bharat

Mission by a special charter flight in July 2020.

Sao Tome & Principe

India and Sao Tome & Principe maintained close and friendly relations. A diplomatic Mission was opened in Sao Tome in September 2020. A high level defence delegation led by Oscar Aguiar Sacramento e Sousa, Minister of Defence and Internal Order, participated in the 11th edition of the Def-Expo 2020 (5-9 February 2020) and the “India-Africa Defence Ministers

Meet”, held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Sao Tome supported India’s candidatures in various multilateral fora including UN elections. India and Sao Tome are actively collaborating in the areas of economic cooperation, traditional medicine, medicinal plants, International Solar Alliance and exploration and usages of outer space for peaceful purposes.

Senegal

Relations with Senegal continued to deepen and strengthen during the year. Senegal supported India’s candidature for the Presidency of the International Solar Alliance for the period 2020-22, and for the UNSC non-permanent seat for the term 2021-2022.

India-Senegal bilateral trade stood at USD 947 million, showing a slight decrease over the previous year, mainly because of a decrease in export of rice from India to Senegal. This was offset, to a small extent, by increase in export of clothing and pharmaceuticals from India. Mission regularly organised online seminars to promote bilateral trade in various sectors, such as dairy, textiles, artificial jewelry, engineering goods, etc which were well attended and helped explore new avenues of cooperation.

During the pandemic, two Vande Bharat Mission flights repatriated close to 300 stranded Indians from Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea Bissau and Mauritania. In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, India donated a large quantity of medicines to Senegal in August 2020.

In Developmental Assistance, there are several operational LoCs projects under various stages of implementation including an LoC of USD 62.95 million for the first phase of Lift Irrigation for Rice Self Sufficiency Programme, USD 27.5 million for the 2nd phase of Rural Electrification Project, USD 19 million for building 19 cold storage facilities under 2nd phase of the fisheries development project, USD 26 million for acquisition of buses for public transportation and USD 24.5 million for up-gradation and rehabilitation of healthcare of Senegal.

India also continued to offer a large number of slots to Senegalese officials under ITEC programme including ICCR scholarships to pursue various courses in India. ITEC Day was virtually celebrated on 11 September 2020. The 6th International Day of Yoga 2020 was celebrated virtually. ‘Story of Gandhi’ narrated by the Chief Functionary of the Gandhian Forum for Ethical Corporate Governance was live streamed on Facebook on 24 September 2020.

Sierra Leone

The High Commission of India in Freetown, Sierra Leone, became functional with effect from 25 August 2020. India’s development cooperation with Sierra Leone through Lines of Credit and through ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) aggregates to USD 217.5 million covering a range of infrastructure sectors. During the year, India has agreed to provide a fresh loan of USD 32 million through EBID to set up a University of Science & Technology in Kono District of Sierra Leone.

In accordance with the announcement made during the visit of the Vice President of India to Freetown in October 2019, India provided 1000 MTs of rice to Sierra Leone in November 2020, as a goodwill gesture.

India donated about 7 tonnes of medicines to Sierra Leone in November 2020 to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, as part of our assistance to various African countries.

Sierra Leone participated in India’s newly launched e-VidyaBharati and e-ArogyaBharati programmes. 82 Sierra Leoneans registered themselves for various courses.

India continued to be a strong trading partner of Sierra Leone and ranked 5th in terms of imports by Sierra Leone. Bilateral trade between the two countries was USD 140 million. India’s exports to Sierra Leone were USD 115 million, while imports were USD 25 million.

More than 600 Indians stranded in Sierra Leone due to Covid-19 were repatriated to India in four chartered aircrafts during June-September 2020.

Sierra Leone is scheduled to host the first meeting of the India and Sierra Leone Foreign Office Consultations at the Secretary/DG level in Freetown in March 2021. Dates are being finalised.

Togo

The Embassy of India was opened in Lomé on 03 September 2020 in line with the Government of India’s decision of opening 18 Missions in Africa. The Embassy is presently functioning from a hotel and will be shifted to a rented building on 01 January 2021. The Minister of State had announced the opening of Indian mission in Togo during his visit to Togo in September 2019. The mission is still working from the hotel at present. Robert Dussey, Foreign Minister of Togo has acknowledged the opening of the Embassy of India in Togo. India and Togo continue to share warm and cordial relations which are further strengthened by establishing Indian embassy in Togo.

Cina Lawson, Minister of Digital Economy and Digital Transformation of the Republic of Togo attended a virtual conference on Global Technology Summit being organised by Carnegie India with the support of the Ministry of External Affairs in December 2020. The mission participated in the video conference organised by the PHD Chamber of commerce in November 2020. In order to strengthen business activities between India

and West Africa, PHDCCI organised a virtual summit between Indian sellers and West African buyers. The mission is also in the process of exploring the possibilities of increasing business possibility between India and Togo.

Export Import Bank of India has extended five Lines of Credit (LoC) amounting to USD 150.1 million as on 30 June 2020 for rural electrification projects, farming and cultivation of rice, maize and sorghum, setting up of power transmission lines and electrification of villages through solar Photovoltaic system in Togo. The project for setting up a 161 KV power transmission line through Line of Credit of USD 52 million is expected to start by November 2020 and will be completed in 36 months.

During the Covid pandemic, 2 flights were organised and 186 Indian nationals stranded in Togo were repatriated and similarly Togo nationals stranded in India were repatriated to their home countries. The bilateral trade continued to grow despite pandemic.

EASTERN & SOUTHERN AFRICA

The period marked high-level virtual interaction despite the adverse conditions created by Covid-19 pandemic. The India-Africa political engagement intensified the focus on the strengthening of the health and business linkages. In solidarity with African nations during the Covid-19 pandemic, Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation on 17 April 2020 with President Ramaphosa of the Republic of South Africa, who is also the current Chairperson of the African Union. In his conversation, the Prime Minister conveyed India’s full support for the joint African effort against the virus. The Prime Minister also had telephone conversations with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni of the Republic of Uganda (09 April 2020), Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, President of Egypt (17 April & 26 May 2020), Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali of Ethiopia (06 May 2020), Pravind Jugnauth, Prime Minister of Mauritius (23 May 2020), Filipe Jacinto Nyusi, President of Mozambique (03 June 2020), Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda (05 June 2020), and John Pombe Joseph Magufuli, President of the United Republic of Tanzania (12 June 2020).

EAM spoke to his counterparts in several African countries including Kenya, Rwanda, South Africa and Uganda to reiterate India’s solidarity with African people in the fight against Covid-19 and offered all assistance in this context. His offer was deeply appreciated by these countries.

India’s Medical assistance to Africa in their fight against Covid 19

India’s role as the “pharmacy of the world” has come into focus

during this pandemic. India has a world-class pharmaceutical industry that is the producer of choice for affordable critical medications with brand recognition in all geographies and markets. In a coordinated response involving several branches of government and multiple private sector pharma companies, India was able to supply large volumes of these drugs to friends and consumers across the world, after ensuring adequate domestic stockpiles India has provided medical assistance to 35 African nations, on a grant basis, to support their response to the pandemic. These essential medicines are expected to complement the national efforts of various countries in Africa to combat the pandemic.

Evacuation of stranded African Nationals

India also facilitated the evacuation of thousands of stranded Indian nationals to India from Africa. It also assisted in repatriation of the African nationals from several nations including South Africa, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Malawi, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Ethiopia from India to their home countries.

Debt Service Waiver

As a member of G-20, India is committed to implement the recent decision of G-20 to suspend debt service payments for the poorest countries that request forbearance. The eligible countries for debt relief belong to the list of poorest countries of the International Development Association initiative of the World Bank as well as the UN list of Least Developed Countries.

During the G-20 virtual meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors in April 2020, India agreed to a time bound suspension of debt service payment by official bilateral creditors for the poorest countries which have requested for such suspension in the light of Covid-19 pandemic. Accordingly, In-

Botswana

The Mission, through the Southern African Development Community, coordinated relief efforts for medical requirements from India for the Southern African region. 252 Indians were evacuated under Vande Bharat Mission from Botswana. Botswana supported India's candidature at the United Nations, including for UNSC non-permanent seat; at

dia has till date suspended debt for Zambia, Ethiopia, Malawi, Mozambique and Lesotho in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, in line with India's commitment to assist all African partner countries to improve their health, economic and social indices as a gesture of solidarity.

the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage; and at the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions. Person of Indian Origin Jamal Ahmad was conferred with the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award-2021 for outstanding contribution in business. She is the first recipient of the award from Botswana.

Burundi

During the Covid-19 pandemic situation, 18 stranded Indian nationals in Burundi were evacuated by special chartered flight (arranged by HCI, Kigali) from Burundi-Kigali-Mumbai on 02 July 2020. Burundi was offered 10 slots for under-gradu-

ate, post-graduate and Ph.D courses in the ICCR Scholarship scheme 2020-2021. Till now 8 students have accepted the scholarship offers and are participating in the online classes as they could not travel to India due to the pandemic.

Ethiopia

The Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali on 06 May 2020 and discussed challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister assured India's support to Ethiopia including supply of essential medicines. In pursuance of the Prime Minister's assurance, India gifted medical aid including HCQ tablets and other life-saving antibiotics to Ethiopia. This was handed over to Dereje Duguma, State Minister of Health on 21 August 2020. On Ethiopian side's request, surgical facemasks worth USD 5 million were supplied by M/s Trident on a commercial basis to combat Covid-19 pandemic. The Mission facilitated 6 chartered flights of Ethiopian airlines to facilitate repatriation of 734 Indian nationals.

India and Ethiopia signed the Air Services Agreement on 17 November 2020 to establish an 'air bubble' whereby Ethiopian Airlines will operate regular flights to India including one weekly flight on Addis-Delhi-Addis sector. Ethiopia consented to the operation of IndiGo airlines flights to Ethiopia, which will

change the earlier code share arrangement between Air India and Ethiopian Airlines.

The Grand finale of Gandhi@150 celebrations was held in Ethiopia with a ceremony at the Gandhi statue in the premises of Gandhi Memorial hospital located in the heart of Addis Ababa city. Essay and painting competitions and screening of "India's struggle for freedom" were held during the celebrations.

Following the developments in Ethiopia's northern Tigray region, the Mission in Addis Ababa facilitated, through the UN Mission and Ethiopian government, the evacuation of 206 Indian nationals from Tigray region (as of 11 Jan 2021). Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) in collaboration with the Mission organised a webinar on Trade and Investment opportunities between India and Ethiopia - post Covid-19 on 11 January 2021. The event was attended by 110 participants. CII in collaboration with the Mission organised another seminar on India-Ethiopia business session on 29 January 2021.

Eswatini

Essential Medicines as humanitarian assistance valued at Rs. 1 crore were handed over to Prime Minister Ambrose Mandluvo Dlamini in June 2020.

In August 2020, USD 200,000 was handed over to Minister of Agriculture Jabulani Mabuza as India's grant assistance towards Lubuyane Irrigation Scheme benefiting the Maphalaleni community to transcend subsistence to commercial farming.

For Gandhi@150 celebrations held on 02 October 2020, a

Mini Urban Forest was established with planting of 150 indigenous plants in Mbabane.

In November 2020, a special e-ITEC course on Legislative Drafting was conducted for 42 Law/Legislative Officers of the Kingdom of Eswatini. Another e-ITEC course for 13 Lecturers/Teachers of Eswatini was held between 07-18 December 2020 by the National Institute of Technical Teachers Training & Research Chennai on "Strengthening Technical & Vocational Education Training Systems" to meet the Sustainable Develop-

ment Goals of UN. Eswatini-exclusive e-ITEC programmes for Performance Audit, Compliance Audit are being conducted between January-March 2021.

On 27 November 2020, Eswatini conveyed its approval to EXIM Bank of India for signing of Line of Credit Agreement

Kenya

During the period under review, EAM had three telephonic conversations with his counterpart, Cabinet Secretary of Foreign Affairs - Amb. Raychelle Omamo to discuss issues of mutual interest including cooperation in healthcare.

EAM, Raychelle Omamo, CS of Foreign Affairs and Minister of Commerce and Industry, spoke at the 15th CII-Exim Bank Digital conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership on 23 September 2020. Chief Administrative Secretary, Ministry of Trade of Kenya, also addressed the Conclave.

Essential medicines worth USD 1.54 million were gifted to Kenya in May 2020. Commitment for this was made during the visit of Prime Minister in July 2016. Another consignment of medicines related to Covid-19 was handed to Kenya on 12 August 2020. Chief Administrative Secretaries of Foreign Affairs & Health were present at the handing over ceremony.

The Postal Corporation of Kenya, also known as 'Posta Kenya' released a Commemorative stamp on Mahatma Gandhi on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on 02 October 2020. The event

for USD 108.28 million for construction of a new Parliament Building and another LoC Agreement for USD 10.4 million for construction of a Disaster Recovery Site for RSTP. 22 Indians were repatriated through Vande Bharat Mission flight.

was attended by DG, United Nations and Chief Administrative Secretaries of Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Ministry of ICT of Kenya.

Five Air India flights & four chartered flights under 'Vande Bharat Mission' repatriated a total of 1487 stranded Indians. These flights also took back stranded Kenyans from India. An MoU to set up an "air bubble" arrangement between India and Kenya was signed on 29 September 2020. Flights from India and Kenya have started operating under the arrangement. The Indian Naval Ship Airavat docked at Mombasa harbour on 20 November 2020 and delivered 70 MT of food aid comprising wheat flour, sugar and rice for South Sudan which had faced food shortages, induced by the Covid-19 pandemic and natural calamities.

General Robert Kibochi, Chief of Defence Forces, Kenya visited India from 02-06 November 2020. This was his first visit outside of Africa since taking charge. He met the Chief of Defence Staff and the three Service Chiefs.

Lesotho

India exported Paracetamol formulations to Lesotho in April 2020 to combat Covid-19 pandemic.

Visa Waiver Agreement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports between India and Lesotho was signed on 03 December 2020.

Malawi

India-Malawi relations continued to see growth and development over the past year, benefiting from the momentum imparted by high level exchange of visits from both sides. India is closely working with Malawi and the bilateral relations between both the countries are progressing well.

India is an active partner to Malawi's development and supports a number of developmental projects. EXIM Bank signed an agreement with the Government of Malawi for LoC worth USD 215.68 million for water projects in Malawi. In July 2020, a gift of medicines worth USD 2 Million was handed over to the Government of Malawi. As announced earlier during the Vice President's visit in November 2018, 1000 metric tonnes of rice for humanitarian relief assistance were handed over to the Malawian Government in October 2020.

Many development projects have already been completed in Malawi under Government of India assistance. In May 2020,

cooperation in the field of power generation was established between India and Malawi through an MoU between NTPC, an India public sector company and Electricity Generation Company in Malawi. An important initiative presently being pursued is the establishment of India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development, a Pan-African premier Institution in the agricultural field at the premises of Lilongwe University of Agriculture and Natural Resources. These goodwill initiatives of the Government of India have been well appreciated by the political leadership and general public of Malawi.

The Mission organised the International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2020 through virtual interaction. The Mission also celebrated Gandhi@150 in a ceremony where a bust of Gandhiji was unveiled in the High Commission, jointly by the Foreign Minister of Malawi and India's High Commissioner.

Mozambique

Relations between India and Mozambique gained momentum during the year due to high level telephonic talks, drawing upon the momentum created by increased high level interactions in the recent past, donation of medicine towards the fight against Covid-19, developmental cooperation projects, and business and cultural events.

The Prime Minister spoke on phone with the President of Mozambique Filipe Jacinto Nyusi. Both leaders discussed the challenges posed in both countries by the Covid-19 pandemic. They discussed the entire gamut of bilateral ties including Indian investments and development projects in Mozambique. Minister of State visited Mozambique to attend the oath taking ceremony of President Nyusi on 15 January 2020.

LoC of USD 250 million for improving the quality of power supply in Mozambique was signed between Exim Bank of India and the Mozambican Ministry of Economy and Finance. Government of India offered a grant of USD 10 million for a water project in Mueda, the hometown of the President of Mozambique, which is under process. A Vocational Training Centre which was granted by Government of India during IAFS-I in 2008 at the cost of Rs. 5 crores was inaugurated. Government

of India donated 13 essential medicines worth Rs. 2.3 crore including Hydroxychloroquine, Azithromycin and Paracetamol to the Government of Mozambique.

The Mission in Maputo organised the first virtual business event between the Mozambican Association of Information Technology Professionals and Companies and Electronic and Computer Software Export Promotion Council of India. A virtual business event was organised between Confederation of Economic Associations, Mozambique and Engineering Export Promotion Council of India in the Engineering Goods sector.

Mission organised two special flights to repatriate 100 stranded Indians in Mozambique and a second flight was operated between Maputo and New Delhi with 102 Indian passengers.

The 6th International Yoga Day celebrations were telecasted on Mozambican National Television. Mission also celebrated a 3-month long Bollywood Ranga Rang 1.1 & 1.2 Film Festival. A month-long Gandhi & Khadi Exhibition was held from 02 October to 01 November, 2020. To mark the 150th Gandhi anniversary, 70 Solar lamps provided by IIT Bombay were distributed among Joaquim Chissano University students.

Namibia

The period saw a further strengthening of relations with Namibia on bilateral and multilateral fronts, in a year when Namibia commemorated 30 years of its independence.

In response to the Namibian Government's request for medical assistance from the Government of India in April 2020 to fight the Covid-19 pandemic, India offered supply of essential medicines to Namibia on a grant basis. Namibia also separately procured 3,000 doses of Remdesivir from India.

The small yet vibrant Indian community in Namibia, with the support of the High Commission, contributed N\$ 150,000 (approx. Rs 7.25 lakh) and provided in-kind support of food products and other essential items to the Namibian Government for distribution to needy people in April 2020 during the Covid-19 lockdown period in Namibia.

35 stranded Indians were repatriated from Namibia to India via Zambia between June and August 2020 by special chartered flights under Vande Bharat Mission. Additionally, 6 Namibian ITEC/Defence trainees in India were repatriated to Namibia between March and July 2020.

Negotiations between India and Southern Africa Customs Union (SACU), headquartered in Windhoek, were restarted after a gap of 10 years for the conclusion of a Preferential Trade Agreement. The 6th round of talks were held virtually on 15 July 2020 with Namibia being the coordinator on the SACU side.

Bilateral trade and investment were given a boost with specific focus on exports from India. Regular business webinars and a large number of virtual B2B meeting were organised starting May 2020 in partnership with premier trade bodies, such as Confederation of Indian Industry, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, and Indo African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, in the aftermath of Covid-19's effect on global supply chains.

The Namibian Minister of Industrialisation & Trade, Lucia Lipumbu, participated in the Ministerial session of the 15th CII-EXIM Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Partnership on 23 September 2020.

A series of activities were organised in Namibia in September and October 2020 to mark the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and to conclude two-year long Gandhi@150 celebrations. An online 'Gandhi Katha' and an online talk on "Civilization & Non-violence: creative possibilities" by renowned Gandhian scholars were organised. Several tree plantation activities were held in Windhoek, including in collaboration with Namibian Government and other local authorities that saw high-level participation including from Namibian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah.

Senior police officers and healthcare providers from Namibia participated in special online ITEC courses "Policing during pandemic times" and "Covid-19: Good governance practices", respectively in August 2020, organised by Government of India

to share Indian experiences and best-practices in the fight against Covid-19 with partner countries.

Rwanda

On 05 June 2020, Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation with the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame. During the call, the two leaders discussed the historically good relationship between the two countries and the challenges posed to the healthcare systems and economies by the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister appreciated Rwanda for effectively managing the Covid-19 crisis. President Kagame thanked Prime Minister for promising to donate medical supplies and equipment.

On 10 June 2020, Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council in collaboration with the High Commission organised a Virtual Business Meet on Fostering Indo-Rwanda Cooperation in Information and Communication Technology (ICT). The Meet saw participation from various Indian and Rwandan companies in the ICT sector.

On 21 June 2020, the High Commission celebrated the International Day of Yoga by organising a virtual Yoga practice session.

On 25 June 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda, Vincent Biruta. The two Ministers discussed bilateral

cooperation between India and Rwanda, the Covid-19 situation, international organisations and the upcoming Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Kigali in June 2021.

On 02 July 2020, High Commission facilitated a chartered flight that took Indian nationals stranded in Rwanda back to India and took back Rwandan nationals stranded in India to Rwanda.

On 23 September 2020, the Minister of Trade and Industry of Rwanda, Soraya Hakuziyaremye addressed the Ministerial Session of the 15th India Africa Conclave hosted by the Confederation of Indian Industry.

On 01 October 2020, as part of the celebrations of the 150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, the High Commission organised a virtual Gandhi Katha by an internationally acclaimed speaker on Mahatma Gandhi.

On 01 November 2020, the bilateral 'air bubble' agreement between India and Rwanda came into effect. Following the agreement, the National carrier of Rwanda, RwandAir restarted direct flights from Kigali to Mumbai.

South Africa

India's high-level outreach between Prime Minister and President Ramaphosa continued in April 2020, discussing collaboration in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

In September, EAM discussed bilateral cooperation with the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Naledi Pandor, and also interacted with Pandor during the BRICS Foreign Ministers Council and a virtual IBSA Foreign Ministers meeting.

In response to the request from the Minister of Trade and Industry, Ebrahim Patel in April 2020, India facilitated the export of 2 consignments of Paracetamol and Hydroxychloroquine

tablets to South Africa to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary finale was organised at the iconic Tolstoy Farm and Phoenix Settlement on 02 October 2020. The historical portion of the Mahatma Gandhi Phoenix Settlement established in KwaZulu-Natal was declared South Africa's National Heritage Site in September 2020.

The South African Foreign Minister Naledi Pandor had a telephone conversation with EAM on 11 January 2021. The phone call involved detailed discussions on India making vaccine doses available for South Africa's health workers. The issues of bilateral, regional, and multilateral interest were also discussed.

Tanzania

The Government of India granted permission for commercial export of Hydroxychloroquine & Paracetamol to Tanzania, in April 2020.

The LoC water project in Zanzibar worth USD 92.18 million was awarded and work on it has commenced. EXIM Bank of India has pre-qualified Indian companies for award of contracts under the USD 500 million LoC for water supply to 25 towns in Tanzania. The work is expected to be awarded soon. Another water supply project from Lake Victoria which is undertaken with India's loan assistance of USD 268.35 million has reached

its completion.

The Government of India formally approved the Government of Tanzania's request for deferment of repayments of soft loans in respect of 6 LoC projects for the period between 01 May to 31 December 2020 in view of difficulties caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

A bilateral 'air bubble' arrangement between India and Tanzania was announced on 28 October 2020 by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India.

The High Commissioner formally handed over the second tranche of essential medicines to the Chief Pharmacist of the Government of Tanzania in a ceremony at the Medical Stores Department (MSD), Dar es Salaam on 10 September 2020.

A total of 15 Tanzanian ITEC scholars studying in different institutes in India were repatriated from India during the Covid-19 lockdown.

As there were no Vande Bharat Mission flights to Tanzania, 23 special chartered flights to Mumbai, Kochi, Hyderabad and Delhi were operated from 29 May 2020 to 19 June 2020 which carried 2232 passengers back to India.

The Mission celebrated Hindi Diwas on 26 September 2020 at Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre (SVCC) in Dar es Salaam in association with a diaspora organisation 'Swarnganga', involved in the promotion of Hindi. Tanzanian children sang India's national anthem and also took a pledge in Hindi to work towards betterment of India-Tanzania relations.

The Mission virtually celebrated its 6th International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2020. Video blogging competition 'My Life, My Yoga' was publicised widely and the Mission received over 40 entries. A special Yoga Video was also uploaded on the Facebook page of the Mission and SVCC on 21 June 2020 for a

live yoga session from the convenience of homes of the viewers and yoga practitioners.

The Mission virtually celebrated Gandhi@150, information on special events such as Ayurveda Day and Teachers Day was widely disseminated through social media. This included a special tribute by Tanzania's Foreign Minister to his Indian teachers and endorsement of Ayurveda by two local celebrities.

Gandhi Jayanti was celebrated on 02 October 2020 at the University of Dar es Salaam. A special streaming of recorded version of Gandhikatha by famous Gandhian speaker was arranged on 03 October 2020 through the social media platforms of High Commission and SVCC.

The First India-Tanzania Joint Defence Cooperation Committee meeting was held in New Delhi on 14-15 January 2021. A delegation of 4 members from Tanzania Peoples' Defence Forces visited New Delhi on 13th January 2021. Tanzanian Air Force Commander, Maj. Gen. G.W. Ingram participated in Aero India 2021 which was held in Bengaluru from 03-07 February 2021.

India gifted medicines worth USD 2 million in two tranches to mainland Tanzania, and medicines worth of Rs. 1.36 crores were dispatched to Zanzibar Island in January 2021.

Uganda

Prime Minister had a telephonic conversation on 09 April 2020 with President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni. The two leaders discussed the health and economic challenges arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Prime Minister assured President Museveni that India stood in solidarity with its friends in Africa during this health crisis and would extend all possible support to the Ugandan Government's efforts to control the spread of the virus in its territory. Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the goodwill and care extended to the Indian diaspora in Uganda by the host Government and society, including during the Covid-19 situation.

EAM had a telephonic conversation on 25 April 2020 with the Foreign Minister of Uganda Sam Kutesa. The call was a follow-up of the telephonic conversation held between Prime Minister and the President of Uganda. EAM confirmed the impending shipment of medicine supplies from India.

The Confederation of Indian Industry organised a digital session on doing business with Uganda on 18 August 2020. Various trade association bodies of Uganda and India, like Private Sector Foundation, Uganda, Uganda Investment Authority, Exim Bank of India, Ajanta Pharma Ltd, India, Samta Group, India etc. participated. The session was attended by more than 200 participants. Another webinar was organised on business opportunities for Indian Mining Sector in Uganda with collaboration of Federation of Indian Mineral Industries and the Private Sector Foundation Uganda on 07 October 2020.

The 15th CII – Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India Africa Project Partnership on Virtual Platform was organised on 22-24 September 2020. Minister of Trade of the Govt. of Uganda, Amelia Kyambadde, participated and delivered a Special Address at the Ministerial Session on "Enhancing India's Trade & Investment with Africa through Bilateral, Regional & Continental level Partnership".

During the Covid-19 pandemic situation, four special chartered flights were organised for evacuation of stranded Indian nationals from Uganda. The first flight was organised for Mumbai with 188 passengers on 16 June 2020. The second flight was organised to Delhi with 185 passengers on 18 June 2020. The 3rd flight for Mumbai with 188 passengers on 16 July 2020 and the fourth flight to Thiruvananthapuram with 171 passengers on 18 July 2020.

The Mission expedited the commercial export of automated N-95 Face mask making machine between Motionworks Robotics Pvt. Ltd. India and Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) Uganda. The machine has reached Uganda and has been received by the UIRI, Uganda.

India donated 100,000 HCQ tablets and 100,000 Paracetamol tablets to Uganda in May 2020 to assist in its fight against Covid-19. Commercial export of 300,000 HCQ tablets and 750 kgs of HCQ API raw material was also permitted. India also gifted a large consignment of medicines (costing approx. Rs 1.2 crore + freight Rs 0.7 Crore). India also donated other lifesaving

medicines worth Rs. 1.9 crore to Uganda.

During the Covid period, considerable increase in pharmaceuticals export from India was witnessed with export from April-September 2020 being USD 111.72 million in comparison to total export of USD 163.84 million in 2019-20 and USD 160.06 million in 2018-19.

As per the announcement by the Government of India, during Prime Minister's visit to Uganda in July 2018, India gifted a total of 88 vehicles to Uganda, for civilian and defence forces' use (44 each), 44 utility vehicles for civilian use were handed over in March 2020 to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 36 vehicles (10 buses, 10 troop carriers, 2 ambulances and 14 motorcycles) for the use of defence forces were handed over on 24 August 2020 by the High Commissioner to Adolf Mwesige, Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs of Uganda.

Four SUVs (Mahindra XUV) were handed over on 11 December 2020 to Mr. Kahinda Otafiire, Minister of East African Community Affairs of the Government of Uganda. The gift of vehicles was part of financial support of USD 929,705 for capacity building and creating supportive infrastructure for the East African Community announced by Prime Minister during his visit to Uganda in July 2018.

20 laptops were also handed over by the High Commissioner to Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Kahinda Otafiire, Minister of East African Community Affairs, Govt. of Uganda on 05 August 2020.

Uganda was offered 35 slots for under-graduate, post-graduate and Ph.D in the ICCR Scholarship Scheme for the year 2020-21. 30 students who have accepted the scholarship offers are participating in the online classes as they could not travel to India due to the Covid-19 pandemic disruption.

Zambia

India and Zambia continued their cordial and friendly bilateral relations. As part of India's commitment under the WTO Hong Kong Ministerial Declaration of 2005, India offers various trade-related concessions to Zambia such as duty-free market access and preferential duties as well as business visa-related concessions. Zambia remains an attractive destination for India's private investments, which is over USD 5 billion, ranging from pharmaceutical manufacturing to copper cables and mining.

Over the years, Zambia has supported India's candidatures at international organizations and UN agencies. In 2020, Zambia supported India's candidature for the non-permanent seat of the UN Security Council for 2021-22, Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions, and Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, an indication of strong bilateral relations.

Economic and Development Cooperation is the main feature of India's engagement with Zambia. India provides economic

The International Day of Yoga was celebrated on 21 June 2020 through an online event "YOGATHAN" in collaboration with the Art of Living members in Uganda. Later on, the High Commission of India, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh and Indian Association also organised another online Yoga Day celebration on 28 June 2020.

The High Commission celebrated the 150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi at its premises on 02 October 2020 with Indian community members and prominent Ugandans. Around 100 guests attended the event and 200 watched online. Vice President of Uganda, Edward Ssekandi, was the Chief Guest at the event, who un-veiled a 'Charkha' installed at the High Commission premises. The Charkha was received from Khadi India.

Under the Ministry's 'India for Humanity' initiative, in connection with the celebration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, an Artificial Limbs Camp was organised with the support of Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti in Kampala from 21 November 2020 – 28 December 2020. The camp was officially inaugurated by Rebecca Kadaga, Speaker of the Ugandan Parliament and the High Commissioner on 28 November 2020. Uganda's Minister for the Elderly and Disabled, Minister of Works and Transport, State Minister of Finance for Investment and Privatization, and Health Minister visited the camp. A total number of 513 persons were fitted with artificial limbs during the camp.

A Khadi exhibition was held in Kampala on 23 January 2021, where khadi products were displayed. People from different walks of life including the Diplomatic community attended in Kampala.

assistance to Zambia and assists in a wide range of skill development courses and training courses offered under ITEC programmes; specialized programmes under India-Africa Forum Summit and ICCR-sponsored scholarship. Under ITEC Defence, a candidate from the Zambian army joined the Defence Staff Service College Course-76 in July 2020 at DSSC, Wellington. 8 candidates from Zambia attended various Covid-19 and medical related courses under the e-ITEC programme.

Setting up of 650 primary health posts across Zambia is in an advanced stage of implementation, supported by Government of India LOC of USD 68 million, and Lusaka Roads Decongestion Project, funded by EXIM Bank's Buyers' Credit of USD 245 million, is expected to be completed ahead of schedule despite Covid-19 related impediments.

To augment Zambia's fight against Covid-19, India donated 6000 kgs of medicines to Zambia in a formal handing over ceremony presided over by Zambian Minister of Health Chitalu Chilufya and other senior government officials in May 2020. In

fulfillment of an announcement made during the state visit of Zambian President to India in August 2019, India also donated 1000 MT non-Basmati rice.

The first India-Zambia Joint Working Group meeting in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources took place virtually on 23 September 2020. The two sides agreed to enhance cooperation in terms of capacity building in geology and mining and promoting trade and investment collaboration in this sector between both public and private sector companies.

Mission organised 8 chartered flights in which 649 persons in-

Zimbabwe

India-Zimbabwe relations continued to develop during 2020 despite the adverse conditions created by the Covid-19 pandemic. The agreement signed between India and Zimbabwe on reciprocal exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic passports was operationalized with effect from 30 October 2020.

Business interactions continued through the virtual mode. Vice President, Gen (Retd) Constantino Chiwenga, and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, Sibusiso Moyo, attended the CII-EXIM Bank Virtual Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership on 24 September 2020. Foreign Minister Moyo also attended the webinar organised by CII on 'Business Opportunities between India and Zimbabwe' held on 07 October 2020. The Ministry of Ayush held a video conference with the Ministry of Health and Child Care of Zimbabwe on 21 October

cluding 4 foreign nationals were repatriated to India. 26 Indian nationals from Namibia and 30 from Zimbabwe were also repatriated to India in the first chartered flight on 09 June 2020.

Keeping Covid-19 related restrictions in view, Mission celebrated International Day of Yoga and Teachers' Day, which were live webcast on Mission's Facebook page. At the culmination of Gandhi@150 celebrations, Mission organised virtual narration of Gandhi Katha by famous Gandhian speaker on 03 October 2020.

2020, to discuss collaboration in the field of traditional medicines.

During the year, medicines worth USD 1.05 million were donated to the Government of Zimbabwe to assist in the fight against Covid-19. A consignment of 1000 MT of rice was handed over on 22 October 2020, to the Government of Zimbabwe to help tide over food shortages created by natural disasters, including Cyclone Idai. The appreciation for these gestures was conveyed by the President of Zimbabwe.

India shared with the Government of Zimbabwe its experience in handling the Covid-19 pandemic. The two sides coordinated to ensure repatriation of stranded nationals in each other's country. On the request of the Government of Zimbabwe, India facilitated the export of Hydroxychloroquine to Zimbabwe in the month of June 2020.

8

EUROPE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

Albania

India - Albania bilateral relations are friendly and remain one of mutual trust and understanding. The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated virtually. Doctors, experts and Ayurveda

enthusiasts from Albania participated in the webinar organised on Ayurveda Day.

Austria

India and Austria share warm and cordial relations. The bilateral relations were further strengthened during the year through telephone conversations between the leaders and foreign ministers, trade interactions, cultural programmes and people-to-people interactions amidst the global pandemic.

EAM had a telephonic conversation with the Austrian Minister for Europe and International Affairs on 11 May 2020. They exchanged experiences on combating Covid-19 and agreed to continue the dialogue on preventing and fighting Covid-19. EAM thanked Foreign Minister Schallenberg for taking care of the Indian community in Austria. Foreign Minister Schallenberg also invited EAM to Vienna.

Prime Minister had a telephone conversation with President Alexander Van der Bellen on 26 May 2020. The leaders exchanged views on measures taken in their countries to manage

the adverse health and economic impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic. Both leaders reiterated their shared desire to further strengthen and diversify India-Austria relations in the post-Covid world. Prime Minister highlighted opportunities for enhanced cooperation in sectors like infrastructure, technology, research and innovation, SMEs etc.

A preparatory meeting of the India-Austria Joint Economic Commission was held on 29 September 2020. The meeting discussed ways to reinvigorate the JEC mechanism and make it more result-oriented.

Prime Minister expressed his solidarity with Austria after a terrorist attack was perpetrated in Vienna on 2 November 2020. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Chancellor, Republic of Austria replied to Prime Minister's message and further addressed a letter of appreciation to Prime Minister.

Margaret Schramböck, the Minister for Digital and Economic Affairs, Republic of Austria gave a special address on “ India and Austria: Imperatives for a Digital Future” during the 5th

Bosnia and Herzegovina

India’s relationship with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) continued to be steady during the year. India is admired for its vibrant democracy and diversity by the people of BiH, who have seen intensive ethnic strife in the past. Culture and Yoga are popu-

lar strands of the bilateral relationship. The total bilateral trade for the period Jan – July 2020 was approximately USD 40.8 million.

annual virtual Global Technology Summit, hosted by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace India in collaboration with the Ministry from 14- 18 December 2020

Bulgaria

Bulgaria continued to be a strong partner, both bilaterally and in multilateral fora, extending support to India’s candidature for a non-permanent UNSC seat, UNESCO, Postal Operations Council, etc.

EAM and the Bulgarian Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Foreign Minister Ekaterina Zaharieva had a telephonic conversation to discuss the challenges brought about by the global pandemic. Foreign Minister Zaharieva thanked EAM for facilitating the emergency evacuation of Bulgarian and EU citizens through special flights, the last of which took off on 09 April. Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov congratulated Prime Minister on the occasion of International Yoga Day and expounded the benefits of Yoga in a video message.

The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated across 39 cities and towns across Bulgaria including the iconic locations of Alexander Nevski Cathedral and the National Theatre in Sofia. The 74th Independence Day was celebrated as a hybrid event in Sofia due to the ongoing Covid pandemic. Further, the grand finale of Gandhi@150 celebrations was marked by unveiling of Gandhiji’s ICCR-gifted statue in Bulgaria’s sea capital, Varna. Bulgaria was a partner country for the virtual Tagore International Literature and Arts Festival, Vishwa Rang 2020 in November 2020.

Deputy Prime Minister for Judicial Reform and Foreign Minister of the Republic of Bulgaria Ekaterina Zaharieva is expected to participate, in person, at the ‘Raisina Dialogue 2021’

Croatia

Croatia supports India’s membership to the UNSC and NSG. Croatia imported 400,000 tablets of chloroquine phosphate from India, an amount sufficient to treat about 20,000 Covid-19 patients at a critical period of a pandemic situation. A significant development during the year was the installation

of Mahatma Gandhi’s bust on 02 October, 2019, the first such bust in Croatia. The bust was unveiled by the Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic (first such instance of Croatian Prime Minister unveiling a bust) and Zagreb Mayor Milan Bandic.

Cyprus

Cyprus supported India for a non-permanent seat in UNSC. Cyprus has also provided reciprocal support to India’s candidature to the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH).

Cyprus is the 8th top investor in India with cumulative investments of USD 10.757 billion during April 2000 – June 2020. These investments as FDI equity inflows were in sectors including services, computer and software, auto manufacture, manufacturing industries, real estate, cargo handling, construction, shipping and pharmaceuticals. A Charter Flight

repatriated Indian citizens (137 passengers) on 15 July 2020 apart from constant support to Indian citizens throughout the Covid-19 lockdown period. India facilitated, through Israel, a consignment of Hydroxychloroquine to Cyprus for which the Government of Cyprus expressed gratitude and expressed appreciation for India’s support to help Cyprus in dealing with the unprecedented pandemic of Covid-19.

Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) at the level of Political Director and Joint Secretary were held on 10 December 2020 through video conferencing.

Czech Republic

This year witnessed an upswing in India-Czech bilateral relationship, generated through the high-level visits of the President of India to Czech Republic and Czech Prime Minister

and Foreign Minister to India from 2018–2020 could be seen through strengthened and broadened political, economic and defence engagement between the two countries. The bilateral

trade of around USD 1.5 billion and investments by Indian and Czech companies in varied sectors indicates the importance of trade and investment relationship for the two countries.

During the Covid crisis, EAM spoke to the Czech Foreign Minister, Tomas Petricek on 24 April 2020 and expressed interest in strengthening bilateral cooperation including on Covid related issues. The Czech Foreign Minister also showed interest in increasing the quota for Indian skilled professionals to Czech Republic and to further streamline their visa procedures. During the early stage of the pandemic, in response to the request, the Czech companies expressed support in engaging with Indian counterparts for manufacturing of critical equipment like PPEs, masks etc. More than 100 stranded Indian nationals, including students, were repatriated from different parts of the Czech

Republic to India through Vande Bharat flights.

The Czech Government actively participated at the highest level in the culmination of celebrations of Bapu@150 through the video message / tweet from Prime Minister Andrej Babis, Foreign Minister Tomas Petricek and Environment Minister Richard Brabec. On the occasion of the International Day of Yoga, several Czech organizations associated with Yoga and the Czech nationals participated in large numbers in events held across the country.

India and Czech Republic supported each other’s candidature at the elections of the UN bodies and other multilateral organizations. The Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis also nominated an Indian scientist on the apex Rand council headed by him.

Denmark

Bilateral relations continued to strengthen during the year and were marked by close interactions between EAM and Danish Foreign Minister, as well as both Prime Ministers through telecom and virtual summits. In spite of the pandemic, 4 JWG were held and 3 MoUs signed while several significant investments were made by Danish companies in India.

The 3rd JCM between India and Denmark was held on 12 May 2020 by video conference. EAM and the Danish Foreign Minister Jeppe Kofod discussed India-Denmark ties and strength-

ening of bilateral relations with focus on clean-tech, urbanization, renewable energy, green solutions, food processing and a stronger political partnership as well as creating a Green Strategic Partnership between India and Denmark.

The Prime Minister and the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen had a telephone call on 14 May 2020 during which they compared notes on the steps taken by India and Denmark to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.



Prime Minister and Prime Minister of Denmark at the India - Denmark Virtual Bilateral Summit on 28 September 2020

Prime Minister and the Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen held their first ever Virtual Summit on 28 September 2020 where they agreed to elevate India-Denmark relations to a Green Strategic Partnership. This was the first Green Strategic Partnership to be signed by India or Denmark with any country. The Prime Minister stated that this was a new age partnership and will add a new dimension to bilateral relations and help

to expand economic relations and green growth, strengthen cooperation on addressing global challenges; with focus on implementation of the Paris Agreement and the climate change goals.

Three Joint Working Groups (JWGs) were held virtually during the period on Digitization (25 June 2020) between the Minis-

try of Electronics and Information Technology and the Danish Agency for Digitization; Urban Development (26 June 2020) between the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs and the Danish Ministry of Industry, Business and Financial Affairs, and

Estonia

India’s relations with Estonia remained friendly during the year. Focus shifted to virtual meetings and events due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Foreign Minister of Estonia Urmas Reinsalu participated at the virtual CII India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave

on Energy Cooperation (8 Sept 2020) between the Ministry of Power and the Danish Energy Agency. The 2nd JWG on Energy Cooperation was held on 18 Nov 2020 between the Ministry of Power and the Danish Energy Agency.

on 5 November 2020 along with several Estonian companies. An Invest India Webinar for collaboration in Biotechnology and Medical Devices was held on 25 June 2020.

Finland

India’s relations with Finland remained warm and friendly. EAM had a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of Finland Pekka Haavisto on 22 October 2020. Economic and Commercial linkages continued to be the focus with virtual seminars and meetings taking place in the areas of cyber security, biotechnology, and trade and investment promotion.

Ville Skinnari, Minister of Development Cooperation and Foreign Trade participated at the Virtual CII India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave on 5 November 2020 along with several Finnish com-

panies. A Joint Committee on Science and Technology Meeting was held virtually on 17 November 2020 which identified 5G, Sustainability and Quantum Computing as the three areas of future cooperation between the countries.

On 26 November 2020, an MoU on cooperation in Environment was signed by the Environment Ministers of both countries. Another MoU for Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources was signed between the Geological Survey of India and Geological Survey of Finland on 3 December 2020.

Greece

The 12th round of India-Greece Foreign Office Consultations was held on 09 October 2020. During the FOC held virtually, a wide range of bilateral, regional, multilateral and EU priorities and achievements were discussed.

A virtual meeting between EAM and his Greek counterpart Nikos Dendias was held on 29 October 2020. The talks were

focused on bilateral, regional and international issues, with emphasis on the deepening of bilateral relations and on developments in the Eastern Mediterranean and South Asia.

EAM had expressed the desire to visit Greece in the near future. In March 2021, India will participate at the Greece ‘Food Expo’ scheduled to be held in Athens.

Hungary

India’s friendly relations with Hungary continued to grow during the year though the pace of activities and exchanges were significantly impacted due to the pandemic. Hungary supported India’s non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for 2021-2022. Both countries agreed to further strengthen their cooperation in bilateral and multilateral spheres. The second dialogue between the Indian Council of

World Affairs (ICWA), New Delhi and the Institute of Foreign Affairs and Trade (IFAT), Budapest was held on 10 September 2020. The 11th India-Hungary Joint Science and Technology Committee Meeting was held on 29 July 2020. The 1st pre-JWG Meeting in the field of water was held virtually on 20 November, 2020 which laid a road map for the discussion during forthcoming JWG meeting.

Iceland

The relationship between India and Iceland continued to be warm and friendly with positive cooperation in the United Nations and other international fora. The 1st Meeting of India-Iceland Joint Working Group (JWG) on Cooperation in the field of Sustainable Fisheries Development was held in a virtual mode on 2 July 2020. Both sides discussed ways of collaboration in the field of fisheries for tangible outcomes.

The 3rd Joint Committee Meeting (JCM) on Renewable Energy Cooperation between India and Iceland took place through videoconferencing on 28 August 2020. At the meeting both sides gave presentations on the geothermal energy sector in India and Iceland. Both sides re-established communication between all the key players in the geothermal sector, an area which has significant potential in India with an estimated 10000 MWs of geothermal energy.

The Indian co-chair informed about the geothermal project being developed in the Union Territory of Ladakh by ONGC Energy Center along with Iceland Geosurvey (ISOR), and the ambitious plans to make Ladakh carbon-neutral, where geothermal energy would play an important role. The outcome of the geothermal energy pilot project in Ladakh would lead the

way for further development of the geothermal sector in India. The meetings and events of the Arctic Council which were to be held in Iceland during 2020 were held in virtual format due to unfavourable travel conditions because of the outbreak of Covid-19. Iceland is the current chair of the Arctic Council and India is an Observer.

Latvia

The Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs congratulated India on being elected as the non-permanent member of the Security Council for the period 2012-22. Latvia signed an MoU with the state of Nagaland on cooperation in music education and cultural exchange. On 18th November, “India and Latvia: A personal bond” E-Global Summit was organised by Dev San-

skriti Vishwavidyalaya, Haridwar. Secretary (West) highlighted the historical connections between India and Baltic States and emphasized that India is committed to strengthen relations with Latvia in all spheres, business and investment, cultural and academic cooperation and specially people-to-people connect.

Lichtenstein (The Principality of Liechtenstein)

The bilateral relations between India and The Principality of Liechtenstein continued smoothly. The Embassy put in place 24x7 emergency numbers and assisted Indian citizens stranded in the Principality of Liechtenstein due to Covid-19 lock-down

and for their travel back to India under the Vande Bharat Mission. The Embassy maintained close contact with Indian diaspora in The Principality of Liechtenstein during the lockdown.

Lithuania

India and Lithuania enjoy cordial relations that are marked by close cultural linkages. The economic and commercial ties have grown in recent years and the bilateral trade between India and Lithuania stands at USD 373 million in 2019-20. Indian investment in Lithuania includes Indorama Group’s investment of over USD 200 million in a manufacturing plant and HCL Technologies, which recently took over the IT infrastructure services of Barclays in Vilnius employing over 500 people. Indorama has set up a plant in the Klaipeda Economic Zone to manufacture plastic resin. It is the largest single line PET resin plant in Europe with the lowest carbon footprint.

This investment has given visibility to India in Lithuania. Lithuania extended support to India’s candidatures as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the period 2021-22 and to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2021-2023. On the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference in February 2020, EAM had a meeting with the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, Linas Linkevicius. The two leaders discussed fostering bilateral relations, trade and deep-rooted India-Lithuania cultural and linguistic ties.

Malta

India and Malta remained fruitfully engaged during this period, including at the highest levels which, apart from the bilateral engagements, included cooperation at UN and multilateral fora. The Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Malta Evarist Bartolo sent a congratulatory message to EAM on

India’s election as a member of the United Nations Security Council for the term 2021-22. The period also saw a trend of increased cooperation between the two sides in the commercial field, witnessed by India’s increased exports, especially pharma exports, to Malta.

Moldova

Bilateral relations are friendly and remain one of mutual trust and understanding. 237 Indian students from Moldova were repatriated by a chartered flight under Vande Bharat Mission. About 6000 Kgs of medicine, medical consumables and other medical supplies was donated as part of India’s assistance to the Republic of Moldova in the context of Covid-19. Apart

from this, Medicines were also separately exported from India to Moldova in June – July 2020.

The Minister of Defence of Moldova, Victor Gaiciuc has been invited by Raksha Mantri to the Aero India-2021 in Bengaluru on 03-07 February 2021.

Montenegro

India’s relations with Montenegro have traditionally been close and friendly since the days of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) of which it was a constituent republic. There

is considerable goodwill and feeling of friendship for India in Montenegro.

North Macedonia

North Macedonia is a long-standing friend of India and remains a reliable partner bilaterally and multilaterally. It extended support to India’s candidatures for the Non-Permanent seat at the UNSC (2021-22), the Advisory Committee on Administrative

and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), etc. EAM sent a letter of felicitation to his counterpart Bujar Osmani upon the latter taking over as North Macedonia’s Foreign Minister.

Norway

The EAM had a virtual meeting with the Foreign Minister of Norway Ine Eriksen Søreide on 12 June 2020 and discussed the issues of mutual interest including economic recovery and Covid situation, ocean management and multilateralism. Norway was committed to forge a strong partnership with India in the areas of combating Covid-19, global health and advancing sustainable development and ocean management.

The 6th Joint Commission Meeting between India and Norway was held on virtual platform on 13 October 2020. The Indian delegation was led by EAM and the Norwegian delegation was led by Ine Eriksen Søreide, the Foreign Minister of Norway. Both ministers reiterated their commitment to cooperate

closely in combating the Covid-19 pandemic, and welcomed the establishment of the COVAX alliance to ensure fair global access to vaccines. Both sides also noted with satisfaction the India-Norway Dialogue on Trade and Investment (DTI) and the significant progress made in the Ocean Dialogue and initiatives under the Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development, and highlighted the activities under the Joint Working Groups (JWG) on Maritime, Marine, Hydrocarbons, Environment, Science and Technology, and Higher Education. Moreover, as India and Norway both got elected as incoming members of the UN Security Council, both sides agreed to engage in regular consultations at senior officials’ level on Security Council issues during the membership period 2021-22.

Poland

India and Poland share a long-standing friendly relationship, marked by strong political partnership, vibrant economic engagement and traditional cultural links. This positive trend in the relationship, particularly economic and commercial ties, is reflected in the almost 200 percent increase in the bilateral trade over a period of a decade i.e. from to USD 808 million in 2009-10 to USD 2398 million in 2019-20. Poland continues to be India’s largest trading and investment partner in Central and Eastern Europe. The balance of trade has always remained in favour of India. Indian investment in Poland is estimated at USD 3 billion providing employment to over 25,000 Poles and Polish investment in India, which has also risen significantly, is estimated at over USD 673.62 million.

The 9th Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) between India and Poland was held virtually on 10 August 2020. The 7th Session of Strategic Dialogue between Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) –The Polish Institute of international Affairs (PISM) was held virtually on 27 October 2020. India and Poland have agreed to conduct regular Foreign Policy Dialogue with the first Dialogue starting in December 2020. Poland extended support to India’s candidatures as a non-permanent member of the UNSC for the period 2021-22 and to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2021-2023.

Romania

India’s bilateral relations with Romania are warm and friendly based on mutual trust and deep understanding. Minister of State represented India in the 20th Anniversary virtual Conference of the Community of Democracies held on 26 June 2020, which was presided over by the Romanian Foreign Minister Bogdan Aurescu. Virtual consultation was held between Secretaries (West) and State Secretary of the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 19 June 2020. Foreign Office Consultations

(FOC) between India and Romania were also held on 27 October 2020 at JS / DG level via virtual mode.

Minister of National Defence of Romania, Mr Ionel Nicolae Ciuca and Minister of Economy, Energy and Business Environment of Romania, Virgil-Daniel Popescu have been invited by Raksha Mantri to the Aero India-2021 in Bengaluru on 03-07 February 2021.

Serbia

After the formation of a new Government in Serbia, traditionally close relations between India and Serbia continued and further strengthened during this year. Serbians take great interest in Indian art and culture.

In spite of disruptions caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral trade for the period January-September 2020

grew 4% and reached USD 138.6 million. Export of Pharmaceutical and Chemicals including Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (APIs) to Serbia increased by 43%. Serbia imported gloves and face masks from India for use in the fight against coronavirus pandemic. Strength of Indian pharmaceutical companies received extensive coverage in Serbia media.

Slovakia

India – Slovakia relations are friendly and free from major bilateral issues. The two countries are cooperating well in the international fora and have been, by and large, supportive of each other’s candidatures. Slovakia supported India’s candidature for UNSC non-permanent seat for 2021-2022; UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for the safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) for the term 2020-2024; Indian Candidature for the prestigious Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) for the term 2021 – 2023.

For the period January – July 2020, India’s export to Slovakia reached USD159.6 million, a decrease of 15.8% in comparison to the same period of 2019. Import from Slovakia stood at USD 57.7 million, an increase of 3.4% year on year. Total trade was USD 217.3 million, a drop of 12%. A total number of 30 Indian nationals availed repatriation facility under the Vande Bharat Mission.

The next Session of Joint Economic Commission (JEC) between our two countries is due to take place in 2021 in Slovakia, on a date mutually agreed through diplomatic channels.

Slovenia

India-Slovenia bilateral relations through Covid-19 pandemic continued to remain cordial. Virtual meeting between EAM and Slovenian Foreign Minister Anze Logar took place on 17 June 2020. Indian suppliers provided PPE to Slovenia during the first wave of pandemic. Collaboration on research between Slovenian scientists and India’s Serum Institute for Covid-19 vaccine is currently underway. At the multilateral fora, Slovenia extended its unconditional support to the Indian candidature for Non-Permanent seat of the UNSC for the period 2021-22. It also supported Indian candidature for UNESCO’s Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Mankind for the period 2020-24.

Next session of Foreign Office Consultations, and Joint Committee on Technical and Economic Cooperation (JCTEC) are

due to take place in the first quarter of 2021.

Agreements and MoUs on cooperation between (1) the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India and Slovenian Ministry of Energy, (2) National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad and Design Institute of Slovenia, (3) Ministries of Culture of two countries to realize Namaste India – Indian Cultural Festival next year and (4) Reviving of India-Slovenia Business Council are under the stages ranging from finalization to negotiations, to be signed during the first quarter of 2021.

Two projects between IIT Kanpur and Slovenia’s Vadnogospodarski Biro under the Cooperation MOU signed during the visit of President in September 2019 are in the process of being finalized.

Sweden

The Swedish Prime Minister Stefan Lofven called Prime Minister on 07 April 2020 to discuss the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the potential for collaboration and data sharing between Indian and Swedish researchers and scientists.

Several Ministerial-level telephonic conversations took place during April-October 2020. During the telephone call between the Minister for Commerce, Industry and Railways, and the Swedish Minister for Foreign Trade and Nordic Affairs, Anna Hallberg on May 26, 2020, two Ministers discussed current global coronavirus pandemic situation as well as ways to further enhance economic cooperation between the two countries, WTO reforms, signing of a comprehensive BTIA etc.

The Swedish Minister for Health and Social Affairs Lena Hallengren held virtual consultation with, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare to discuss cooperation in the field of health and medicine. Minister Hallengren congratulated Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare for his election as Chair of WHO Executive Board and praised India for increasing the testing capacity. On 23 September, on the invitation of Minister for Health and Family Welfare, the Swedish Health and Social Affairs Minister, Lena Hallengren spoke about Sweden’s experience on handling Covid-19 at Arogya Manthan 2.0 - Moving towards Universal Health Coverage and catalyzing more robust health systems through digital technologies.

Switzerland

The Swiss Federal Council declared an 'extraordinary situation' due to Covid-19 on 16 March 2020. Expressing solidarity with all Indians in the fight against Covid-19 whilst projecting the Indian flag on the iconic Matterhorn Mountain. The Swiss Government also organised repatriation flights for Swiss/European residents stranded in India. On 4 June 2020 Secretary (West) had a telecon with Swiss Acting State Secretary and Head of the Directorate of Political Affairs Krystyna Marty. On 08 September 2020, a Panel Discussion on India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) was held in Bern. The Swiss Association of Ayurveda Physicians and Therapists (VSAMT) participated as a partner Organization in the 4th Edition of "CII Global Ayurveda Summit" on 15 September - 14 October 2020. Federal Councillor Guy Parmelin, Vice President of the Swiss Federal Council and Head, Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research, virtually addressed the inaugural session of the 23rd edition of Bengaluru Tech Summit on 19 November 2020. In-

dia was the Guest of Honour in the 8th edition of the Geneva Health Forum (GHF), which was held in a virtual format from 16-18 November 2020.

The events that are anticipated to take place till March 2021 are as follows: Virtual meeting between Minister for Railways, Commerce and Industry and Guy Parmelin, Federal Councillor, Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research of Switzerland; Participation from Government of India in 'Davos Dialogues' to be digitally convened by the World Economic Forum; Virtual India-Switzerland Financial Dialogue; Virtual meeting between Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of AYUSH, and Swiss Federal Office of Public Health in the field of health cooperation; Webinar on Opportunities in India for Swiss Trading Firms; Virtual Investor Pitch event connecting Swiss investors with Indian Start Ups; Virtual participation from Switzerland in Pravasi Bharatiya Day Celebrations and its side events etc.

Turkey

A new bilateral mechanism, the 'India-Turkey Policy Planning Dialogue' was institutionalized between the two Foreign Ministries with the First Round held virtually on 22 October 2020. Despite both countries having partial lockdown and restricted movement of men and material, bilateral trade between India and Turkey during April-September 2020 was USD 2.36 billion. During the period, several activities including interactions between think-tanks, cultural organizations and chambers of commerce and Industries of the two countries continued in a hybrid/virtual format. People to people contact were promot-

ed through extensive use of the social media, besides events such as International Yoga Day and commemorative events to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

There is a likelihood of holding of (i) India-Turkey Joint Committee on Economic and Technical Cooperation (JCETC) and (ii) Foreign Office Consultations (FOC). However, holding of these events is contingent on several factors, including the evolving situation due to the ongoing pandemic and finalisation of mutually agreeable dates by the two sides.

United Kingdom

The year witnessed close partnership between India and the UK despite the challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Covid-19 Cooperation

Starting April 2020, India has supplied to the UK critical medicines and medical equipment, including 45.36 million paracetamol tablets and two consignments of 4.0 MT and 19.2 million hydroxychloroquine (HCQ) tablets. India also supplied 10.95 million 2/3 ply surgical masks to the UK in June 2020. Later, the Government of India opened export of most of the restricted export items facilitating continued flow of masks, PPEs and pharmaceutical products from India to the UK.

Close cooperation with the Government of UK enabled the

evacuation of stranded Indians in the UK during the pandemic. The expired UK visas were extended for those who could not be evacuated in time. The Government of India reciprocated accordingly for the British citizens stranded in India. More than 50,000 Indians were evacuated in over 200 flights during the lockdown phase.

Recent high-level political exchanges

At the invitation of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Prime Minister participated in the Climate Ambition Summit co hosted by UK on 12 December 2020. Prime Minister reiterated India's commitment to combat climate change and pledged that centennial India will not only meet its own targets under the Paris Agreement but will exceed the expectations of all countries.



Foreign Secretary of UK called on Prime Minister in New Delhi on 16 December 2020

Dominic Raab, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the UK visited India from 14-17 December 2020 and held discussions with EAM. In context of the UK leaving the EU and the big geopolitical changes in a Covid-impacted world, both Ministers recognised the immense opportunities for greater collaboration in diverse sectors such as trade and investments, defence and security, health, education, research and innovation, energy and climate change. They agreed to prioritize finalization of an ambitious, 360 degree roadmap for upgrading India-UK partnership to the next level. Both the Ministers also held discussions on a number of regional and global issues of mutual interest reiterating their shared commitment to a multi-polar world and faith in multilateralism. They explored ways to strengthen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, on countering terrorism and radical extremism and addressing emerging challenges in the cyber, maritime and space domains. During the visit, Dominic Raab also met with the Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, and the Minister for Education.

Lord Tariq Ahmad of Wimbledon, Minister for South Asia and the Commonwealth, FCDO, spoke with Minister of State on two occasions and discussed pandemic related issues. He also had a virtual meeting with Chief Minister of Gujarat, to discuss about regional governments and others on opportunities in wind power and held a virtual tour of a UK supported solar plant in Rajasthan.

UK's Minister of Education Gavin Williamson, had a virtual meeting with the Minister for HRD, on 16 July to discuss further collaboration in higher education, student mobility and working together through Covid-19.

Foreign Secretary visited the United Kingdom on 3 and 4 November 2020. During his visit, the Foreign Secretary called on the UK Home Secretary Priti Patel and the Minister of State at

the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), Lord Tariq Ahmad and held wide-ranging bilateral consultations with the UK Permanent Under Secretary in the FCDO, Sir Philip Barton. Foreign Secretary also met UK's Acting National Security Advisor, David Quarrey and discussed issues relating to the ongoing Integrated Review of UK's Foreign and Security Policy, the Indo-Pacific and International Terrorism. Foreign Secretary also delivered an address on "India's Vision of the Indo-Pacific" at Policy Exchange.

Home Secretary of India had a video call with his UK counterpart on 15 January 2021 and discussed issues related to migration and mobility, terrorism, radicalism and extradition cases.

CII Global Parliamentarians Forum was virtually held on 23 November 2020. The main objective of the event was to increase the level of engagement of industry with Parliamentarians and of Parliamentarians across countries. The event aimed for key development of policy issues, enhance mutual understanding and cooperation between India and the UK. The forum was chaired by Mr Suresh Prabhu, (MP - India), Bob Blackman (MP - UK), Virendra Sharma (MP -UK) and many other dignitaries attended the virtual forum.

Economic relations

During April 2020 to August 2021, India's merchandise export to the UK was USD 2.33 billion and Import was USD 1.47 billion, totalling USD 3.80 billion.

A virtual 14th Joint Economic and Trade Committee (JETCO) meeting was held on 24 July between Minister of Railways and Commerce and Industry, and Elizabeth Truss MP, UK's Secretary of State for International Trade. Both sides agreed to remove barriers to trade as part of a roadmap to a Free Trade Agreement. The two Ministers, joined by UK Minister for In-

ternational Trade Ranil Jayawardena, and Indian Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, also met business leaders representing bilateral working groups in three priority sectors: food and drink, life science and healthcare, and digital and data services.

Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, and his counterpart Ranil Jayawardena, UK's Minister for International Trade, met virtually on 02 September 2020 and on 20 October 2020 as a follow up of 14th JETCO meeting CIM and Secretary of State Elizabeth Truss also held a review meeting on 9 November 2020. Both sides reiterated their commitment to working in the direction of signing a Free Trade Agreement in a staged manner. They also agreed to explore the possibility of signing a Social Security Agreement (SSA) between the two countries. India has requested the UK to consider giving a 5 years exemption from contribution towards social security to Indian professionals working in the UK.

Bilateral ministerial interaction between Minister for Commerce and Industry, and Elizabeth Truss, Secretary of State for International Trade, UK, took place on 9 November 2020. Both the ministers expressed gratitude on the ongoing support and engagement that is driving forward the India-UK trade partnership. They further engaged in a high-level talk on The Enhanced Trade Partnership (ETP) as the first step in the roadmap towards a potential Free Trade Agreement, WTO compatible India-UK Early-Harvest agreement, etc. Taking the bilateral discussion further, both the ministers also celebrated the progress made to date on removing trade barriers and taking forward joint initiatives to strengthen collaboration in light of Covid-19. Minister of State, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, and Minister for International Trade of the UK, were also present.

A bilateral virtual meeting between Minister of State (Commerce and Industry) and the UK Minister for International Trade Ranil Jayawardena, was held on 19 January 2021.

The 10th Economic and Financial Dialogue (EFD) was held on 28 October virtually between the Finance Minister of India, and Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of Exchequer, UK. The UK side welcomed the recent announcement by India to permit Indian companies to list directly on stock exchanges in select foreign jurisdictions, including the UK as well as India's decision to grant 100% tax exemptions to sovereign wealth funds for investments in infrastructure. The UK side also welcomed India's support for consistent disclosure of climate risks in the financial system and SEBI's expansion of Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) related disclosures to India's top 1000 companies.

The 5th India Water Impact Summit (IWIS) was held on 10 December 2020 through a virtual format. The programme has a special track dedicated for strengthening international partnerships with key nations including the UK. The UK is a key partner to India's green financing needs.

Inaugural India-UK Policy Planning Dialogue (virtual) was held on 17 December 2020 in virtual format. Virtual India – UK bilateral consultation on Disarmament related issues was held on 17 December 2020. Inaugural India-UK Bilateral Consultation on UN Security Council related issues was held virtually on 18 December 2020. The 14th India – UK Joint Working Group meeting on Counter Terrorism was held on 21-22 January 2020 virtually.

Defence cooperation

An MOU was signed between the Defence Institute of Advanced Technology (DIAT), Pune, and the University of West England (UWE), Bristol, on 17 August for implementing various collaborative research and academic programmes. Both the parties further agreed to work together in planning and executing science and technology outreach activities and promoting STEM careers among the youth. The MOU is valid for five years.

An MOU between DIAT, Pune, and Cranfield University, UK, on 'Dual Degree Programme' was signed on 27 August 2020. The MOU enables students to pursue their two-year master degree programme in two years' segment – one year in India and another in London. The programme covers aerospace, gun system design, guided weapons system and other advanced technologies.

The 15th Executive Steering Group (ESG) virtual meeting between the Indian Air Force and Royal Air Force was held on 12 November 2020. Both services engaged in the talks to work towards capability development and further growth of their own service. The Aero India – 2021 is planned to be held from 3-7 February 2021 at Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru.

High Commission of India in London celebrated 'Indian Navy Day' on 4 December 2020 to commemorate the success of 'Op Trident' during the Indo-Pak conflict 1971. On the occasion, High Commissioner underlined the contributions made by the Indian Navy in ensuring security of India and in humanitarian operations. A Naval Exhibition, screening of the Navy Week Theme video, was held.

On 1 December 2020, General Manoj Mukund Naravane,

France

India and France have traditionally had close and friendly relations. In 1998, the two countries entered into a Strategic Partnership, which is emblematic of their convergence of views on a range of regional and global issues. This strong bilateral relationship has acquired greater depth in areas such as defence and security cooperation, space cooperation and civil nuclear cooperation and UN reforms.

Apart from these traditional fields of cooperation, India and France are increasingly engaged in new areas of cooperation such as maritime security in the Indian Ocean region, counter terrorism, climate change including the International Solar Alliance, and sustainable growth and development among others.

India and France enjoy vibrant cultural and educational linkages reflected in the growing people-to-people contacts. This was further strengthened by the signing of the Migration and Mobility Agreement, which is expected to come into force in early 2021 after it is ratified by the French Parliament. The Indian diaspora also has a sizable presence in metropolitan France and its overseas departments/territories.

Recent high-level political exchanges

Prime Minister held telephone conversation with President Emmanuel Macron on 10 January 2020 to exchange New Years' greetings and on 31 March 2020 to discuss possible joint efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. On 24 July 2020 President Macron wrote to Prime Minister thanking him for India's decision to lift export bans on life-saving drugs such

Chief of Staff, held a telephone talk with General Sir Mark Carlton-Smith, Chief of General Staff, British Army. The discussions focussed on increasing bilateral engagement between the two armies. The 11th Executive Steering Group (ESG) Meeting (Army Staff Talks) is proposed to be held on 10 March 2021 in New Delhi.

Miscellaneous

The High Commission of India and the All Party Parliamentary Group – Indian Traditional Sciences (APPG-ITS) jointly celebrated the 5th Ayurveda Day 2020 on 13 November 2020. The event was attended by Lords, Baroness, MPs and many experts and luminaries in the field of Ayurveda from India and other countries.

The online event of Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conference was organised in a virtual mode on 8 January 2021. Also, the online event of the 16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention was organized by the High Commission on 9 January 2021. An online programme was organized on 10 January 2021 to commemorate World Hindi Divas.

as paracetamol, which had been exported to France when it was in the midst of the first wave of the pandemic. He also expressed solidarity with India in the fight against Covid-19, by sharing medical equipment and technical expertise. Prime Minister delivered a virtual address to the Paris Peace Forum held on 11-13 November 2020 on the theme "Bouncing Back to a Better Planet".

The two leaders had a telephone conversation again on 7 December 2020 where Prime Minister conveyed to President Macron his condolences for the terror attacks in France, and reiterated India's full support to France in the fight against terrorism, extremism and radicalism. The leaders also discussed other bilateral, regional and global issues of mutual interest, including improving the affordability and accessibility of Covid-19 vaccines, post-Covid economic recovery, cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, maritime security, defence cooperation, digital economy and cyber security, strengthening multilateralism, and climate change and biodiversity.

On 26 June and 26 September 2020, EAM participated in the virtual meetings of the Alliance for Multilateralism. He also had a telephonic conversation with his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian on 30 June 2020.

India and France held their annual Strategic Dialogue on 7 January 2021 in New Delhi. National Security Advisor led the Indian delegation while the French delegation was led by Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President. Both sides reaffirmed the high priority they accord to the India-France



EAM and Foreign Secretary of UK hold the Ministerial Level Dialogue at Hyderabad House, New Delhi on 15 December 2020

strategic partnership and highlighted the convergence of views between the two countries.

India and France also entered into a trilateral dialogue with Australia in the Track 1 format. Foreign Secretary co-chaired the dialogue where the three sides discussed areas of cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region such as protection of marine global commons, Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and maritime security cooperation.

On 29 June 2020, Foreign Secretary held virtual Foreign Office Consultations with his counterpart François Delattre, Secretary-General, French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs.

On 29-30 October 2020, Foreign Secretary visited France for bilateral consultations and meetings with his counterpart and other senior officials in the French government. He also met Alice Guittou, Director General, Directorate General of Strategic and International Relations, and Emmanuel Bonne, Diplomatic Advisor to the French President.

Covid-19 Cooperation

India and France closely cooperated at the peak of the pandemic. India supplied France with nearly 2 million HCQ tablets and 36 MT of paracetamol (API) after having lifted export restrictions on these life-saving drugs. France expressed its gratitude by sending 120 ventilators, 50 thousand serological tests and 50 thousand nose/throat swabs as aid. France also announced an EUR 200 million loan to India to help those most severely affected by the pandemic. Over 2500 Indians had been repatriated from France and a similar number of French citizens were repatriated from India to their home countries through special flights. An 'Air Bubble' arrangement was established to facilitate smooth air travel between India and France.

Defence Cooperation

The major ongoing defence-related projects include the purchase of Rafale aircrafts and the P-75 Scorpene Project. The first five Rafale jets arrived in India on 29 July 2020 and were inducted into the Indian Air Force at Air Force Station, Ambala on 10 September 2020. Florence Parly, Minister of the Armed Forces physically attended the induction ceremony and held a bilateral meeting with our defence minister. The second batch of three Rafales have also reached India.

Exercise VARUNA was held between the two Navies on 19 – 23 October 2020. The French International Liaison Officer (ILO) joined the Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Gurugram thus further deepening bilateral cooperation in the field of maritime domain awareness.

Space Cooperation

France remains a major supplier of components and equipment for the Indian space programme. ISRO and CNES are currently finalizing an agreement to implement the Trishna infrared satellite project between 2024 and 2030.

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

During the visit of the French President to India in March 2018, NPCIL and EDF concluded an "Industrial Way Forward Agreement". Discussions between EDF and NPCIL have been ongoing with the objective of expeditious realization of the JNPP project. In this regard, the JNPP Financing Committee Meeting was held in November 2020 to finalise the financing mechanism of the project.

Economic Relations

France is the ninth largest foreign investor in India with a cumulative FDI stock of USD 7.10 billion from April 2000 to December 2019, which represents 1.55% of the total FDI inflows into India. There are more than 150 Indian companies operating in France (including subsidiaries), employing more than 7,000 persons. In May 2020, bilateral trade stood at USD 456 million.

A Joint Economic Committee exists at the level of Ministers of Commerce and Foreign Trade from both sides. The 18th Joint Economic Committee meeting was held virtually on 27 November, 2020 Minister of State, Commerce and Industries and Franck Riester, Minister Delegate for Foreign Trade and Economic Attractiveness. They discussed ways to enhance bilateral trade and investment and launched the Fast Track Mechanism for Indian and French companies.

Cultural Cooperation

India was to be the Country of Honour for the 2020 edition of the Paris International Book Fair (Livre Paris) but the fair had to be called off due to Covid-19 pandemic. India is likely to be the Country of Honour in 2021. The next edition of Namaste France will be held in 2021-2022. The last edition was held in 2016 and was very well received in France.

Cooperation in the fields of S&T and Education

Currently, about 10,000 Indian students are pursuing various courses in France. The two countries have set themselves the target of doubling this number by 2025.

Germany

Germany is one of India's most important partners in Europe on account of its leadership role in the EU and its membership of the G4 alongside India. With the release of its Indo-Pacific guidelines, Germany has displayed interest in playing a bigger role in this region and it considers India an important partner in the Indo-Pacific.

In the uncertainty surrounding the post-pandemic scenario, Germany is now looking to diversify its economic supply chains, thus making India an attractive and reliable partner in this endeavour.

Besides the economic interest, other areas of convergence include an open, free and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, desire for reformed multilateralism and a rules-based international order.

The two sides hold Intergovernmental Consultations (IGC) once every two years covering a wide range of areas of mutual interest and cooperation. The next edition, sixth, of the IGC is to be held in 2021 in Germany.

Germany is a preferred destination for Indian students to pursue Higher education. More than 25,000 Indian students are currently studying in Germany. Around 800 German students are studying or doing internships in India.

Recent high-level political exchanges

Prime Minister and Chancellor Merkel held a telephone conversation on 02 April 2020 in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister wrote to Chancellor Merkel in December 2020 congratulating her on her 15 years in office as Chancellor and complimented her for the contributions she has made to the India-Germany bilateral relations and to global affairs.

The two leaders also held a video teleconference on 6 January 2021 where they discussed key issues of mutual importance including the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral ties, regional and global issues, particularly India-EU relations.

On 26 June and 26 September 2020, EAM participated in the virtual meetings of the Alliance for Multilateralism jointly organised by France and Germany.

On 26 June 2020, Foreign Secretary held virtual Foreign Office Consultations with his counterpart Miguel Berger, State Secretary, German Federal Foreign Ministry.

On 2 November 2020, Foreign Secretary visited Germany for bilateral consultations and meetings with his counterpart and other senior officials in the German government. He also called on Niels Annen, Minister of State, German Federal Foreign Ministry and met Jan Hecker, Foreign and Security Policy Advisor to the German Chancellor.



Foreign Secretary met Minister of State, German Foreign Office during the visit to Berlin, Germany on 02 November 2020

The High Defence Committee meeting between the Defence Secretary and his German counterpart was held virtually on 12 January 2021, where they discussed various areas of defence cooperation.

Covid-19 Cooperation

India and Germany closely cooperated at the peak of the pandemic in both countries. India supplied Germany with nearly

1.5 tonnes of HCQ and 240 MT of paracetamol (API) after having lifted export restrictions on these life-saving drugs. India also exported 8 million 3 ply surgical masks to Germany. Germany for its part pledged to provide grants worth EUR 20 million and EUR 460 million in short-term loans to India to help those most severely affected by the pandemic. Germany also provided 5000 testing kits to India at the beginning of the pandemic. From 22 July 2020 onwards the two sides established an “Air Bubble” arrangement for smooth travel between the two countries.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Germany is India’s largest trading partner in Europe. It has consistently been among India’s top ten global partners and was the eighth largest trading partner in FY 2019-20 (7th during FY 2020-21 up to August 2020).

Bilateral trade in 2019-20 was USD 22 billion. Indian exports during this period decreased by 6.87% reaching USD 8.29 billion and Indian imports decreased by 9.7% to USD 13.69 billion. During 2020-21 (until August 2020), bilateral trade was USD 6.74 billion. The global economic slowdown in 2019, and thereafter the Covid-19 pandemic have adversely impacted bilateral trade.

Germany is the 7th largest FDI source for India. The total FDI from Germany to India from April 2000-March 2020 is over USD 12 billion. In FY 2019-20, German FDI in India was USD 488 million. As per Indo-German Chamber of Commerce, there are more than 1,700 German companies in India. German investments in India have been mainly in sectors such as transportation, electrical equipment, metallurgical industries, services sector (particularly insurance), chemicals, construction activity, trading and automobiles among others.

Indian investments in Germany till date, is over USD 7 billion. As per CII, there are more than 213 Indian companies operating in Germany, and are involved in Trading, manufacturing,

R&D and innovation, and services. Indian companies have invested in Germany mainly through Mergers and Acquisitions (M&A). Investments are mostly in IT, automotive, pharma, biotech and manufacturing. The penetration of Indian software companies in German market is increasing. Major clusters of Indian companies are in the States of North Rhine Westphalia, Hesse, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg.

Recent Indian investments in Germany include opening of a new Digital Innovation Centre in Düsseldorf by Infosys to support their clients in digital transformation, JBM Group’s acquisition of majority stake in German auto components manufacturer Linde-Wiemann GmbH, establishment of the first global R&D Centre near Munich by Hero MotoCorp and L&T’s acquisition of German IT firm Nielsen+ Partner to strengthen its banking and financial services software segment.

Fast Track mechanisms are in place by DPIIT and German Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi) to address issues/grievances of companies in India and Germany.

Development Cooperation

Germany has been an important development cooperation partner for several decades. Total bilateral Technical and Financial Cooperation since it began in 1958, amounts to approx. USD 22.73 billion. Energy, sustainable economic development and environment and management of natural resources are priority areas.

Financial assistance from Germany is mainly as soft loan, composite loans or grants routed through KfW, German Government’s Development Bank. Technical assistance is provided through GIZ, German Government’s development agency.

Major strategic projects are in the energy sector (renewables, Green Energy Corridor Indo-German Solar Partnership), skill development and sustainable urban development (water/sanitation/waste, climate friendly urban mobility, smart cities).

India and Monaco have been cooperating on tax issues under the agreement for the exchange of information relating to tax matters and so far, have been satisfactorily responsive to the exchange of information requests from either side. Both sides are committed for first automatic exchanges from 2018 and the financial institutions in both jurisdictions are collecting financial account information in respect of residents of other jurisdictions from 1 January 2017 onwards.

Minister, António Costa, is the first Prime Minister of Indian origin in the western world is a testament to these deep linkages.

Following the successful State Visit by the Portuguese President to India in February 2020, wherein 57 new co-operation agreements were signed, Portugal and India continued to deepen and diversify their bilateral relations in key areas such as defence, scientific research, multilateral cooperation, Covid management, Migration and Mobility, IT and Startups, economic and commercial partnership.

Recent high-level political exchanges

On 05 May 2020, Prime Minister spoke over the phone with Prime Minister Antonio Costa, to discuss the Covid-19 pandemic. The leaders exchanged notes on their efforts to contain the outbreak, pledging mutual assistance on how to collaborate on research and innovation aimed at fighting Covid-19. Prime Minister thanked Prime Minister Costa for extending the validity of visas of Indian travellers in Portugal whereas PM Costa acknowledged the help rendered by the Indian authorities to Portuguese citizens in India.

In a virtual meeting on 14 October, EAM and his Portuguese counterpart Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva undertook a detailed review of bilateral ties, including follow-up on the outcomes and agreements of the State Visit of the President of Portugal in February 2020 to India and cooperation related to the Covid-19 crisis.

Covid-19 cooperation

Around 120 Indian citizens were repatriated to India on special flights under the ‘Vande Bharat’ initiative. Following an official Portuguese request for HCQ tablets during Covid-19, India lifted the export ban, allowing a sale of 2.5 million HCQ tablets to Portugal. India also supplied Portugal with 15 tonnes of sanitary equipment such as protective gloves.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Bilateral trade in goods surpassed USD 1 billion in the 2019 calendar year for the first time in history, reaching USD 1.06 billion and recording an annual growth rate of 21% year-on-year. Portuguese investment into India has doubled in the last two years from USD 49 million to USD 99 million as of December 2019 in sectors like petrochemicals, industrial moulds, textiles and leather.

Indian investment in Portugal has also touched USD 350 million and seen some significant deals in recent years. However, India-Portugal trade between January and August 2020 dipped to EUR 483.22 million mainly due to Covid19 (down 13.79% on 2019), with the trade balance continuing to be firmly in India’s favour. Indian imports were worth EUR 62.68 million (down 27.89% from 2019) whereas Indian exports were worth EUR 420.54 million (down 13.3% from 2019).

Defence

Under MoUs signed during the Presidential visit, Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and ENP Shipyard Portugal are discussing co-production of Ferry Boats, Landing Crafts, OPVs and exploring market opportunities in African and Latin American markets. HAL is in discussions with Portuguese defence company CEiiA for assistance in obtaining EASA (European Authority for Aviation Safety) certification for HAL’s Light Utility Helicopters and for establishing a civilian MRO Services Facility at Nasik. India’s VEDA Defence and Portuguese UA Vision are working on joint design and development of a UAV prototype for possible use of the Indian Air Force.

Science and Technology

Portugal is only one of the 4 countries with whom India launches joint research projects every two years. Under the Joint Research Fund of EUR 4 Million announced during the visit of Prime Minister to Portugal in 2017, 423 joint research proposals have been submitted in August 2020, in response to the inaugural call for proposals, which also includes Covid-19 related research.

The robust scientific collaboration between India and Portugal is also evident in the fact that 16 S&T related outcomes emanated from the President’s visit earlier this year. In fact, one single Portuguese institute INESC-TEC has 11 MoUs with its counterpart Institutes in India. Despite the pandemic, INESC-TEC and its Indian counterparts like IIT Madras, NIT Goa, and CSIR-NIO have initiated projects in key areas like oceanography, robotics, assessing plastic levels in the Arabian sea and use of drones for disaster management.

India-Portugal Technology Summit was held online during 7-9 December 2020. It was jointly organised by the Department of Science and Technology (DST - India) and the Science and Technology Foundation (FCT - Portugal), in collaboration with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII - India). The summit included thematic sessions on Healthtech, Cleantech, Energy, Climate Change, Watertech, Agrotech, Space-Ocean Interactions and IT/ICT and Advanced technologies. Minister of Science and Technology, Health and Family Welfare and Earth Sciences inaugurated the summit and the digital exhibition on 7 December 2020. As the designated Guest of Honour, Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education Manuel Heitor also addressed the inaugural session.

Culture

To commemorate the 150th birth anniversary, a bust of Mahatma Gandhi was installed in the famous tourist city of Albufeira on 02 October, 2020 which is also home to a large and growing Indian diaspora.

Ireland

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and consequent lockdowns, a lot of activities of the Mission had to be curtailed or shifted to digital platforms. The Embassy adapted to the changed circumstances and continued its functions, including rendering consular, visa and passport services in accordance with local guidelines.

Bilateral political and economic relations between India and Ireland remained upbeat, despite the Covid-19 challenge. In the midst of the pandemic, Prime Minister had a telecon with the then Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar (on 22 April 2020) to discuss collaboration in pharmaceuticals and medical research in joint global fight against the pandemic. Varadkar expressed appreciation for the exceptional role played by Indian doctors and nurses in difficult times. The commemorative centenary of Connaught Rangers Mutiny, one of the most extraordinary acts of defiance against the British Empire in India on 28 June 1920 by Irish soldiers serving in the British army, was organised in Dublin, led by Leo Varadkar. The 35th anniversary of the crash of Air India Kanishka off the South West coast of Ireland near Ahakista was marked virtually (23 June 2020) with the local community. With the lifting of pandemic restrictions, Mission has proposed a high level visit by EAM/CIM as well as an Irish Parliamentary delegation to India in Q-I 2021 to provide a spur to bilateral relationship. At the multilateral level, both India and Ireland were elected as non-permanent members of the UNSC for 2021-22, Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney spoke to EAM (04 August 2020) to discuss the common agenda of multilateralism, peacekeeping, climate change and rule-based international order. Ireland supported India's candidature to Commission on Population and Development (2021-25), Commission on Status of Women (2021-25) and Committee for Programme and Coordination (2021-23); UNESCO-ICH; and ACABQ.

Parliamentary Elections and Government Formation

Following inconclusive general elections in Ireland a 3-party historic coalition Government comprising Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael and the Greens, was formed on 26 June 2020. Micheal Martin, leader of the Fianna Fail was elected as the 15th Prime Minister on 27 June 2020 , on rotational basis with leader of the Fine Gael, Leo Varadkar appointed as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Varadkar will serve as Prime Minister from mid-December 2022.

Cooperation within the framework of the EU

Mission has identified niche areas of CT, climate change, renewable energy and cyber security for strengthened cooperation.

Covid-19 Pandemic

At bilateral level, as demonstration of its commitment, India supplied around 1,700 MT does of paracetamol to Ireland. To assist the large Indian community and students, the Embassy set up various support structures, including the Community Support Groups (CSGs), in all major cities viz. Dublin, Cork, Galway, Wexford, Athlone, Sligo and Limerick, representing members from diverse professions like doctors, academics, clinical psychologists, entrepreneurs and students. Effective partnerships were also set up with regional Indian Associations representing different provinces of India, religious bodies and voluntary groups. For the welfare of Indian students (5,000 throughout Ireland), liaison was maintained with the Heads of major Universities for establishment of special student support systems. Regular webinar interactions were held with Indian community, students and entrepreneurs. To lift spirits, virtual Yoga, dance, meditation, cookery and film screening were held. Two Vande Bharat repatriation flights were organised to Bengaluru-Kochi (26 May 2020) and Delhi-Mumbai (03 June 2020).

IDY and Ayurveda Day 2020

IDY 2020 was dedicated to frontline staff in Ireland, representing nurses, police force, fire service, National Ambulance, Dublin Bus, hospitals and cleaning services (20 June 2020). It was highlighted that the quintessential message of Yoga promoting holistic health, community connectivity, peace and harmony was particularly relevant in the time of Covid and resonated strongly with the core value system critical to tackling the pandemic. The live-streamed event was joined by more than 10,000 people practicing from home, as per stipulated local health protocol. Other events included virtual Yoga quiz competition, My Life-My Yoga video blogging competition, online Yoga films and free online Yoga classes offered by some Institutes. Ayurveda Day (13 November 2020) was marked through various online events with participation of Ayurveda practitioners, patients and other stakeholders.

Gandhi@150 finale events

The Embassy, in collaboration with the local institutions/colleges/schools organised various events, mainly on virtual platforms. These included: "Gandhi Katha" by Shobhana Radhakrishna, Gandhian Forum for Ethical Corporate Governance (28 September 2020); screening of "Lage Raho Munna Bhai" (29 September 2020); drawing Competition and Quiz on Gandhi for children (30 September 2020); talk by Jacob Pulickan, Founder and Director at Gandhi Centre for Rural Development, Swadesh and Gandhi Darshan (01 October 2020); panel discussion in partnership with University College Dublin (UCD) (02 October 2020); Gandhi commemorative event at John Scottus School, Dublin (School has been teaching Sanskrit

since inception in 1987) (02 October 2020); and inter-cultural talk on "Mahatma Gandhi's Contribution to World Religion and Spirituality", organised by Vedic Hindu Cultural Centre of Ireland (VHCCI) (03 October 2020). Former Irish PM, Bertie Ahern (he was PM from 1997 – 2008 and had visited India in 2006) also contributed to the celebrations with a short video message on his impressions of Gandhi. The Embassy has been trying to promote Khadi collaboration with Irish industry.

Culture

The Embassy assisted the Indian community in celebration of virtual regional festivals. The first Hindu temple in Ireland was inaugurated (22 August 2020) by Vedic Hindu Culture Centre, Ireland (VHCCI), towards realization of socio-cultural-religious aspirations of the community. The Teachers Day was organised (07 September 2020) through virtual panel discussion with Indian-origin teachers in Ireland, centered around propagation of Indian culture, languages and value system. Hindi Divas and Vishwa Hindi Divas were marked through week-long campaign of events, centred around #WordOfHindi. Constitution Day (26 November 2020) was marked by events organised in association with Indian students representing various Irish Universities. The 11th Indian Film Festival in Ireland (IFFI) was held (20-23 November 2020) on a virtual platform with screening of regional films and documentaries, panel discussions and cultural programmes. PBD 2020 programmes were organised with robust participation by the local diaspora. ICCR short-term Chairs on Indian Studies were proposed for University College Cork, Trinity College Dublin and University College Dublin. The project relating to unveiling of a plaque in Limerick to commemorate centenary of Max Arthur Macauliffe, credited for translating Guru Granth Sahib into English in 20th Century was shortlisted for top award by the Irish Government in cultural integration category.

Economic

Trade between India and Ireland for 2019-20 was EUR 1.08 billion, with Indian exports amounting to EUR 590.43 million and imports EUR 495.74 million, leaving a trade balance of EUR 94.69 million in India's favour. As per the last available figures, trade in services amounted to EUR 4.02 billion, with Ireland exports at EUR 3.12 billion and imports at EUR 896 million, with a balance of trade in Ireland's favour by EUR 2.23 billion. Trade from April – September 2020 was EUR 339.94 million, as compared to EUR 429.75 million for April-September 2019, reflecting a decrease of 20.89%, impacted by the pandemic. Opportunities for export of Indian manufactured PPEs and di-

Belgium

India and Belgium enjoy excellent bilateral relations. The ties further strengthened, with focus on enhanced multilateral engagement, as Belgium held the non-permanent membership of the UN Security Council for the period 2019-2020.

agnostic kits were explored. TCS Ireland entered into an agreement (November 2020) with Prudent Financial Inc. (PFI), acquiring the 1500 staff and select assets of Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd, subsidiary of PFI based in Co. Letterkenny. Major MOUs on Migration and Mobility Partnership as well as mutual cooperation between IFSCA and the Central Bank of Ireland were pursued. The Embassy conducted its activities on virtual platforms, with regular webinars with business leaders, centered around bilateral commercial opportunities, post-Covid, including in the sectors of new supply chain technologies, fintech, medtech and remote technologies, as well as potential for recruitment of more healthcare workers in Ireland. Ambassador, in particular, gave interviews to Indian Business Association (IIBA), ABP news, Business Standard, Irish "Diplomat.ie" and TechSparks (India's leading Start-up Tech Conference). There was robust participation of Indian-Irish scientists in VAI-BHAV 2020. Commercial Reports were undertaken in the sectors of ICT, Pharmaceuticals, Civil Aviation and Brexit's Impact on Irish Hi-Tech. Tourism roadshows with focus on medical and wellness tourism were planned for Dublin and Cork (Q-I 2021).

Provincial Outreach

Dependent on easing of internal travel restrictions, the Embassy continued with its provincial outreach activities, mainly to explore post-Covid collaboration, particularly in economic and medical fields. Ambassador visited the Counties of Sligo (June); Port Laoise, Monaghan, Wicklow and Carlow (July); Meath, Leitrim and Carrick-on-Shannon (August); Clare and Offaly (September), as well as Galway and Waterford (December). During these visits, meetings were held with the Mayors/City Council officials, Presidents of local Chambers of Commerce and Enterprise Centres as well as Heads of Universities. Site visits were made to local business firms with potential for collaboration with India. These were also important opportunities to pay tribute to Indian frontline workers at city hospitals for their outstanding work during the Covid. A key element of the programme was interaction with members of the Indian community in the Counties, to assure full Embassy support.

Indian Community

There are approximately 45,000 persons of Indian origin in Ireland, approximately 26,500 PIOs 18,500 NRIs. The bulk of the community is in health-care, IT, engineering and senior management positions. The community is well integrated into Irish society. During the period April – November 2020, 1,528 passports and 110 visas were issued, 421 documents were attested, and 127 new births and 5 deaths were registered.

Covid-19 cooperation

In general, cooperation in the fight against Covid-19 dominated the bilateral agenda. 1000kgs of HCQ(API) was exported to

Belgium after the lifting of restrictions by the Government of India.

Trade and economic relations

The central pillar of India-Belgium bilateral relations has traditionally been trade and investment. The total bilateral trade in goods between India and Belgium from January to July 2020 totals EUR 4.39 billion (USD 4.87 billion). The total bilateral trade in services between India and Belgium is EUR 1.05billion (USD1.24 billion). Total investment by Belgium in India stood at USD 1,876 million from April 2000 to June 2019, making it the 19th most important investor in India.

Luxembourg

India enjoys warm and friendly relations with the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg.

Political exchanges

On 19 November 2020, the Prime Minister held a Virtual Summit with Xavier Bettel, Prime Minister of Luxembourg which was the first high level engagement between the two countries in nearly 20 years. A Joint Statement was issued and three financial sector MOUs were concluded to coincide with the Summit.



India-Luxembourg Virtual Summit held on 19 November 2020

Cultural cooperation

To mark the commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a statue of Mahatma Gandhi was inaugurated in the city of Antwerp on 02 October 2020.

Scientific cooperation

Belgian Company AMOS organised a celebratory event on 16 October 2020, on the successful completion of their project of 2.5m telescope for the Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad. Mr. Willy Borsus, Vice-President of Wallonia, and Minister of the Economy graced the occasion with his presence. The telescope will be installed at Mount Abu, Rajasthan. The 5th meeting of the India-Belgium Joint Committee between Department of Science and Technology (India) and the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office was held on 18 January 2021

On 30 July 2020, the Luxembourg chapter of The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) was launched; the event was organised virtually with special guest Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs, giving a keynote address to chartered accountants fraternity and marking the unique milestone of expanding the global presence of the ICAI with 50 such chapters to date.

Economic relations

The India-Belgium Luxembourg Economic Union Joint Commission (India-BLEU JCM) established in 1997 is the main forum for deliberating on bilateral economic and commercial issues. A range of subjects including trade diversification, investment, economic cooperation, renewable energy, clean-tech, water treatment, ICT, services, traditional medicines, yoga, tourism, market access issues, multilateral cooperation, etc. are discussed at this platform.

The Netherlands

High-level political exchanges

EAM and Stef Blok, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands had telephonic conversations in June and November 2020. Commerce and Industry Minister spoke to his counterpart Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation of the Netherlands in May 2020.

Covid-19 cooperation

India and the Netherlands facilitated airline operations for the repatriation and also granted extension of visas for the stranded nationals of each other. More than 2000 Indian nationals who were stranded in the Netherlands were repatriated.

Over 350 thousand packs of HCQ tablets were exported to the Netherlands after the ban on exports was lifted which was appreciated by the Netherlands government. An Air Bubble Arrangement with the Netherlands was effectuated from 1 November 2020.

Economic cooperation

The 2nd Joint Working Group meeting between the Ministry of Jal Shakti and Dutch Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management under the Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation in the field of Water Management took place in a virtual format on 22 October 2020.

Multilateral cooperation

India and the Netherlands continued to cooperate and support each other in global initiatives and multilateral organizations. In May 2020 the Netherlands ratified the revised Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). The Netherlands extended support for India`s candidature for the non-permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. The Netherlands has also agreed to join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.

At the invitation of the Dutch Prime Minister, Prime Minister addressed the Climate Adaptation Summit hosted by the Netherlands on 25 January 2021.

Italy

India stood in solidarity with the people and the Government of Italy at the peak of its Covid19 pandemic. India gifted 40,000 surgical masks, 100,000 hand gloves, 20,000 headcovers and 20,000 shoe covers to Italy in March 2020, which was highly appreciated by the Italian Government. Foreign Minister Di Maio tweeted his government`s gratitude on arrival of the shipment and the Italian foreign ministry said, “we are grateful for the friendship and generosity in this time of need”.

High-level political exchanges

India-Italy relations received a fresh impetus with the telephonic conversation between Prime Minister and Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte on 08 May 2020. This momentum was carried forward with the virtual Bilateral Summit between India and Italy held on 6 November 2020 to comprehensively review the broad framework of the bilateral relationship and also strengthen cooperation against common global challenges, including the Covid-19 pandemic. Both nations adopted the Action Plan for an enhanced Partnership between India and Italy (2020-2024). 15 MoUs/Agreements in various sectors such as energy, fisheries, ship building, design etc. were signed coinciding with the Summit.



India-Italy Virtual Summit held on 06 November 2020

EAM had a virtual meeting with his Italian counterpart Luigi Di Maio, on 11 December 2020 to follow up on the Virtual Summit level outcomes and review progress in bilateral ties including the possibilities of cooperation in the post-Covid scenario.

Economic relations

In the run up to the VVIP Summit in November, a number of meetings were held including a meeting with European Business and Technology Centre on 07 October; a high-level meeting on the emerging opportunities in the fisheries sector on 14 October; with SNAM on 26 October; with Indian-Italian health experts on 27 October; India-Italy High-level Dialogue on Economics Relation on 28 October; with Chairman of Fincantieri on 29 October; and with representatives of the Indian companies based in Italy on 30 October.

On 24 November 2020, the second edition of Fast Track mech-

anism meeting took place.

Labour and migrant worker issues

A large number of workers seek employment in Italy. They are subject to exploitation. Italy is taking various measures to tackle exploitation, including setting up of an inter-ministerial body and adopting a three-year action plan for 2020-2022 to combat exploitation of migrant workers. The Ministry is also extending support for providing integration services to migrant workers. Under this activity, a pre-departure facilitation was provided at Jalandhar in 2019, which benefitted around 50 Indian workers. Both sides agreed on proper dissemination of information on various measures that have been taken by the Italian side to tackle exploitation of migrant workers. A Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement is under discussion and when concluded will help those seeking employment.

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.

San Marino has extended support to India's candidature in UN-ESCO Executive Board, International Maritime Organization and also supported India's initiative on Coalition of Disaster

Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI).

Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at USD 0.40 million, reflecting an increase of 29% in 2019-20 over 2018-19. India's exports to San Marino increased by 62.65 % and stood at USD 0.25 million while imports from San Marino decreased by 5.11% reaching USD 0.15 million.

Spain

Spain and India maintain close ties. Prime Minister spoke to President Pedro Sanchez on 04 April 2020. EAM met Spanish Foreign Minister Arancha Gonzalez Laya on the side-lines of the Munich Security Conference on 16 February 2020. EAM

spoke with the Spanish Foreign Minister twice during the early phase of the pandemic. Spanish Foreign Minister thanked India for sending Hydroxychloroquine and other medicines to Spain at the peak of the crisis.

EAM had a virtual meeting with his Spanish counterpart on 23 December 2020. Both leaders undertook a detailed review of bilateral ties and appreciated the upward trajectory in the bilateral ties witnessed in the recent years. They agreed to maintain the momentum particularly in new areas of cooperation such as mobility, defence cooperation, and energy. The leaders also discussed India - EU relations and agreed to work closely in the context of the forthcoming India-EU Leaders Summit proposed to be held in Portugal in May 2021.

The 6th India-Spain Foreign Office Consultations were held virtually on 21 July co-chaired by Secretary (West) and the Spanish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Ibero-America and the Caribbean Cristina Gallach. Both sides exchanged views on the response to Covid-19 and post-Covid recovery priorities and opportunities for enhancing bilateral economic cooperation. The two sides reviewed agreements under consideration and ways to strengthen economic, business, cultural, scientific, educational and people-level cooperation.

Covid-19 cooperation

Spain was one of the countries worst hit by Covid-19, during which there was close high-level cooperation. India exported 2500 kgs of HCQ (API) to Spain to meet its needs.

Economic cooperation

Andorra

Relations between India and the Principality of Andorra remain cordial and friendly. The first ever Republic Day celebrations in Andorra were held on 27 January 2020 and were graced by the Andorran Foreign Minister, Maria Ubach Font as the Chief

Commercial ties remain strong between India and Spain. Trade delegations started on a high note with the tourism fair FITUR 2020 in January and gifts and decoration fair InterGift in February. Virtual engagements continued through webinars and VBSMs with business chambers, investment agencies, trade associations, consulting and law firms. Post Covid19 reforms and opportunities in India received considerable interest from Spanish companies.

Cultural relations

The unveiling of 'The Head of the Giant' painting on Gandhiji by Cristobal Gabarron, one of Spain's greatest living mixed-media artist on 24 October 2020 in Valladolid in an impressive exhibition devoted to his works and a special video message from Maria Pilar Llop Cuenca, the President of the Senate of Spain marked the conclusion of Gandhi@150 celebrations.

Spain hosted the first outgoing cultural delegation from ICCR since the pandemic began and also the first to celebrate Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar in his centenary outside India. The Ravi Shankar Quartet Tour (07-12 October) and the 6th edition of India en Concierto biennial cultural festival (09-11 October) marked the first physical cultural events.

The European Union



Prime Minister participated at 15th India-EU Virtual Summit on 15 July 2020

Recent high-level political exchanges

The 15th India-EU summit was held in virtual mode due to Covid-19 pandemic. Prime Minister represented the Indian side while European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula Von Der Leyen represented the EU. The summit mainly covered joint response to the Covid-19 pandemic, strengthening India-EU Strategic Partnership and its various dimensions, as well as convergences and collaboration on the global arena covering multilateralism, international organizations and contemporary developments. The Summit helped to consolidate the partnership with the European Union and provided a new roadmap upto 2025 to upgrade the relationship in all areas including by establishing new dialogue mechanisms such as high-level dialogue on bilateral trade and investment and one on maritime security.

The leaders adopted a Joint Statement, the India-EU Strategic Partnership: Roadmap to 2025 and the Joint Declaration on Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy reaffirming their commitment to strengthen the EU-India strategic partnership. Further, an Agreement for Research and Development Cooperation in the field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was signed and an Agreement for Scientific and Technological Cooperation was renewed for another 5 years.

A virtual meeting was held between Speaker of the Lok Sabha, and the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli on 13 January 2021. On 28 May 2020, EAM held a telephone conversation with EU High Representative/Vice President, Josep Borrell.

To take stock of the implementation of the decisions taken during the Summit, the 7th round of Foreign Policy and Security Consultations between India and the European Union was held on 22 October 2020 in virtual mode. Indian side was led by Secretary (West), while the EU side by Deputy Secretary-General for Political Affairs, European External Action Service.

Economic relations

During the 15th India-EU Summit, it was agreed by both sides to establish a High-Level Dialogue at ministerial level to provide political guidance to the bilateral trade and investment relation. The first meeting of the Dialogue was held on 22 January 2021 and co-chaired by Commerce and Industries Minister, and European Commissioner for Trade, Valdis Dombrovskis.

In addition to the above, the annual meeting of India-EU Financial Services Dialogue (10 June 2020); 3rd Project Advisory Committee of Technical Project under India-EU Common Agenda on Migration and Mobility (02 July 2020);13th Joint Working Group (JWG) on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures/ Technical Barriers to Trade (09 July 2020); JWG on Pharmaceuticals, Biotechnology and Medical Devices (15 October 2020); JWG on Renewables (13 November 2020) ; 11th JWG on Agriculture and Marine Products (9 December 2020); JWG on Energy Efficiency, Smart Grids, and Electricity Markets (4 December 2020); JWG on Energy Security (14 January 2021); and the 1st India-EU Intellectual Property Rights Dialogue (14 January 2021) were held.

The total bilateral trade in goods between India and EU-27 from January to July 2020 was EUR 36.11billion (USD 40.09 billion) which is a decline of 22.5% compared to the same trading period in 2019 (EUR 36.11billion compared to EUR 46.61billion). The total bilateral trade in services between India and EU-27 is EUR 29.6bn (USD 33.15 billion). At 17.31% of the total FDI flows to India , the EU is India's largest source of FDI. FDI flows from the EU-27 from April 2000 to March 2020 totalled USD 81.35 billion.

Security Cooperation

India and the EU have 4 dialogue mechanisms to discuss security cooperation. Meetings of all the dialogues— 12th Counter Terrorism Dialogue (19 November 2020); 6th consultations on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (23 November 2020); 6th Cyber Dialogue (14 December 2020); and 1st Maritime Security Dialogue (20 January 2021), were conducted in virtual format.

9 THE AMERICAS

United States of America

High-level Interactions

On 04 April 2020, Prime Minister and Former President Trump exchanged views telephonically on the Covid-19 pandemic and its impact on the global well-being and economy and agreed to deploy the full strength of the India – US partnership to resolutely and effectively combat Covid-19. The two leaders also spoke on 2 June 2020 and exchanged views on topical issues including the Covid-19 pandemic. Former President Trump also extended an invitation to Prime Minister to attend the next G-7 Summit to be held in the US (which was subsequently postponed).

On 27 June 2020, Prime Minister virtually addressed the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Physicians of Indian Origin (AAPIO). On 22 July 2020, Prime Minister addressed the US-India Business Council's virtual India Ideas Summit and 45th Annual Meeting. On 03 September 2020, Prime Minister addressed the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum's virtual third Annual Leadership Summit. On 17 November 2020, Prime Minister virtually addressed the Bloomberg New Econ-

omy Forum.

The Former President of the US conferred the highest decoration, the Legion of Merit, Degree Chief Commander, to Prime Minister on 21 December 2020 in recognition of the Prime Minister's steadfast leadership and vision for India's emergence as a global power, and exemplary contribution made by him for advancement of the India-US strategic partnership and promoting global peace and prosperity. The Legion of Merit, in the highest degree of the Chief Commander, is a prestigious award conferred typically upon Heads of State or Heads of Government.

Prime Minister congratulated President Joseph R. Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris on social media on their election. On 17 November, 2020 Prime Minister had a warm and friendly telephone conversation with President Biden. They agreed to work closely to further advance the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and discussed their priorities, including containing the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting access to affordable vaccines, tackling climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region.

India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue

The third annual India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue took place in New Delhi on 27 October 2020 led by Raksha Mantri, and EAM on our side, with the U.S. side led by Former Secretary of Defense Mark T. Esper and Former Secretary of State Michael

R. Pompeo. They reviewed bilateral relations in defence, strategic and security domains as well as important regional and global issues. Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper also held separate bilateral meetings with Raksha Mantri and EAM respectively.



India - US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue held in New Delhi on 27 October 2020

During the visit, Secretary Pompeo and Secretary Esper jointly called on Prime Minister. The two former Secretaries also held a meeting with the National Security Advisor. A Joint Statement was issued on the conclusion of the Dialogue.

MoUs/Agreements Signed

The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement between the Ministry of Defence and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, US Department of Defense.

MoU for Technical Cooperation in Earth Observations and Earth Sciences between the Ministry of Earth Sciences and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the US

Arrangement extending the duration of the MoU concerning cooperation with the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India.

Agreement for the Electronic Exchange of Customs Data between the Postal Operators.

Letter of Intent between the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences, Ministry of AYUSH and the Department of Health and Human Services, for cooperation in the field of Ayurveda and Cancer Research.

Ministerial-level Engagements

On 14 July 2020, the India-US CEO Forum was held in virtual format. Following the virtual Forum, Minister of Commerce and

Industry, and former U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Wilbur Ross held a telephone conversation and discussed bilateral issues of mutual interest.

On 17 July 2020, the India-US Strategic Energy Partnership Ministerial Meeting was held in virtual mode. The meeting was co-chaired by Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and former US Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette. An MoU between the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas and U.S. Department of Energy was signed on co-operation in Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPRs).

Minister of Commerce and Industry, held telephonic conversations with former US Trade Representative, Robert E. Lighthizer on 02 July 2020, 26 August 2020 and 9 January 2021.

Apart from regular telephone calls with his then counterpart Secretary Pompeo, EAM had a bilateral meeting with Secretary Pompeo on the side-lines of the 2nd Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of Australia, India, Japan and US on 06 October 2020 in Tokyo.

Former US Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen Biegun visited India from 12-14 October 2020 for a bilateral meeting with Foreign Secretary and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations. They also reviewed regional and global issues of shared interest. Deputy Secretary Biegun met EAM and National Security Advisor. He also participated in the inaugural session of the 4th India-U.S. Forum held in virtual format on 12 October 2020.

Foreign Secretary had a virtual interaction with the Board Members of the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) on 19 November 2020. Foreign Secretary also had a telephone conversation to bid farewell to then US Deputy Secretary of State, Stephen E. Biegun on 7 January 2020.

Other Major Engagements

Vice Chief of Army Staff visited US Army Pacific Command in Hawaii from 16 – 19 October 2020. US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad visited India in May and September 2020 and met EAM and National Security Advisor.

Cooperation in combating Covid-19 pandemic

India and the US are working together to facilitate the evacuation of Indian nationals in each other's countries, strengthen supply chains of essential items such as medicines, exchange best practices on Covid-19 management, and expand cooperation on development of therapeutics and vaccines to counter Covid-19.

India responded to the US request for pharmaceuticals (hydroxychloroquine, paracetamol and APIs), PPEs, masks and other essential medical supplies. The US Government donated 200 ventilators to Indian Red Cross Society through the US agency for International Development.

Under the Vande Bharat Mission, the Indian Embassy and Consulates facilitated repatriation of over 80,000 stranded In-

dian nationals from the US through over 325 VBM flights till end-October 2020. A special bilateral travel arrangement (air transport bubble) was established by the Ministry of Civil Aviation of India for 24 countries including the U.S.

Consultations/Dialogues

Despite restrictions posed by Covid-19 pandemic, bilateral engagement continued unabated, albeit in virtual format.

Defence Cooperation: Defence relationship continued its positive trajectory with intensification in defence trade, joint exercises, personnel exchanges, and cooperation in maritime security and counter-piracy. The following meetings were held:

- Inaugural meeting between Indian Defence Innovation Organization (DIO-iDEX) and US Defence Innovation Unit on 22 July 2020.
- The 10th meeting of the India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) was held virtually on 15 September 2020. The meeting reviewed the ongoing cooperation in defence technology cooperation.
- The first meeting of the India-US Defence Cyber Dialogue was held virtually on 17 September 2020.

Military Exercises: The Malabar Naval Exercise, was held in the Indian Ocean with the participation of Naval forces of India, US, Japan and Australia in two phases from 3-6 November 2020 and 17 -20 November 2020 respectively.



Indian Navy jets participating in Malabar 2020

Economic and Commercial Relations: Bilateral economic and commercial relations remained robust with a sustained increase in the bilateral trade over the last few years. The US is India's largest trading partner (goods and services combined). According to US official statistics, bilateral trade increased by 4.3% to reach USD 148.8 billion in 2019. In 2020, bilateral trade in

goods reached USD 26.55 billion during April-August 2020.

The US is India's 5th largest source of FDI. According to US official statistics, the US FDI in India reached USD 45.9 billion in 2019, an increase of 8 % from 2018 level of USD 42 billion. Investments are growing in both directions. Indian companies

have a cumulative investment of USD 16.7 billion in the US and have generated about 125,000 jobs in the U.S.

A MoU between Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India and US Patent and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce of the US was signed on 2 December 2020.

Science & Technology and Space Cooperation

India-US cooperation in Science and Technology is multi-faceted and has been growing steadily under the framework of the India-US Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in October 2005, which was renewed for a period of ten years in September 2019. The Indo-US Science and Technology Forum(IUSSTF), a bi-national autonomous organization established to promote cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation has continued to play an important role in strengthening cooperation in this field.

After the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, both India and the US are focussing on collaboration particularly in health and medical research. The IUSSTF has granted awards to 8 virtual research centres and 11 start-ups. At least 4 Indian companies have been collaborating with US based agencies to develop and mass produce Covid-19 vaccine, which are at different stages of clinical development and assessment.

India and the U.S. have a long history of cooperation in the civil space arena that includes cooperation in earth observation, satellite navigation, space launch and space science and exploration. A virtual meeting between, Scientific Secretary, Indian Space Research Organisation and Thomas Zurbuchen, Associate Administrator, U.S. National Aeronautical and Space Administration was held on 28 September to review the ongoing ISRO – NSA joint activities.

ISRO and NASA are working together to realise a joint microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, named NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR). This joint mission is targeted to be launched by 2022. The NISAR Joint Steering Group meeting was held virtually on 18 August 2020.

Canada

High Level engagements

Prime Minister spoke twice to Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the telephone on 28 April 2020 and 16 June 2020 and discussed regional and global issues. On 08 October, Prime Minister delivered an inaugural address at the virtual Invest India 2020 Conference organised by Fairfax Financial Holdings Ltd.

EAM spoke with the Canadian Foreign Minister Francois-Philippe Champagne regularly about Covid-19 pandemic

In addition, an MoU between Nanaji Deshmukh Veterinary Science University, Jabalpur and Cornell University, New York on Cooperation in Assessment of Impact of Health on Wildlife Conservation in India was signed on 5 November 2020.

International Day of Yoga

The Indian Embassy and the Consulates organised the 6th International Day of Yoga on 21 June 2020 virtually on the theme ‘Ghar Ghar Se Yoga-Yoga at Home’. A large number of yoga enthusiasts from all over the US joined the virtual celebration of the Yoga Day.

Gandhi@150

The Indian Embassy and Consulates held several events highlighting Mahatma Gandhi’s philosophy, ideals and teachings as part of the two-year long celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, culminating in commemorative Gandhi@150 events organised on 02 October 2020.

Think-Tank Exchanges

The vibrant interaction and exchange of ideas between think tanks in India and the U.S. on various aspects of India-U.S. relations continued in the virtual format. The Ministry, in association with the Ananta Centre, organised the Fourth India-U.S. Forum on 12 October 2020 virtually bringing together eminent persons from the government, politics, think-tanks, industry and media for extensive discussions on India-U.S. relations.

People-to-People Ties

Ties: People to people linkages have been one of the key drivers of the India-US partnership. The 4 million strong Indian diaspora in the US has played an important role in bringing the countries closer. The Indian skilled professionals have contributed to the growth and development of the US economy and provided an enduring foundation for the growth and development of the India-US strategic partnership. The US continues to remain an important destination for Indian students with over 200,000 Indian students currently enrolled in various courses in US institutions.

management, evacuation of stranded citizens and regional and global issues of mutual interest. EAM participated in the meeting of the Ministerial Group of Foreign Ministers for coordination on Covid-19 Response on 3 November 2020, convened by the Canadian Foreign Minister.

Commerce and Industry Minister spoke with Canadian Minister for Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade, Mary Ng on several occasions and discussed issues pertaining to maintenance of global supply chains; pharmaceuticals products availability;

ty; G-20 cooperation and matters related to bilateral trade.

Finance, Trade and Industry

Bilateral trade was worth USD 2.17 billion from 01 April to 31 August 2020. India’s exports to Canada during this period were USD 1.006 billion and imports from Canada were USD 1.174 billion. Canadian Pension Funds have pledged to invest over USD 50 billion in India. India and Canada are discussing the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA). Virtual meetings on CEPA, and BIPPA between India and Canada were held on 22 June 2020 and on 27 October 2020.

In order to enhance India-Canada bilateral trade and attract Canadian investments into India, several conferences and buyers-sellers meetings with Ministerial participation from both sides were organised virtually between Canadian and Indian businesses in association with industry associations and chambers of commerce.

Science and Technology

Under the India-Canada Centre for Innovative Multidisciplinary Partnership to Accelerate Community Transformation and Sustainability (IC-IMPACTS) program between Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, Canada (NSERC) Canada, 10 projects are under implementation in the areas of Safe and Sustainable Infrastructure, Energy conservation and Integrated Water Management. DST has been also supporting Industrial R&D projects with Canada which have potential for application. The virtual Annual Conference of IC-IMPACTS was held from 6-7 August 2020.

An MoU between Zoological Survey of India and International Barcode of Life Corporation, Canada was signed on 29 June 2020 on DNA Barcoding of various species to make inventory and monitor faunal diversity.

The Principal Scientific Advisor of India had a virtual interaction with the Chief Science Adviser to Prime Minister of Canada Dr. Nemer on Covid-19 collaboration on 5 November 2020.

An MoU for Cooperation between the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research under Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Canadian High Arctic Research Stations operated by POLAR Knowledge Canada was signed on 26 February 2020. An Mou on S&T Cooperation between the Department of S&T, Department of Biotechnology, India and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada is also likely to be renewed in the first quarter of 2021.

Education

India has now become the top source of foreign students with 230,000 Indian students studying in Canada. 69 reputed Canadian faculty members have visited India, so far under the Global

Initiative of Academic Works programme for teaching assignments in Indian institutions. Canada is one of the 28 countries covered under the Scheme for promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration, an initiative aiming to improve research ecosystems in India’s higher education institutions. So far, 19 projects under Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) and 106 under Global. Initiative of Academic Networks (GIAN) have been awarded to Canadian faculties.

Security Cooperation

The Joint Working Group on counter-terrorism discussed the India-Canada Counter-Terrorism Action Plan on 26 August 2020 and reviewed threats posed by terrorist groups worldwide and in their respective countries. They also discussed actions undertaken to counter terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization to violence.

Cultural Exchanges

On the occasion of the Independence Day of India, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau extended wishes. The Halifax Regional Council, Nova Scotia proclaimed August 2020 as the Indian Independence Month.

On the occasion of Vaisakhi, Puthandu and Navratri festivals, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau extended greetings to those people celebrating these festivals. The Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan declared the month of August 2020 as the “The Hindu Heritage Month”. A 3-day Great India Festival was organised virtually in Canada by the High Commission of India. The 6th International Day of Yoga was celebrated with more than 50 virtual events.

India-Canada Track 1.5 Dialogue

The 2nd India-Canada Track 1.5 dialogue was held in Mumbai on 22 November 2019 between Gateway House, Mumbai and Centre for International Governance Innovation (CIGI), Canada. The 3rd meeting of India-Canada Track 1.5 dialogue was held virtually on 17 November 2020. EAM and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Canada, Francois-Philippe Champagne inaugurated the dialogue.

Mutual support during Covid-19

Government of India allowed export of medical supplies including Paracetamol tablets, Hydroxychloroquine tablets, Hydroxychloroquine Sulfate USP (API) and PPEs to Canada. India has facilitated special charter flights operated by the Canadian High Commission to evacuate stranded Canadian nationals from India. Under the air bubble arrangement, Air Canada has operated 51 flights (as on 06 November 2020). Since May 2020, Vande Bharat Mission flights have operated from Canada with 142 flights evacuating 24107 passengers to India (as on 6 November 2020).

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

India’s long standing historical and cultural linkages with countries in the region continued to be reinforced by a vibrant and dynamic Indian diaspora, numbering over a million in the Carib-

bean region. India and LAC countries continued to cooperate with each other in international and multilateral fora.

Argentina

India’s bilateral cooperation with Argentina was marked by increased interactions, including through various bilateral dialogue mechanisms as well as in various multilateral fora such as G-20, WTO and the UN. On 05 May 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Felipe Solá, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship of Argentina and discussed the coronavirus situation, economic recovery, multi-lateral cooperation and global issues. This was the first high level interaction with the new government in Argentina. On 10 September 2019, the 5th India-Argentina Foreign Office Consultations were held via video conferencing, led by Secretary (East) on the Indian side and Deputy Foreign Minister on the Argentine side. The two sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation within the framework of the Strategic Partnership, exchanged views on regional and international issues of common interest as well as experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic and agreed to enhance cooperation in the multilateral arena.

From January-June 2020, the trend of increasing bilateral trade continued with a growth of 22.74% (notably, India’s bilateral trade with Argentina reached a record figure of USD 3.09 billion in FY 2019-2020). The bilateral trade during the period was valued at USD 1.57 billion (with Indian exports worth USD 401 million and Indian imports valued at USD 1.17 billion). The 3rd meeting of the Joint Trade Committee between India and Argentina took place on 20 October 2020 via videoconferencing, after a gap of almost three decades. The two sides held a comprehensive review of bilateral trade and investment cooperation and discussed the way ahead. The first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Agriculture was held on 01 July 2020 via videoconferencing where discussions were held on granting reciprocal market access for items of interest on both sides as well as the implementation of Work Plans (signed in 2019).

In March 2020, Argentina joined the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) as a Founding Member. In a significant development in the field of mining, MoUs were signed between KABIL (PSU under the Ministry of Mines) and two public sector companies in Argentina viz. YPF (the Argentine state energy company) and JEMSE (a public sector undertaking of the Province of Jujuy) on 10 July 2020 and 10 September 2020 respectively. The MoUs established a framework for institutional cooperation for exploration, identification and exploitation of lithium as well as joint development of projects.

The two countries also cooperated in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. India granted exemptions to Argentina, al-

lowing for export of hydroxychloroquine and paracetamol from India. Argentina granted exemption for export of ventilators to India.

On 14 October 2020, a bilateral business chamber, ‘India-Argentina Business Council’ was formally launched by Ambassador of India and Minister of Productive Development of Argentina, Matias Kulfas. The Council is conceptualised as a non-profit organization comprising leading Indian companies based in Argentina and Argentine companies having business interest in India.

Foreign Minister of Argentina Felipe Solá also participated in the commemoration of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. The Embassy of India organised a virtual commemoration of the International Day of Yoga through a specially created website under the slogan “Yoga at home”. Several top Argentine celebrities also shared their experience and the benefits of yoga in times of quarantine and the website received almost 40,000 visitors.

The Embassy of India in Buenos Aires organised, coordinated and participated in several video conferences aimed at boosting bilateral trade with the three countries, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay. These include “India and the World” seminar by Confederation of Indian Industries; Buyer-Seller Meet between Electronics and Software Council of India and CESSI (Argentine Chamber of Software Exports); seminar by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry titled “India-Argentina Business Promotion, Challenges and Opportunities – Post Covid-19”; webinar by Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) on India-Argentine commercial relations; LAC Regional Council session by FICCI on “The Future of India Argentina Business Relations”; virtual apparels; and webinar organised by UPL Argentina on agricultural cooperation between India and Argentina.

EAM and Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship, Felipe Solá delivered remarks at the closing session of India and Argentina in the New World Order: Dialogue among Indian and Argentine Think Tanks’, co-organised with Research and Information System for Developing Countries and Center for Implementation of Public Policies for Equity and Growth, held on 06 November 2020. Minister of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare, held a video conference with his Argentine counterpart Mr Luis Basterra on 20 November 2020 and discussed avenues to increase Indian agricultural exports to Argentina, and potential for cooperation in agricultural research. The second meeting of the India-Argentina Joint

Committee on Cooperation in Outer Space was held virtually between representatives of Indian Space Research Organization(ISRO) and Argentine National Space Activities Commission on 02 December 2020. An MoU between CAMYEN, a

PSU of the Province of Catamarca, Argentina, and KABIL, was signed in December 2020 for cooperation in the field of mining, with focus on lithium.

Bolivia

India’s bilateral relations with Bolivia continued to strengthen with high level interactions and cooperation in multilateral fora. A new government led by Luis Arce of Movement for Socialism (MAS) came to power after victory in the general elections held in October 2020.

India’s exports to Bolivia saw a growth of 9.39% in 2019-20 and was valued at USD 113.4 million (out of the total trade of USD 959.35 million. India remained the 3rd largest supplier of medicines to Bolivia.

There was robust cooperation in the area of development partnership. India sent a medical aid package to Bolivia including 300,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. 2 Bolivian experts attended specialized courses offered by India under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation programme on

prevention of infection, policy development during the pandemic times, and exchange of experience and best practices to manage the Covid-19 pandemic. An MoU was signed between the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Government of India, and the Ministry of Development Planning of Bolivia on 02 September 2020.

Yoga practitioners from Bolivia participated in the 6th International Day of Yoga celebrations in June 2020. The Constitution Day was celebrated online on 26 November 2020 with the participation of Indian community in Bolivia. It included talks and screening of films that highlighted the importance of the Constitution of India. It also marked the conclusion of a year-long activities and “my duties” campaign that were aimed at enhancing awareness about the Constitution and Fundamental Duties.

Brazil

India and Brazil deepened their strategic partnership with continuing high level interactions and cooperation in the multilateral fora such as BRICS, BASIC, G-20, G-4, IBSA, Biofuture Platform as well as in the UN framework. Prime Minister and President Bolsonaro had a telephonic discussion on 04 April 2020 where they discussed the global situation of the Covid-19 pandemic. On President Bolsonaro’s request, India granted exemption to Brazil and allowed import of hydroxychloroquine from India. President Bolsonaro in his national address on 08 April 2020 thanked Prime Minister and the people of India for this goodwill gesture. India sent 2 million Covishield vaccines in January 2021 to Brazil.

On 23 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Ernesto Araújo, Foreign Minister of Brazil wherein they reviewed bilateral cooperation in a follow up to the State visit of President Bolsonaro in January 2020 and exchanged views on global issues including the coronavirus pandemic. Interactions were also held under the multilateral framework such as BRICS (04 September 2020), IBSA (17 September 2020), G4 (23 September 2020) and also during EAM’s interactions with Foreign Ministers of select seven countries on 4 November 2020. An MoU was signed between the Society of Indian Defence Manufacturers and the Brazilian Association of Defence and Security Materials Industries for collaboration in defence industry partnership on 25 May 2020. EAM held virtual bilateral discussions with FM Araujo on bilateral cooperation and global developments. Both sides agreed to work closely in multilateral forums including BRICS and IBSA.

Brazilian Minister for Mines and Energy Bento Albuquerque virtually addressed the 3rd Global Re-Invest Renewable Energy Investors Meet and Expo, organised by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy on 28 November 2020. Embassy of India, Brasilia organised a webinar on “Strengthening Defence Industrial Partnership between India and Brazil” on 8 December 2020 to promote business and technological partnerships between private sector defence manufacturing companies of India and Brazil. Mission has organised a series of webinars focusing on cooperation in Cyber Security in association with the leading IT firms from India and Data Security Council of India. Under this initiative, the first webinar on 19 November 2020 was attended by senior officials from Brazil’s National Telecommunication Agency and leading Indian IT companies operating in Brazil. The second webinar was organised on 14 December 2020 between the Ministry of Justice and Public Security of Brazil and the Indian IT companies. Mission in association with the Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council of India (Pharmexcil) organised a webinar themed “India-Brazil: Strengthening Partnerships in Pharmaceutical Sector” and organised Buyer-Seller-Meet between Indian and Brazilian companies on 26-27 November 2020 where 102 Indian and 46 Brazilian companies participated.

Chile

Bilateral relations between India and Chile continued to grow and strengthen with continued interactions and cooperation in multilateral fora. On 16 October 2020, the first India-Chile Joint Commission Meeting was held in virtual mode with EAM and Andrés Allamand, Foreign Minister of Chile as co-chairs. A new dimension was added to the bilateral ties with India's acceptance of a proposal by Chile to open a Consulate in Mumbai.

The procurement of a naval ship from Larsen and Toubro by Chile, opened yet another avenue of cooperation between the two countries. Virtual screenings of Gandhi Film Festival and

a Festival of Indian Patriotic Films, as well as the launch of a series of locally-produced videos in Spanish on the Rig Veda on the Indian Embassy's YouTube channel were the highlights in bilateral cultural cooperation.

The anticipated events by March 2021 include the 7th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Chile, reaching of an agreement on the 2nd expansion of the India-Chile Preferential Trade Agreement, and release of a book by Luis Bates, a lawyer and former Chilean Justice Minister on Gandhi's career as a lawyer and how that affected the rest of his life.

Colombia

India's bilateral relations with Colombia remained warm and cordial. On 29 April 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Claudia Blum de Barberi, Foreign Minister of Colombia and reviewed cooperation on trade and energy development partnership as well as in the fight against pandemic. Bilateral trade between India and Colombia maintained a steady trajectory during the period and was valued at USD 710 million for the period April- August 2020.

Under development partnership, health professionals from Colombia participated in the e-ITEC programmes on Covid Management Strategies. During the Covid-19 pandemic, India granted exemptions to Colombia to allow for export of hydroxychloroquine and paracetamol from India.

In January 2021, the 4th round of India - Colombia Joint

Committee for Business Development Cooperation was held. Discussions focused on reciprocal market access, liberalised trade regime including negotiations for a partial scope trade agreement, mining, renewable energy, civil aviation, health and pharmaceutical, information technology, among others. On 27 November 2020, a virtual round table on Indian investment in the Information Technology (IT) sector of Colombia was organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and Pro Colombia (an organisation in Colombia that supports inward investment into Colombia) in collaboration with the Embassy. The Embassy of India in Bogota participated in the event and approximately 76 representatives from Indian and Colombian IT companies based out of Colombia participated in the round table.

Cuba

India and Cuba continued to maintain warm and cordial relations. In 2020, the two countries celebrated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Cuba, including 300,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. The return of 10 Cuban nationals who were in different institutes in India attending courses as part of the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation program at the time of Covid-19 pandemic was

also facilitated.

The 1st anniversary of the Ayurveda center at La Pradera in Havana was celebrated along with Ayurveda day on Dhanvanti Divas on 13 November 2020. Mission handed over India's donation of medicines and protective gear to First Vice Minister Ana Teresita Gonzalez Fraga at a ceremony hosted by the Government of Cuba on 12 November 2020.

Ecuador

India and Ecuador continued their friendly bilateral relationship. On 12 October, EAM had a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of Ecuador and reviewed bilateral cooperation in health, trade and development partnership. Discussions were also held on consular issues as well as strengthening of multilateral cooperation.

There was progress in cooperation in the field of space, and

discussions were held between Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and Geographical Institute of Military of Ecuador on 12 August 2020 on the first manned spaceflight programme of India, Gaganyaan. India sent a medical aid package to Ecuador including 400,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment and protective gear.



8th India-Mexico Joint Commission Meeting held on 29 October 2020

Mexico

Bilateral relations between India and Mexico continued to strengthen in 2020, which marked the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. The 8th Joint Commission Meeting, co-chaired by EAM and the Foreign Minister of Mexico Marcelo Ebrard Casaubon, was held via video conference on 29 October 2020. The meeting reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and discussed cooperation in areas such as commerce, outer space, innovation, science and technology, health and pharmaceuticals, education, culture and people-to-people contacts. EAM spoke to Marcelo Ebrard, Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico in May 2020 and August 2020 where discussions were held on the Covid-19 pandemic and economic recovery and cooperation in multilateral fora. In 2020, India and Mexico also started an active dialogue on mutual priorities in the UN Security Council for their shared tenure in 2021-2022.

India remained the 9th largest trading partner of Mexico globally. During April-August 2020, the bilateral trade was valued at USD 1.98 billion. The 5th meeting of the India-Mexico Bilateral High Level Group on Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation was held on 09 October 2020 through a video conference. The meeting was co-chaired by the Commerce Secretary of India and the Vice Minister for Foreign Trade of Mexico, Luz María de la Mora. Discussions were held on a range of issues

such as measures to boost trade and investment and increased market access for agriculture products of mutual interest.

A number of agreements were signed for promoting trade and investment ties between India and Mexico such as MoUs between Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council of India and the Mexican Chamber of Electronics, Telecommunications and Information Technologies, and another between the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the Mexican Business Council of Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, India granted exemption to Mexico to allow for export of hydroxychloroquine from India.

The 2nd Consular Dialogue between India and Mexico was held on 12 November, 2020 during which consular issues of concern for both sides were discussed. The Trade Promotion Council of India and the India Mexico Business Chamber organised a virtual Buyer-Seller Meet on Ceramics on 14 December 2020. The Deputy Minister for Foreign Trade of Mexico participated as a Speaker in the CII Partnership Summit held from 15-18 December 2020.

Paraguay

Bilateral relationship between India and Paraguay continued to strengthen. On 30 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Antonio Rivas Palacios, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Paraguay on the coronavirus situation and the economic recovery. Under development partnership, India sent a medical aid package to Paraguay including 200,000 hydroxychloro-

quine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment to Paraguay.

Peru

India and Peru continued to maintain warm and cordial relations. On 28 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, (then) Foreign Minister of Peru and exchanged information on response to Covid-19 pandemic and development partnership. India sent a medical aid package to Peru including 900,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment and protective gear. Peru has conveyed its decision to formally join the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure(CDRI). At the World Solar Technology Summit held virtually on 08 September 2020 under the framework of International Solar Alliance, the Peruvian Minister of Energy and Mines participated and addressed a session on “Solar beyond the power sector”.

The first meeting of India - Peru Joint Working Group on co-operation in New and Renewable Energy took place through online mode on 7 December 2020. As a part of India-Peru institutional framework on space cooperation between ISRO and CONIDA (National Commission on Aerospace Research and Development), a webinar was held by CONIDA on 9 November 2020. A state-facilitation webinar was also held on 26 November 2020 in association with Government of Telangana, Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry and local chamber with focus on pharmaceutical sector. 9 Peruvian nationals participated in the courses offered on the teachings of Buddha, Vipassana and its application to research and mental health.

Uruguay

India continued to maintain close bilateral ties with Uruguay. On 29 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Uruguay Ernesto Talvi and exchanged information on the situation in both countries arising out of the Covid-19 pandemic and explored possibilities for economic cooperation.

in a video conference hosted by Latin American Integration Association in Uruguay on “India at the International Concert and its Relations with Latin America: Commercial, Economic Challenges and Opportunities.” (ALADI is the largest Latin American integration group with headquarters in Montevideo, Uruguay, consisting of 13 member countries viz. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico, Paraguay, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

On 21 July 2020, Indian Ambassador in Argentina participated

Venezuela

India’s bilateral ties with Venezuela remain warm and cordial. Bilateral trade from April-August 2020 was valued at USD 382.21 million. Mineral fuels and pharmaceuticals comprised the majority of the exports from India. There is a significant increase in the amount of tea exported to Venezuela and is worth USD 120,000 (12,000 kgs) in the period April-August 2020.

age to Venezuela including 740,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment to Paraguay.

A virtual pharmaceutical B2B / G2B with Indian and Venezuelan pharmaceutical companies was held on 09 November 2020 with the support of FICCI. 2 candidates from Venezuela attended courses under ITEC. 1Venezuelan student will undergo a PhD course under ICCR Scholarship Programme.

CENTRAL AMERICA

Belize

India and Belize continued to have a friendly bilateral relationship. During April-August 2020, bilateral trade was worth USD 3.02 million, with exports valued at USD 2.74 million and imports amounting to USD 0.28 million.

pus of the University of Belize in March 2020. India sent a medical aid package to Belize including 20,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

Under development partnership, India successfully completed the setting up of a Centre of Engineering in the Belmopan cam-

Ambassador inaugurated the Center of Engineering, set up under a Government of India grant at the University of Belize in Belmopan, in January 2021.

Costa Rica

India and Costa Rica continued to maintain friendly bilateral

ties. Under the development partnership programme, India

sent a medical aid package to Costa Rica including 140,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. 3 candidates from Costa Rica attended the e-ITEC Covid Management and Hepatology courses. In March 2020, the bilateral MoU on Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic, Official and Service passports came into force.

Gustavo Segura, Minister of Tourism of Costa Rica and Adriana Bolanos Argueta, the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Costa Rica addressed a special event facilitated by the Embassy of India to create new business and investment opportunities between India and Costa Rica”, on 9 December 2020.

El Salvador

India’s bilateral relationship with EL Salvador continued to grow and evolve. Bilateral trade saw a cumulative growth of 7% over the last three year and was valued at USD 82.55 million in 2019-20, with the balance of trade in India’s favour. India sent a medical aid package to El Salvador including 200,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

for the non-permanent seat of the UNSC for 2021-22, and Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions.

Several key buyers from El Salvador participated in the Buyer-Seller Meet organised by the Indian Embassy on 20 November 2020, in collaboration with Engineering Export Promotion to showcase India’s state-of-the-art engineering products including Agro Machinery, Auto components, industrial boilers, medical equipment, and electric applications, among others.

There was also robust cooperation in the multilateral fora with El Salvador extending support for India’s candidatures such as

Guatemala

India continued to maintain close bilateral ties with Guatemala. On 30 April 2020, EAM had a telephonic call with Pedro Brolo Vila, Foreign Minister of Guatemala and held discussions on expanding bilateral trade and cooperation in international fora.

On 20 November 2020, the Indian Embassy in collaboration with Engineering Export Promotion Council organised a Buyer-Seller-Meet to showcase India’s state-of-the-art engineering products including agro machinery, auto components, industrial boilers, medical equipment, and electric applications, among others. More than 20 companies from India participated and made presentations of their products. More than 75 buyers from Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras participated from Central America.

India’s trade with Guatemala saw a cumulative growth of 8% over the last 3 years, with a balance of trade in India’s favour. Under development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Guatemala including 500,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. India and Guatemala continued to cooperate in multilateral fora, including by extending support for candidatures.

On 04 November 2020, the Mission in association with the FinTech Association of Guatemala organised a webinar on the success story of Indian IT and FinTech Industry.

Nicaragua

India’s bilateral ties with Nicaragua remained warm and cordial. On 05 June 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Denis Ronaldo Moncada Colindres and discussed collaboration in health, energy and investment and multilateral cooperation.

tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. 17 Nicaraguans participated in various ITEC courses.

The bilateral trade was valued at USD 32.86 million in April-August 2020, India’s exports were worth USD 30.30 million and imports were worth USD 2.56 million during this period. Under development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Nicaragua including 170,000 hydroxychloroquine

In February 2020, Government of India had granted two new LoCs in the Health sector for USD 20.10 million and USD 7.35 million respectively, in addition to the three ongoing LoCs in the power sector.

Nicaragua signed the ISA Framework Agreement on 22 July 2020 and has ratified it on 28 September 2020.

Panama

India continued to maintain friendly bilateral ties with Panama. On 28 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Alejandro Guillermo Ferrer López, Foreign Minister of Panama and assured him of India’s help in fighting the Covid-19 pandemic. Bilateral trade with Panama was valued at USD 66.16

million in April-August 2020 with Indian exports amounting to USD 46.53 million and imports worth USD19.63 million.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Panama including 1,10,000 hydroxy-

chloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

A virtual meeting was organised on 24th November 2020 between various companies of the IT sector of India and Panamanian companies with the support of the Panamanian Chamber of Technologies, Information, Innovation and Telecommunications. A virtual meeting to promote bilateral collaboration in

the implementation of a recycling project of plastic bottles in the Tocumen International Airport and the Panama metro stations on lines of a similar project under ‘Swachh Bharat Abhiyan’ in Mumbai, was organised on 9 November 2020 with the Ministry of Environment of Panama. Several Indian companies working in the recycling sector participated in this meeting.

CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES

Antigua and Barbuda

India and Antigua and Barbuda continued to share warm and friendly relations. On 5 June 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with E.P. Chet Greene, Foreign Minister of Antigua and Barbuda and discussed economic recovery post Covid-19 as well as cooperation in education, health, capacity building

Under development partnership programme, India sent a med-

ical aid package to Antigua and Barbuda including 10,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

There was robust cooperation in the multilateral fora with Antigua and Barbuda extending support for India's candidatures for a non-permanent seat of UNSC (2021-22) and ACABQ.

The Bahamas

India's bilateral relations with the Bahamas continued to remain warm and cordial. On 27 October 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Darren Henfield, Foreign Minister of the Bahamas and held discussions on ongoing development partnership, cooperation in the context of Covid-19 as well as

in the UN and the Commonwealth. Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to the Bahamas including 20,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

Barbados

India and Barbados continued to enjoy close and cordial relations as well as extensive cooperation in the UN,the Commonwealth and NAM. On 05 June 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Jerome Walcott, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and International Business in the context of

Covid-19.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Barbados, including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

Dominica

India continued to enjoy friendly and cordial relations with the Commonwealth of Dominica. On 30 April 2020 EAM held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister Kenneth Darroux and discussed cooperation in IT and distance education.

Under development partnership, India sent a medical aid pack-

age to Dominica including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

India and Dominica continued to cooperate in the multilateral fora, including by extending support for candidatures.

Dominican Republic

India's bilateral relationship with Dominican Republic remained warm and cordial. The two countries continued to have robust cooperation in the various multilateral fora.

Dominican Republic was the first country in the region to receive medical aid from India in the context of Covid-19 pandemic. An initial consignment of HCQ and other medicines were delivered in April 2020. A second consignment consisting

of essential medicines and protective gear was delivered in July 2020. The medical aid was handed over in a formal ceremony organised by the Foreign Ministry of Dominican Republic and the gesture was appreciated at the highest levels.

EAM had a virtual telephonic conversation with Foreign Min-

ister Roberto Alvarez on 3 December 2020. The two leaders discussed on the roadmap for expanding the strong bilateral cooperation into commercial ties in the fields of pharmaceuticals, solar energy and capacity building initiatives under ITEC and PCFD, ISA etc.

Grenada

The bilateral ties between India and Grenada remained cordial and friendly. On 29 April 2020, EAM held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Grenada, Peter David and discussed cooperation in health and development partnership.

Under development partnership, India sent a medical aid package to Grenada, including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medi-

cines and medical equipment.

The agreement between India and Grenada on exemption of visa requirement for holders of diplomatic and official passports entered into force in October 2020.India and Grenada continued to cooperate extensively in the multilateral fora, including by extending support to candidatures.

Guyana

India and Guyana continued to maintain friendly bilateral ties. India extended an assistance of USD 1 million to Guyana for combating Covid-19 pandemic as a part of the Quick Impact Community Development Fund for fighting Covid-19 under India-UNDP Fund. India also sent a medical aid package to Guyana, including 30,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

4 projects viz. East Coast-East Bank Demerara Link Road Project, Procurement of Ocean Ferry, Acquisition of high capacity fixed and mobile drainage pumps and upgradation of 3 primary health centers under development cooperation partnership are under implementation. There was also strong cooperation in the multilateral fora.

Haiti

India continued to maintain close cooperation with Haiti. On 30 July 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Claude Joseph, Foreign Minister of Haiti where discussions were held on cooperation in dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic and cooperation in the multilateral fora.

package to Haiti, including 30,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

On behalf of President Jovenel Moise, Foreign Minister Claude Joseph while receiving India's donation of Covid-19 medical aid thanked the Government of India for its support to Haiti in its attempt to control the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

India was among the first international responders to assist Haiti in its fight against Covid-19, when it sent a medical aid

Honduras

India's bilateral relations with Honduras continued to remain warm and cordial. Bilateral trade saw a considerable growth over the last three years. In 2019-20, the bilateral trade was worth USD 204.66 million, with a balance of trade in India's favour.

There was robust cooperation in the multilateral fora.

Under development partnership, India sent a medical aid package to Honduras, including 2,60,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

On 20 November 2020, Honduran buyers participated in the Buyer-Seller-Meet organised by Embassy in collaboration with the Engineering Export Promotion Council organised to showcase India's state-of-the-art engineering products including agro machinery, auto components, industrial boilers, medical equipment, and electric applications, among others.

Jamaica

India's bilateral relationship with Jamaica continued to grow and strengthen. In the General Elections held in Jamaica on 03 September 2020, the incumbent Prime Minister Andrew Holness of Jamaica Labour Party scored a decisive victory over the

Opposition Peoples' National Party with a massive mandate of 49 seats in the 63-member House of Representatives.

On 29 April 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with his

counterpart Kamina Johnson Smith, Foreign Minister of Jamaica and exchanged views on the challenge posed by Covid-19. Jamaica has appointed their first resident High Commissioner to India viz. Jason Keats Hall, who is a career diplomat.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Jamaica including 80,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. This was in addition to an earlier donation of 40,000 HCQ tablets. India also granted exemptions to Jamaica for Indian exports of hydroxy-

chloroquine. The two countries also cooperate extensively in regional and multilateral fora.

In observance of the International Day for the elimination of Violence against Women (25 November 2020) and the AIDS Day (1December 2020), the High Commission participated in an online panel discussion on IDAEVAW, hosted by the British High Commission and co-hosted by the Indian, EU, Canadian and US Missions in Jamaica.

Saint Kitts and Nevis

India and St. Kitts and Nevis continued to maintain warm and cordial relations. The two countries also cooperated in the multilateral fora with St. Kitts and Nevis extending support for India's candidature for non-permanent seat of UNSC. Under the

development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to St. Kitts and Nevis including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

St. Lucia

India continued to maintain close cooperation with St. Lucia. On 01 May 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Sarah Flood-Beaubrun, Foreign Minister of St. Lucia and exchanged views on the situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic and the challenge of economic recovery and India's engagement with the CARICOM region.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to St. Lucia including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment.

India and St. Lucia cooperated in the multilateral fora by extending support to each other's candidatures.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines

India and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines continued to share close and cordial relations in the bilateral and multilateral fora. On 30 April 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Saint Vincent and Grenadines Luis Straker and exchanged views on economic recovery and community development projects.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Saint Vincent and Grenadines including 10,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. Several Quick Impact community development projects are also under implementation.

Three community development-related projects under MoU on



Minister of State at the 7th India-Suriname JCM held on 02 December 2020

Quick Impact Project with grant from India are in progress. The first meeting of the Steering Committee on Arrowroot Industry Modernization for Sustainable and Climate Resilient and Rural

Development project under India-UNDP Fund was held in November, 2020.

Suriname

The bilateral relations between India and Suriname have scaled new heights in recent years. Election of Chandrikapersad Santokhi, a PIO (only the second PIO to hold that position) as the President of the Republic of Suriname was the highlight of this year, which also found mention in Prime Minister's 'Mann ki Baat', where he referred to the chanting of vedic mantra during the oath ceremony of the President. On 27 October 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Albert Ramadin, Foreign Minister of Suriname and discussed the long standing historical and cultural ties, health cooperation and emphasized India's commitment as a development partner.

Under the development partnership programme, India sent a medical aid package to Suriname including 20,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment. There is considerable progress in development partnership projects under

implementation viz. milk central processing plant; upgradation of transmission network; maintenance and servicing of three Chetak helicopters and solar electrification of 50 villages.

The 7th Joint Commission Meeting between India and Suriname took place virtually on 02 December 2020, co-chaired by Minister of State and Ambassador Albert Ramdin, Minister of Foreign Affairs, International Business and International Cooperation of Suriname. bilateral, multilateral, economic, cultural and political issues were discussed. Progress was made with regard to the agenda of the 6th JCM. President Chandrikapersad Santokhi of Suriname was the Chief Guest for the 16th Pravasi Bhartiya Divas Convention held virtually on 09 January 2021. President Santokhi was also conferred the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award. Minister of State is expected to visit Suriname in early 2021.

Trinidad and Tobago

Bilateral relations between India and Trinidad and Tobago, a girmitya country with a significant Indian diaspora population, continued to be warm and cordial. On 29 April 2020, EAM had a telephonic conversation with Mr. Dennis Moses, Foreign Minister of Trinidad and Tobago where he discussed cooperation in IT and healthcare.

Under development partnership, India sent a medical aid package including 40,000 HCQ tablets, essential medicines and medical equipment to Trinidad and Tobago.

On 12 November, 2020, Mission and the Mahatma Gandhi Institute for Cultural Co-operation (MGICC) celebrated Diwali at

the newly constructed MGICC center with Leader of the main Opposition party, the United National Congress, MPS and representatives of Indian Diaspora community taking part in the event. Mission handed over the medical aid consignment to the people and Government of Trinidad and Tobago on November 23, 2020, which was received by Amery Browne, Minister of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs received the consignments at a virtual ceremony. Mission in collaboration with the MGICC and Hindi Foundation of Trinidad and Tobago Inc celebrated World Hindi Day 2021 on 16 January 2021 with MPs and bureaucrats from the T and T Government and the Indian diaspora in attendance.

CARICOM

India's bilateral ties with the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) continued to be warm and friendly. In the context of Covid-19 pandemic, India sent medical aid comprising essential medicines, medical equipment and protective gear to all CARICOM countries. Under the India-CARICOM Leaders' Proj-

ect, medicines and medical supplies including ventilators were sent to Antigua and Barbuda and Guyana. Projects submitted by Barbados, St. Lucia, St.Kitts and Nevis, Dominica and Haiti are under implementation.

Pacific Alliance

India is an Observer State in the Pacific Alliance which is a regional group of countries bordering the Pacific Ocean with Chile, Colombia, Peru and Mexico as its members. Chile is the current pro-tempore President of the Alliance.

Under the pro-tempore Presidency of Chile, the 2nd Cooperation Forum (instituted in 2019 for cooperation with Observer

states) was held in virtual mode on 12th November 2020. India in the capacity of Observer State participated in the virtual forum, with a short intervention by Joint Secretary (LAC) in the opening session, wherein India's commitment in engaging actively with the countries of Pacific Alliance for mutually beneficial cooperation was reaffirmed.

10

BIMSTEC, SAARC AND NALANDA

SAARC

At the initiative of Prime Minister, a Video Conference of SAARC Leaders was held on 15 March 2020 to discuss regional response to combat Covid-19 pandemic. The Presidents of Afghanistan, Maldives and Sri Lanka; the Prime Ministers of Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, the Minister of State for Health of Pakistan, and the Secretary-General of SAARC attended the conference. India announced several initiatives including the setting up of a Covid-19 Emergency Response Fund to meet the immediate costs of combating the pandemic. India took lead in pledging a voluntary contribution of USD 10 million to the Fund followed by other SAARC members. Responding to the requests of the countries in the region, India immediately operationalized the Fund with the supply of essential drugs, medical consumables, Covid-19 protection and testing kits, and other equipment worth Rs. 17.1 crores (approximately USD 2.3 million).

Among other initiatives announced at the video conference, India hosted a video conference of health professionals representing all SAARC countries at the level of Director General of Health Services on 26 March 2020 to share information and best practices among member states. On 08 April 2020, India hosted a video conference of trade officials of SAARC countries to discuss the impact of travel restrictions and the larger Covid-19 situation on intra-regional trade including the need

for simplified import procedures. On 4, 6 and 8 May 2020, AIIMS, New Delhi organised webinars for practising medical professionals in the SAARC countries to share experiences on management of Covid-19, testing strategies, infection control measures and bio-medical waste management.

India also launched a Covid-19 Information Exchange Platform 'COINEX' on 12 May 2020 to facilitate exchange of specialized information among the designated health professionals of SAARC countries on disease surveillance, contact tracing, isolation and quarantine. This was complemented by a website developed by SAARC Disaster Management Centre's Interim Unit, Gandhinagar, to provide reliable information and updates on the evolving situation and sharing of best practices.

To address short term liquidity requirements, India extended foreign currency swap support to Maldives (USD 150 million) and Bhutan (USD 200 million).

The SAARC Food Bank mechanism was activated for the first time in May 2020 to fulfill Bhutan's request for supply of 2000 MT of rice from food grain reserves maintained by India to build up the stock of Bhutan's food grains. This was the first ever transaction made by any country ever since SAARC Food Bank was set up in 2007 to enable Member States facing food

shortages to avail food grains both during emergencies and normal times.

The annual Informal Meeting of the SAARC Council of Ministers held on the sidelines of UNGA was held in virtual mode on 24 September 2020. EAM participated in the meeting which primarily reviewed regional efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, participants appreciated the leadership of the Prime Minister in convening a video conference of SAARC Leaders in March 2020. EAM reiterated that India remains steadfast in its commitment to building a connected,

integrated, secure and prosperous South Asia. On the issue of consideration of dates for the 19th SAARC Summit and its preceding meetings, EAM drew attention to the lack of consensus among the member states. He said that the issues of cross border terrorism, the blocking of connectivity initiatives and the reluctance to progress on trade pacts need to be sincerely addressed if summit level engagement is to be meaningful or productive. He added that the current priority for all member states was to deal with the Covid-19 challenge and talking of the next summit at this juncture was premature.



Prime Minister delivered his address during the Video Conference of SAARC Leaders on combating Covid-19 on 15 March 2020

The 15th Informal Meeting of the SAARC Finance Ministers was held on 16 September 2020 in virtual Mode, on the sidelines of 53rd Annual Meeting of Asian Development Bank (ADB). The Meeting was attended by the Finance Ministers/ Heads of Delegations from all the SAARC Member States. India was represented by, Additional Secretary (FB and ADB), DEA, Ministry of Finance. The participants shared their national responses to economic fallout caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and emphasized the need for closer collaboration in trade and economic issues under SAARC.

The SAARC Education Ministers meeting was hosted by Nepal in virtual format on 08 October 2020. Chairman, AICTE led Indian delegation at the meeting. India also participated in a video conference of Health Ministers hosted by Pakistan on 23 April 2020 to deliberate on the Covid-19 situation.

The inaugural meetings of SAARC Planning Ministers preceded by the Meeting of SAARC Planning Secretaries were held in virtual format on 23 and 25 November 2020 respectively. CEO, Niti Aayog led the Indian delegation at the Planning Ministers meeting.

The 58th Session of the Programming Committee of SAARC was held in virtual mode on 15 December 2020. Joint Secretary (BSN), Ministry of External Affairs led the Indian delegation.

India continued to extend support for construction of permanent campus of the South Asian University in New Delhi, which notwithstanding the disruptions caused by Covid-19 pandemic, made satisfactory physical progress.

BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a unique regional organization linking South Asia with South East Asia while focusing on India's core concerns in the region thus fulfilling India's key foreign policy priorities of 'Neighborhood First' and 'Act East.' India is currently leading BIMSTEC cooperation in four out of a total 14 priority sectors, namely, counter terrorism and trans-national crime; transport and communication; tourism; and environment and disaster management.

The BIMSTEC Foreign Ministers approved, by circulation, the nomination of Tenzin Lekphell (Bhutan) as the 3rd Secretary General of BIMSTEC for a period of three years as per alphabetical rotation. Lekphell assumed the charge on 6 November 2020.

A Webinar on 'Revisiting Economic Cooperation in BIMSTEC in Post-Covid-19 Era' was hosted by Research and Information System for Developing Countries on 30 June 2020. Minister of State gave the inaugural address in which he reiterated India's commitment towards enhanced cooperation in the BIMSTEC region.

The 21st BIMSTEC Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held in Colombo virtually on 02 September 2020. The Meeting endorsed the final text of the BIMSTEC Charter for approval of the 17th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting. SOM also endorsed the following instruments to be signed at the next BIMSTEC Summit upon approval by the Ministerial meeting: (i) BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters; (ii) Memorandum of Association on the Establishment of BIMSTEC Technology Transfer Facility in Colombo, Sri Lanka, and (iii) MoU on Mutual Cooperation between Diplomatic Academies/

Training Institutions of BIMSTEC Member States. The Meeting also considered and finalized a Template of the Memorandum of Association on Establishment of the BIMSTEC Centres/Entities. SOM was preceded by the 4th meeting of the BIMSTEC Permanent Working Committee on 31 August 2020.

The 20th SOM was held on 03 March 2020 in Colombo recommended the rationalization of Sectors and Sub-sectors of cooperation to bring focus in the work of BIMSTEC, which will be placed before the Seventeenth BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting for approval.

The draft BIMSTEC Master Plan on Transport Connectivity received 'in principle' concurrence of all Member States was finalized by the Member States at the 3rd BIMSTEC Working Group Meeting on Transport Connectivity Chaired by India in virtual format on 8 December 2020.

The 5th Meeting of BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks was hosted by Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) in virtual format on 21-22 December 2020.

A BIMSTEC Start-up Conclave was held in New Delhi in virtual format on 15-16 January 2021 as part of Start-up India International Summit. Ministers, Senior Officials, Start-ups and Investors from BIMSTEC countries participated in the event.

Action is underway on a number of unilateral initiatives announced by Prime Minister at the last BIMSTEC Summit in Kathmandu in 2018 in diverse sectors of security, disaster management, trade, blue economy, agriculture, health, digital connectivity, etc.

Nalanda University

The Nalanda University Act 2010 established the University and the teaching began in 2014. The University has made steady progress both in terms of physical infrastructure as well as academic programmes. Over 70% of University campus construction has been completed. The University was awarded the 5 Star Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment, Large Development (GRIHA LD- 5 Star) by the GRIHA Council on 09 October 2020 for Net Zero Energy Campus. Also, the University bagged CSR award in Excellence in Education for its innovative academic architecture.

The University started its academic and administrative activities from the new campus. There are currently 38 faculty members, including 12 foreign faculty, and a total of 834 regular and part-time students, including 134 foreign students from 23

countries. The number of academic programmes scaled to 12. The University currently has 5 Schools including a new School of Management Studies that commenced MBA programme in Sustainable Development and Management in the AY 20-21. The University also initiated a 4-year Global PhD programme for national and international students in 2020.

The University is in the process of setting up three Global Centres on Bay of Bengal Studies, Common Archival Resource Centre and Centre for Conflict-Resolution and Peace Studies. As part of India's Act East Policy, Nalanda University has been nominated as nodal University to anchor the India-ASEAN Network of Universities and work out a roadmap for linkages aimed at collaborative activities.



INDO PACIFIC

The Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean together constitute an important geographical space that is home to more than 64% of global population and contributes over 60% of global GDP. About half of the global trade happens through the maritime trade routes in this region. Over the years, this region has seen strong and sustained economic growth spreading across the Pacific rim, Southeast Asia, South Asia, the Gulf region and the East and Southern Coast of Africa. While this economic dynamism has led to increased connectivity, regional integration and greater economic opportunities, it has also brought common threats and challenges. These changes have naturally attracted greater global attention and articulation of the concept of Indo-Pacific. In view of the importance of this region, the Prime Minister of India, articulated India's vision of the Indo-Pacific in June 2018 by providing substantive policy elements and programmes. The Ministry established an Indo-Pacific Division in April 2019 to bring greater focus and organisational synergy to our Indo-Pacific vision and its implementation.

During 2020-21, despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, India continued to intensify its engagement with various Indo-Pacific frameworks: ASEAN, East Asia Summit (EAS), Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC), Ayeyawady-Chao Phraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS), and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI).

Association of South East Asian Nations

ASEAN centrality has been, and will remain, an important aspect of India's 'Act East' policy which is a central element in India's Foreign Policy. This year the Chairmanship of ASEAN is held by Vietnam and Thailand holds the position of country coordinator between India and ASEAN.

The 22nd ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting was held through a Video Conference on 16 July 2020. Senior Officials from all ten ASEAN countries and India discussed and deliberated upon ASEAN-India Cooperation and its future directions. The two sides discussed the current situation of Covid-19 pandemic and the need for a cohesive, coordinated and multilateral response to it. They also discussed issues of regional and global concern.

EAM participated in the ASEAN-India Foreign Ministers' Meeting held through Video Conference on 12 September 2020. The Meeting reviewed the status of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership in several areas including maritime cooperation, connectivity, education and capacity building and People-to-people contacts. The new ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025) was adopted at the Meeting. The Ministers discussed ways to strengthen cooperation to fight Covid-19 pandemic and exchanged views on important international developments.

India organised the 6th edition of the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT) in August 2020 in collaboration with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Thailand through video conference. The ASEAN-India Centre (AIC) at the Research and Information System for Developing Countries and ASEAN Studies Centre at Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok were the organizing partners of the Roundtable. It was jointly inaugurated by EAM and the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Thailand Don Pramudwinai. ASEAN Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi also addressed the inaugural session. The theme of the Roundtable was ‘ASEAN-India: Strengthening Partnership in the Post-Covid Era’ and the discussions also focused on the way forward in the context of complementarities of India’s and ASEAN’s visions for the Indo-Pacific.

The welcome ceremony for the first two batches of the 1000 integrated PhD fellowships programme for ASEAN students at the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) was held through video conference on 16 October 2020. The ceremony was attended by the Minister of Education, Minister of State for

Education, Secretary Education and Secretary East, MEA from Indian side and the Ambassadors of ASEAN countries in India. The Fellowship was announced by Prime Minister at the 25th Anniversary of the ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit in New Delhi in January 2018 and was inaugurated by EAM and Minister of Human Resource Development in September 2019. With a total budget outlay of Rs 300 crores, the fellowship programme is the single largest capacity building initiative of India in its partnership with ASEAN.

The 2nd ASEAN-India Track 1.5 Dialogue on Cyber Issues was organised in New Delhi on 12 October 2020 by the Ministry in partnership with Observer Research Foundation. The Dialogue saw participation of government representatives and cyber experts from ASEAN Member States and India. The dialogue discussed how India and the ASEAN countries can tackle specific challenges in the realms of cybercrime and cyber security, facilitation of B-2-B partnership in this area and in the areas of emerging technologies and 5G, and exploring partnership between national agencies of India and ASEAN.



17th ASEAN-India Virtual Summit held on 12 November 2020

The 17th ASEAN-India Summit, which was held virtually on 12 November 2020 was co-chaired by Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc. All ten ASEAN Member States participated at the Summit. The Summit reviewed the status of ASEAN-India Strategic Partnership and took stock of the progress made in key areas such as connectivity, maritime cooperation, trade and commerce, education and capacity building etc. The Leaders discussed ways to further strengthen ASEAN-India engagement and in this context noted the adoption of ASEAN-India Plan of Action (2021-2025). Prime Minister in his remarks underlined the central role of ASEAN for India’s Act East Policy and announced a contribution of USD 1 million to Covid-19 ASEAN Response Fund.

East Asia Summit (EAS)

EAS Senior Officials Meeting was held virtually on 20 July

2020. Senior Officials from 18 EAS participating countries exchanged views on various areas of EAS cooperation including Covid pandemic, environment and energy, education, natural disaster management, connectivity, economic cooperation and maritime cooperation.

Minister of State attended the 10th East Asia Summit Foreign Ministers’ Meeting held virtually on 09 September 2020. The Meeting was held virtually. The Meeting was attended by the Foreign Ministers of the EAS participating countries and chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam Pham Bin Minh. The Meeting discussed ways and means to strengthen the leaders-led EAS platform and to make it more responsive to emerging challenges on its 15th anniversary. The Ministers exchanged views on the current regional and international developments, including the Covid-19 pandemic, and the cooperation to achieve a speedy and sustainable recovery.



EAM at the 15th East Asia Summit held on 14 November 2020

EAM represented India at the 15th East Asia Summit on 14 November 2020. The Summit was chaired by the Prime Minister of Vietnam Nguyen Xuan Phuc in his capacity as ASEAN Chair. All the 18 EAS countries participated in the virtual Summit. EAM, in his remarks, re-affirmed the importance of EAS as the leaders-led forum to exchange views on strategic issues. He spoke of the importance of adhering to international law, respecting territorial integrity and sovereignty, and promoting a rules-based global order. The Leaders underlined the importance of cooperation in ensuring safe, effective and affordable access to Covid-19 vaccines. They called for greater cooperation in keeping the global supply chains open for an expeditious and sustainable economic recovery. Regional and international issues such as the South China Sea, the situation in Korean peninsula and Rakhine state were also discussed. Besides the Ha Noi Declaration, the Summit also adopted four other Leaders’ Statements on Marine Sustainability; Epidemics Prevention and Response; Women, Peace and Security; and Steady Growth of Regional Economy.

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)

All IORA engagements post March 2020 were held virtually due to travel restrictions imposed by Covid-19. IORA hosted an Extraordinary Meeting of Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) and Dialogue Partner Engagement on Covid-19: Responses, Cooperation and Partnerships in May 2020. India participated in the meeting and conveyed its support to the region in dealing with Covid-19. A Joint Statement was issued after the meeting. India also participated in the 10th Biannual IORA CSO meeting held in June 2020 which took stock of progress made in six priority areas and two cross cutting areas of IORA.

As the lead country on the IORA priority area of Academic, Science and Technology – India hosted the 2nd IORA Expert’s Group Meeting on Academic, Science and Technology at the end of August 2020.]

India also participated in various meetings hosted by IORA Member States on priority areas – 6th Advisory Committee Meeting hosted by IORA Secretariat, Workshop to review Non-Payment of dues by IORA Member States, 1st Meeting of IORA Core Group on Tourism hosted by UAE in August 2020; Webinar on Blue Carbon Initiatives in IORA, Webinar on Women’s Economic Empowerment in Fisheries hosted by Indonesia, Webinar on Advancing Sustainable Fisheries Management hosted by Indonesia, Covid-19 Research and Innovation programs and Projects implemented by IORA Member States and Dialogue Partners hosted by South Africa in September 2020; 25th Meeting of the Indian Ocean Rim Business Forum hosted by UAE; Workshop to review the progress of IORA Action Plan and Preparation of new plan hosted by UAE and Bangladesh, Italy-IORA Webinar on Sustainable Cruise Tourism hosted by Italy and 1st IORA-RoK Partnership Seminar hosted by Republic of Korea in October 2020.

India invited IORA Member States for two capacity building courses hosted online by ITCOO, INCOIS in the field of Marine Ecology [Understanding Sea Level] and Fisheries [Fishery Oceanography] in October and November 2020, respectively.

On 17 December 2020, Minister of State led the Indian delegation at the 20th Meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association Council of Ministers hosted virtually by UAE. The meeting deliberated upon various regional and global issues of common interest by IORA Member States. The COM adopted the Emirates Communique and the IORA’s Solidarity and Cooperation Statement in response to Covid-19. Minister of State, in his remarks, noted the contributions made by India, as Coordinating Country, in two priority areas of IORA namely, Disaster Risk Management and Academic, Science and Technology. Keeping in view the post-pandemic comprehensive recovery, Minister of State called for greater cooperation in the field of traditional medicine and wellness tourism among IORA Member States. As India’s contribution to further strengthening IORA, Minister of State announced India’s initiatives in the form of im-

plementation of e-Office system and setting up of Mahatma Gandhi library at the IORA Secretariat. India also supported France’s IORA membership bid, which became the 23rd member of IORA at this COM. The COM was preceded by the 22nd Meeting of IORA Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) on 15-16 December 2020.

Asia – Europe Meeting (ASEM)

The ASEM Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) was held virtually on 02 and 03 July 2020. Connectivity and the Covid-19 pandemic were the 2 main issues on which deliberations took place between the SOM leaders. The ASEM statement on Covid-19 was adopted on 07 September 2020. The meeting prepared the ground for the 2020 ASEM Foreign Ministers meeting with Cambodia being the ASEM Chair for 2020. The ASEM Summit was postponed till 2021.

India participated in the Asia-Europe Forum on “Combating Substandard and Falsified Medicines” which was organised virtually by Cambodia on 29 and 30 September 2020. India also participated in the 14th ASEM Finance Ministers Meeting held virtually on 6th November 2020 organised by Bangladesh.

Mekong Ganga Cooperation (MGC)

This year marks the 20th Anniversary of the Mekong Ganga Cooperation which was established in 2000 and is one of the oldest initiatives in the Mekong region. To commemorate this milestone, a host of celebratory activities were planned to be held during the course of the year. However, due to Covid-19, some of these activities have been postponed. Nevertheless, several virtual events have been organised to mark two decades of MGC, including webinars in May and November 2020 in collaboration with AIC, RIS and ICWA, focusing on the progress made over the past twenty years and the future course of action.

12th MGC Senior Officials’ Meeting (12th MGC SOM) was held virtually on 03 September 2020 where Senior Officials from India, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam reviewed the progress made in various initiatives under the MGC Plan of Action (2019-22) adopted during the 10th MGC Ministerial Meeting in Bangkok on 01 August 2019.

Quick Impact Project (QIP) Scheme has been one of the major mainstay of MCG. These are short-term, low-cost, community oriented projects for development of social infrastructure in the region. India and Myanmar signed a QIP Umbrella Agreement during the visit of the President of Myanmar to India in February, 2020. India already has such agreements with Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. In the year 2020, a total of twenty three projects have been sanctioned under QIP schemes which include 12 projects for Vietnam, 8 for Cambodia and 3 for Lao PDR. Water Resource Management was added as a new area of cooperation under the QIP scheme under which 7 projects have been sanctioned to Vietnam for infrastructure development for efficient water management in its drought prone ar-

reas. India has also established a Project Development Fund to promote trade and investments by the Indian private sector in the Mekong countries.

Ayeyawady-Chaophraya-Mekong Economic Cooperation Strategy (ACMECS)

India joined ACMECS as a Development Partner in July 2019 along with Australia, China, Japan, Republic of Korea and USA. India looks forward to identifying suitable projects from ACMECS Priority Projects drawing on the USD 1 billion Line of Credit announced by the Prime Minister at the ASEAN-India Summit in November 2015 for connectivity and digital infrastructure in the ASEAN region. Under this initiative, India is currently considering extending a line of credit to the tune of USD 167 million to Lao PDR for the eastward extension of the IMT trilateral highway.

Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative

India’s vision for the Indian Ocean Region as articulated by the Prime Minister in March 2015 during his visit to Mauritius and encapsulated in the Hindi word for Ocean, “SAGAR” i.e. “Security and Growth for All in the Region” has been the genesis of our broader articulation of the Indo-Pacific. It was further elaborated in the Prime Minister’s keynote address at the Shangri La Dialogue in June 2018. India’s approach is based on cooperation and collaboration. ASEAN is at the centre of this maritime space. In the Western Indian Ocean, India is a member of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA). India seeks to cooperate for an architecture in the region that ensures peace and security of the Indo-Pacific, leading to stability and prosperity of the region as a whole.

India’s Indo-Pacific Vision envisages a free, open, inclusive region, which embraces all in a common pursuit of progress and prosperity. It believes that our common prosperity and security requires evolution, through dialogue, grounded in a common rules-based order for the region with respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, consultation, good governance, transparency, viability and sustainability.

As a natural progression of India’s vision of Indo-Pacific and to give it concrete shape, Prime Minister announced the Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative (IPOI) at the East Asia Summit held in Bangkok in November 2019. The IPOI is focused on finding cooperative solutions to global challenges in an open, inclusive and cooperative manner. As an open global initiative, it draws on existing regional cooperation architecture and mechanisms to focus on the 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; Trade Connectivity and Maritime Transport. Taking the lead on pillars of Maritime Security and Disaster Risk Reduction, India has invited interested countries to come on board on one or more pillars of IPOI.



UNITED NATIONS AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

75th Session of the General Assembly

75th Session of the General Assembly opened on 15 September, 2020. On 21 September 2020, Prime Minister addressed the high-level meeting of the Assembly to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the United Nations on the theme “The Future We Want; The UN We Need: Reaffirming our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism”. In his intervention, Prime Minister 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.

The theme for the 75th UNGA General Debate was “The Future We Want; The United Nations We Need: Reaffirming Our Collective Commitment to Multilateralism-Confronting Covid-19 through Effective Multilateral Action”. Addressing

Commemorative Postage Stamp on the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations

India released a postage stamp on 23 October 2020 to mark the 75th Anniversary of the United Nations. Speaking at the event, EAM said that India, as a founding member of the United Nations, is invested with its heart and soul right from the craft-

the General Assembly (through pre-recorded message) in the General Debate on 26 September, 2020, Prime Minister called for urgent reform of the United Nations and for inclusion of India’s voice in its decision-making structures. He also outlined India’s contribution to the global response to the Covid-19 pandemic, announcing that India will make available its vaccine production and delivery capacities to the rest of the world, in keeping with its philosophy of seeing the world as one family.

A Special Session of the UN General Assembly in response to the Covid-19 Pandemic was held on 03-04 December 2020. Secretary (West) represented India and spoke about India’s response to the pandemic, as well as India’s assistance to 150 other countries in this regard.

ing of the principles of the UN Charter to being in the forefront of keeping its peace.

He highlighted the need to recommit ourselves to join hands

and work with vigour and dedication to bring the goals and objectives of the UN closer to the aspirations of its member states, and more importantly to the aspirations of their people.



EAM witnessed the release of Commemorative Postage Stamp on 75th Anniversary of United Nations on 23 October 2020

Security Council

During 2020-21, India participated in several open debates of the UN Security Council. India also co-sponsored the UN Security Council Resolution 2538 of 2020 which calls upon member states, the United Nations Secretariat, and regional organizations to strengthen their collective efforts to promote the full, effective, and meaningful participation of uniformed and civilian women in peacekeeping operations at all levels and in all positions, including in senior leadership positions. India also participated in Arria Formula meetings of the Security Council on the topics of Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Yemen. India took over the seat as an Elected Member of the UN Security Council for the period 2021-22.

Reform of the UN Security Council

In 2020-21, India continued its efforts to move forward the process of UN Security Council Reforms, through its active engagement with reform-oriented groupings like the G-4 and L-69.

The Intergovernmental Negotiations (IGN) process during the 74th UNGA session was cut short by the Covid-19 related restrictions on in-person meetings. In the two IGN meetings held during the year, there was growing support from member states for the Common African Position, as well as increasing calls for improved working methods of the IGN.

In the 75th UNGA session, India worked with like-minded delegations to ensure concrete progress, including through immediate commencement of text-based negotiations on Security Council reform.

In a Joint Ministerial Statement issued on 16 September 2020, the IBSA (India, Brazil, and South Africa) Foreign Ministers highlighted the urgent need for tangible progress on comprehensive reform of the Security Council, as the United Nations marks its 75th anniversary.

The G-4 Foreign Ministers (India, Brazil, Germany, and Japan) held their annual meeting virtually on 23 September 2020, on the sidelines of the 75th UNGA high level week. In a joint press statement, the Ministers reiterated that expansion of the Security Council in both categories is indispensable to make the body more representative, legitimate, and effective. They called for commencement of substantive text-based negotiations to deliver concrete outcomes in the 75th anniversary year of the United Nations.

G-77 Event

The Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations participated in the virtual Flagship G-77 Ministerial Meeting on the theme “Maintaining a Low Carbon Development Path towards the 2030 Agenda in the Era of Covid-19” on 29 October

2020. He also participated in the G-77 Annual Foreign Ministers Meeting on 12 November 2020. The theme of the meeting was “Global response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the obstacles it poses to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and achievement of the SDGs”.

India and Peacekeeping

India continued to be the largest cumulative contributor of UN Peacekeeping troops, having provided around 253,000 since the 1950s. As of 31 October 2020, India is the 5th largest contributor with 5,353 personnel deployed in 8 peacekeeping missions. As on date, 175 Indian Peacekeepers have sacrificed their lives while serving in UN missions. Female police officers constitute 44 % (12 out of 27) of the police personnel deployed by India in the UN Peacekeeping operations.

During the period based on a request received from the UN Secretariat, India deployed two medical teams of 15 medical personnel each at Goma (DRC) and Juba (South Sudan). The main hub of command and control center of MONUSCO is located in Goma, DRC. The Hospital constructed, with the assistance of India, in Goma, is operational since January 2005, has 90 Indian nationals including 18 specialists. Given the rising Covid cases in the area, the “Level-3” facility, which is the highest level of medical care provided by a deployed UN unit, is now being upgraded to a Level-3 Plus facility. The “Level-2 plus” Hospital by India in Juba, South Sudan (UNMISS), operational since December 2016, has 77 Indian nationals including 12 specialists. The Indian facility in Juba presently has one of the highest levels of medical facilities existing in South Sudan. This facility is now being upgraded from Level-2 plus to a Level-3 facility

At the deliberations in UN, India continues to stress the need for serious and institutionalized consultations with Troop Contributing Countries (TCCs) in mandate formulation; need for prioritization of mandates and allocation of adequate resources for implementation; necessity to remove all national caveats as they hinder performance; need for dedicated counter-IED measures; need for enhancing security of camps; appropriate caution on the issue of ‘robust mandates’; and legal safeguards for troops in robust offensive operations.

Security Council Elections

Elections for non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council for the term 2021-22 were held on 17 June 2020. India was the endorsed candidate of the Asia-Pacific Group and was on a clean slate. Out of the 192 votes cast, India secured 184 votes, and took its seat in the Security Council on 1 January 2021. This is the 8th time that India is serving in the Security Council. In the run-up to the elections, India listed five priorities for its Security Council tenure under the overarching theme of NORMS: New Orientation for a Reformed Multilateral System. These include inter alia new opportunities for progress, effective response to international terrorism, reforming multilateral systems, comprehensive approach to international peace and security, and technology with a human touch.

ECOSOC Elections

India was also elected as a Member of three ECOSOC bodies - Commission on Status of Women, Commission on Population and Development, and Committee for Programme and Coordination in the elections held on 14 September 2020.

Inter Parliamentary Union

The 206th Session of Governing Council of Inter-Parliamentary Union was held virtually from 01-04 November 2020. Lok Sabha Speaker attended the Session. India was elected as a Member of the Commission on Status of Women in elections held in September. India, Afghanistan, and China contested for two seats in the Asia-Pacific Group with India and Afghanistan emerging as winners. India was also elected to the Committee for Programme and Coordination and Commission on Population and Development.

Non-Aligned Movement

Prime Minister participated in the online Summit of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Contact Group on Covid-19 held on 04 May 2020 to discuss response to the Covid-19 pandemic, along with over 30 other Heads of State and Government. The online NAM Contact Group Summit on the theme of “United against Covid-19” was convened by the Chair of NAM, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan, in order to promote international solidarity in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic and to mobilize efforts of States and international organizations to address the pandemic. The event also commemorated the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace.

Prime Minister's participation underlined India's longstanding commitment to the principles and values of NAM as one of its leading founding-member. In his intervention, Prime Minister emphasized the importance of a coordinated, inclusive and equitable response by the world to this crisis, outlining the steps India had taken domestically and internationally. Prime Minister also emphasized the importance of a continued effort by the world against other viruses, in particular terrorism and fake news.

Alliance for Multilateralism

On 26 June 2020, Alliance for Multilateralism held a virtual ministerial meeting to celebrate the anniversary of the signing of the Charter of the United Nations. In his pre-recorded video message EAM, underlined that today the world faced both a pandemic and an infodemic and that a dynamic multilateral order was the need of the hour in order to face these challenges.

On 25 September 2020, another virtual Ministerial meeting was held on issues like climate change, cyberspace, gender, and health. EAM, participated and spoke about India's contributions to build back the world economy by creating new

On 09 October 2020, Minister of State participated in the annual Ministerial Meeting of NAM, which was held virtually on the sidelines of the 75th UNGA session. Speaking on the theme "Bandung+65: More relevant, United and Effective NAM against Emerging Global challenges, including Covid-19", he highlighted the need for NAM to stand together and speak in one voice, instead of taking up divisive issues.

capacities in the fields of fintech platforms, renewable energy, and vaccines.

The Commonwealth: Commonwealth Virtual Leaders Meeting on Covid-19 and the Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers' Meeting were held in virtual format on 24 June 2020 and 14 October 2020, respectively. Secretary (West) attended both meetings. India contributed USD 9.46 million to the India-UN Development Fund to fund projects in small island developing states, including in the Caribbean and Oceania.

Democracy Initiatives

Community of Democracies is a global intergovernmental coalition of States to bring together governments, civil society and the private sector in the pursuit of a common goal: supporting democratic rules and strengthening democratic norms and institutions around the world. It celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Warsaw Declaration virtually on 26 June 2020. Minister of State made a statement at the event through a recorded message.

To mark the 25th Anniversary of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IIDEA), a virtual global anniversary conference was arranged titled 'Democracy Now

and Next' on 19-20 November 2020. Minister of State recorded a congratulatory video message for the event underlining the importance of democracy and the contributions of IIDEA in advancing democracy around the world.

India also contributed USD 150,000 in FY 2020-21 to the United Nations Democracy Fund to support democracy initiatives around the world including through community activism, electoral processes, gender equality, media and freedom of information, rule of law and human rights, strengthening civil society interaction with government, tools for knowledge and youth engagement.

UN General Assembly side event on Tuberculosis

Minister for Health and Family Welfare delivered a pre-recorded statement at the event held on 23 September 2020 under the theme "Progress and Multi-sectoral Action towards achiev-

ing global targets to end TB" co-organised by WHO and the Russian Federation. The side event marked two years of the 2018 UN High Level Meeting on TB.

Ministerial Meeting on Universal Health Coverage

Minister for Health and Family Welfare delivered a statement (pre-recorded) at the high-level event held on 08 October 2020 under the theme "One Year Commemoration of the High-Level

Meeting: Measuring Progress, Challenges and Opportunities in the Context of Covid-19".

High-level Event on the Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-Accelerator)

Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India participated (virtually) in a high-level event held on 30 September

2020 under the theme "Tackling Covid-19 together through the ACT-Accelerator".

High-level side-event on "Responding to Infodemic – Sharing Best Practices"

The objective of the event organised by India, Latvia, Australia, Indonesia, and France on 02 December 2020 was to share best practices and policies employed by member states to counter

the Covid-19-related misinformation and disinformation. The President of the General Assembly, Volkan Bozkir, delivered the opening remarks followed by remarks from Foreign Ministers of Latvia and Australia. Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, represented India at the event.

High-Level Segment of United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Prime Minister delivered the keynote address at the High-Level Segment of the ECOSOC on 17 July 2020. The theme of the session was "Multilateralism after Covid 19: What kind of UN do we need at the 75th anniversary ?" PM in his remarks

touched upon several subjects such as India's commitment to achieve the SDGs and actions taken to combat Covid-19 pandemic. PM highlighted the importance of reformed multilateralism and human-centric globalization.

India's 2nd Voluntary National Review

As part of follow-up and review to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, member states conduct regular reviews of progress made towards the achievement of the 17 SDGs. These Voluntary National Reviews (VNR) are presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), held under the auspices of ECOSOC every year in the month of July. India presented its first VNR at the 2017 HLPF and presented its second VNR virtually at the 2020 HLPF held on 13 July 2020. Vice Chairman

of NITI Aayog, presented India's VNR. In our second VNR, we made a paradigm shift to a "whole-of-society" approach by engaging sub-national and local governments, civil society organizations, local communities, people in vulnerable situations and the private sector. India's commitment to the SDGs was presented by highlighting our national development agenda as reflected in the motto of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikaas.

UN Human Rights Council

This year was the second year of India's three-year membership of the UN Human Rights Council (2019-2021). India continued its engagement and participation in, inter-alia, sessions of the Human Rights Council (HRC), annual forum meetings, inter-governmental working group proceedings, and Human Rights Treaty Bodies reporting process. During the 44th (June 2020) and the 45th (September 2020) Sessions of the HRC, India continued to highlight its support on promotion and protection of human rights, technical assistance and cooperation and capacity building of the UN Member States. India co-sponsored 4 resolutions, namely, the resolutions on 'Elimination of discrimination against persons affected by leprosy and their family members'; 'Human Rights and Climate Change'; 'Independence and impartiality of the judiciary, jurors and assessors, and the independence of lawyers'; 'Technical cooperation and capacity

building for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Philippines'. On behalf of NAM, India was the main sponsor for resolutions on 'Enhancement of International Cooperation in the field of Human Rights', 'Human Rights and Unilateral Coercive Measure' and the 'Right to Development'. India also aligned itself with Joint Statements on various human rights issues particularly on 'the Convention on the Rights of Child', 'Climate change', 'Rights of intersex people' and 'Technical assistance and capacity building' among others as well as those delivered by NAM. India continued its participation in the ongoing Third Cycle of the Universal Periodic Review Process pertaining to 28 Member States, which were subjected to review in 2020. At the 45th Session, Indian candidate was re-elected as a member of the Advisory Committee by the HRC.

International Labour Organisation

Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment has been elected as the Chairperson of the Governing Body (GB) of the International Labor Organisation (ILO) for the period October 2020 to June 2021. India chaired the proceedings of the 340th Ses-

sion of the GB of the ILO that was organised in a virtual mode from 02-14 November 2020. Minister for Labour and Employment participated in the High-Level Virtual Summit organised by the ILO on 08-09 July 2020.

World Health Organization

The 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA) session took place in Geneva in a virtual format due to the coronavirus pandemic on 18-19 May 2020 and 09-14 November 2020. Indian Delegation was led by Minister for Health and Family Welfare. The WHA Session on 18-19 May 2020 adopted a resolution on Covid 19, which was co-sponsored by India. The resolution led to the formation of an Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response to conduct an independent and comprehensive evaluation of the WHO led international response to Covid-19 pandemic. Former Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, has been selected as a member of the Independent Panel. India presented an Approach Paper on WHO reforms to the Independent Panel in December 2020. India was elected to the Executive Board (EB) of the WHO for a period of 3 years from May 2020. Minister for Health and Family

Welfare was elected as the Chair of the EB of the WHO on 21 May 2020 for a period of one year. India actively participated in the Special Session of the EB held on 05-06 October 2020 and the regular session of the EB held on 16 November 2020.

India also actively participated in various consultations and co-ordination meetings organised by agencies like GAVI, Global Fund etc. On the occasion of Ayurveda Day 2020, WHO announced the setting up of WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India. The Centre will aim to strengthen the evidence, research, training and awareness about traditional and complementary medicine. The Centre will also support WHO's efforts to implement WHO Traditional Medicine Strategy 2014 to 2023.

World Intellectual Property Organisation

India's relations with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) continued to progress further in 2020. Minister for Commerce and Industries participated in the launch of the Report of the Global Innovation Index (GII), a flagship event of the WIPO. India's global ranking further improved in the GI

to 48 this year, a jump of 33 places since 2015. WIPO's Global Design Database and Global Brand Database added India's national collections of 2 million trademark concepts and more than 58000 design models.

Refugees and Migrants

India actively participated in various meetings organised by the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) as a member of its Executive and Standing Committees. India also participated

at the meetings organised by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), most notably the 5th Special Session held in October 2020 that amended the IOM Constitution.

South Centre

The ongoing cooperation mechanism between India and the South Centre continued to grow in 2020. In April 2020, Shri

Mohandas Pai was appointed as a member of the Governing Board of the South Centre.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

India continued to participate actively and constructively in all UNCTAD meetings in 2020. India was among the top 10 FDI

inflow destinations in 2019, as per the UNCTAD Investment Report 2020.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

Secretary, Department of Telecommunications participated in the High-Level Policy Session of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) Forum, which was held virtually in Geneva, from 22 June to 10 September 2020. The theme of the event was "Fostering digital transformation and global partnerships: WSIS Action Lines for achieving the Sustainable

Development Goals (SDGs)". India, in partnership with the ITU, has proposed to host the World Telecommunication Standardisation Assembly (WTSA-21) in February-March 2022, in Hyderabad, Telangana. It was earlier scheduled to be held in November 2020 but has been postponed due to Covid pandemic.

Climate Change

The 26th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-26), the supreme decision-making body of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) set to take place in Glasgow, UK in November 2020 was postponed due to Covid-19 and now will be in November 2021.

Prime Minister addressed a G20 Summit side event 'Safeguarding the Planet - The Circular Carbon Economy Approach' on 22 November 2020. He said that India will meet the goal of 175 GWs of renewable energy well before the target year of 2022 and will seek to achieve 450 GWs by 2030.

UK along with the United Nations, France, in partnership with Italy and Chile co-convened the virtual Climate Ambition Summit commemorating the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement on 12 December 2020. Paris Agreement of UNFCCC on climate change takes effect from 01 January 2021. Prime

Minister addressed the Summit. He said that India is not only on track to achieve its Paris Agreement targets, but to exceed them beyond expectations. India has reduced emission intensity by 21% over 2005 levels. India has also succeeded in expanding forest cover and safeguarding biodiversity. Prime Minister mentioned two major global initiatives - International Solar Alliance (ISA), and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). Prime Minister said that India will celebrate 100 years as a modern, independent nation in 2047 and pledged that centennial India will not only meet its own targets, but will also exceed expectations.

Prime Minister participated in the virtual Climate Adaptation Summit on 25 January 2021 organised by the Government of Netherlands and Global Commission for Adaptation (GCA). India is one of the co-conveners of GCA.

Arctic Council

India continued its engagement with the Arctic Council as an Observer, and attended the SAO (Senior Arctic Officials) Plenary Virtual Meeting on 17-19 November 2020. India also submitted its biennial Observer Report to the Arctic Council which

conveyed India's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups and its projects. India also committed to step up scientific cooperation with Arctic states and expand the research themes with wider geographic coverage.

Biodiversity Summit

The first UN Summit on Biodiversity was held virtually during the high-level week on 30 September 2020 on the theme "Urgent Action on Biodiversity for Sustainable Development". The summit saw virtual participation from more than 140 member states. Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

also took part in the Summit through a prerecorded video statement. In his statement, the Minister highlighted India's commitment towards conservation of biodiversity. He said that India aims to restore 26 million hectares of degraded and deforested land and achieve land-degradation neutrality by 2030.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Indian Mission participated in the 150th & 151st meetings of Committee of Permanent Representatives of UNEP, held vir-

tually, on 30 April 2020 and 14 September 2020, respectively.

UN-Habitat

First session of 2020 of the Executive Board of UN-Habitat was held online on 29 June 2020. India is a member of the 36 member Executive board. Indian Mission also participated in

the Second session of 2020 Executive Board of UN-Habitat which was held online from 27 to 29 October 2020.

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

A delegation from the Indian Meteorological Department participated in the WMO Data Conference held from 16-19 November 2020.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

India continues to participate in FAO as a member of the FAO Council. It also continues to serve as a member of various com-

mittees of FAO. India has been elected as Chair of Committee on Agriculture (COAG) for a 2-year term starting October 2020

till 2022. The Committee on Agriculture is one of the FAO's important governing bodies providing overall policy and regulatory guidelines on issues related to agriculture, livestock, food safety, nutrition, rural development and natural resources management. This is for the second time that India has been elected as the Chair of COAG.

India continues to be a member of Committee on World Food Security as a Bureau Member from Asia. India has also been elected as a member of International Steering Committee on International Year of Fruits and Vegetables to be celebrated in 2021.

On 16 October 2020, Prime Minister released a commemorative 75 Rupee coin on the occasion of the 75th anniversary

World Food Programme

During the World Food day celebrated on 16 October 2020, Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmes' Welfare participated in the High-level panel discussion. At the World Food Programme (WFP), India continues to be a member of the Ex-

of FAO.

Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare participated in the 35th Asia Pacific Regional Conference virtually organised by Bhutan from 01-04 September 2020.

India is the Vice Chair of Asia Regional Group of FAO and took over as a Chair of Asia Regional group from January 2021.

India is actively engaged in the Food System Summit to be held in 2021 through discussion in different action tracks especially in Action Track 4 on livelihood. India continues to be the member of the International Steering Committee on United Nations Decade of Family Farming.

ecutive Board starting from 01 January 2020 to 31 December 2021. India has been elected as WFP Executive Board Bureau Member and List B convener of 54 countries.

International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)

India is an active member of the Executive Board of IFAD. India contributed USD 60 million on the replenishment cycle and actively participated in the 12th Replenishment discussions. India

continues to be the member of Evaluation Committee of IFAD, and is the Chair of the Emoluments Committee of the IFAD.

Counter Terrorism

The 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of terrorism was held virtually on 28 September, wherein Secretary (East) represented India.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime: India continued active participation in all the important conferences of Commissions and Conventions which are organised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC). Indian delegation participated in the 63rd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) held in Vienna from 02-06 March 2020.

First Intersessional meeting of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption on the preparation for the special session of the General Assembly against corruption (UNGASS) was held in Vienna on 22- 23 June 2020. Indian experts also attended meetings of the Working Group of the Government Experts on Technical Assistance, established by the Conference of the Parties to the UNTOC, Second inter sessional meeting of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice on 30 September 2020 and United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP)

The 76th Commission Session of UNESCAP was held through video conference on 21 May 2020 under the theme 'Promoting economic, social and environmental cooperation on oceans for sustainable development'. Election of Governing Council of Asia Pacific Centre for Transfer of Technology (APCTT) was held during the session where India was re-elected as the host country. Ambassador and PR of India to UNESCAP led the In-

dian delegation at the 7th Asia Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development held through video conference on 20 May 2020.

3rd session of the UNESCAP Committee on Information and Communications Technology, Science, Technology and Innovation was held on 19-20 August 2020. The 7th session of the Committee on Statistics of UNESCAP was held during 26-28

August 2020 in a hybrid format. India was elected as the Vice Chair of the Bureau of the Committee. 6th Session of the UN-ESCAP Committee on Social Development was held on 20 -21

October 2020. The 6th Session of the UNESCAP Committee on Transport was held on 12 -13 November 2020. India participated in all these events.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

The activities and programmes of UNESCO were adversely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, UNESCO organised the 6th Special Session from 08-09 June 2020 to deliberate on the way ahead for the functioning of the organization.

The 209th Session of the Executive Board was held from 02-10

July 2020. India's National Statement at the Session highlighted the achievements of the Government in the field of education, culture and science. India contested the elections for the 21 member Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, but could not get elected.

High-level Meeting to Celebrate 25th Anniversary of Beijing Women's Conference

Minister for Women and Child Development delivered a statement (pre-recorded) at the high-level meeting held on 01 October 2020 under the theme "Accelerating the Realization of

Gender Equality and the Empowerment of All Women and Girls".

International Day of Non-Violence

On 02 October 2020, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN hosted a virtual commemoration to mark the International Day of Non-Violence and the culmination of celebration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, addressed the special event which was organised under the theme "Gandhi@150: A non-vi-

olent approach to peace and development". The event also saw special messages from Permanent Representatives of over 20 delegations to the United Nations. In their messages, speakers highlighted the continuing relevance of Gandhian principles for the United Nations and its objectives.

International Day of Yoga Celebrations

On 21 June 2020, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN organised a virtual celebration on the theme of "Yoga for Health-Yoga from Home" through UN platforms in the form of a pre-recorded video. President of the United Nations General Assembly Tijjani Muhammad-Bande participated in the celebrations and delivered a speech underlining the importance of

Yoga, especially in the context of prevailing pandemic situation.

The Permanent Missions of India, Nigeria and Singapore to the UN supported by WHO, UNICEF and UN-Water organised the World Toilet Day on 19 November 2020. This year the theme was "Sustainable Sanitation and Climate Change".

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 then we have witnessed a steady increase in

volume and frequency of Hindi content on both the Hindi website of the UN and its social media sites, including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The MoU with the UN on usage of Hindi has been extended by five more years till 2025.

13

MULTILATERAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS

G20

At the G20 this year, our efforts were focused towards ensuring that the global response to Covid-19 pandemic is human-centered, inclusive, and sustainable. Prime Minister participated in the Extraordinary Virtual G20 Leaders' Summit convened on 26 March 2020, with Saudi Presidency, to discuss challenges posed by the outbreak of the pandemic and to forge a global coordinated response. At the Summit, Leaders committed to inject over USD 5 trillion into the global economy to counter the social and economic impact of Covid-19 pandemic. Debt Service Suspension Initiative offering temporary suspension of Government to Government debt to low income countries was also announced and is being implemented.

Prime Minister also participated virtually in the 15th G20 Summit convened by Saudi Arabia, from 21-22 November 2020. The Summit was centered on the theme "Realizing Opportunities of 21st Century for All". A Leaders' Declaration,

that contained elements calling for building a resilient and inclusive recovery for building a sustainable future, was also adopted at the end of the Summit.

EAM represented India at the G20 Foreign Ministers' Extraordinary Meeting convened by G20 Chair Saudi Arabia on 03 September 2020. EAM proposed development of voluntary 'G20 Principles on Coordinated Cross-Border Movement of People' with standardization of testing & quarantine procedures and 'movement and transit' protocols.

India's G20 Sherpa, also attended G20 Sherpa meetings in Khobar, Saudi Arabia on 11-12 March 2020 and virtual G20 Sherpa meetings on 25 March 2020, 29-30 September and 27-29 October, 2020. A joint G20 Finance and Health Ministers meeting was held on 17 September 2020, in which a Joint Statement was adopted calling for strengthening economic resilience and growth in overcoming the current crisis.



Prime Minister addressed the Leaders' Side-Event on Safeguarding the Planet at G20 Summit on 22 November 2020

BRICS



Prime Minister participated at the 12th BRICS Summit on 17 November 2020

Prime Minister participated in the 12th BRICS Summit convened virtually by Russia under the theme "Global Stability, Shared Security and Innovative Growth." Leaders discussed intra-BRICS cooperation and key issues in the global context, including reform of the multilateral system, measures to mitigate the impact of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, cooperation in counterterrorism, trade, health, energy and people to people exchanges. The Moscow Declaration was adopted at the end of the Summit. India took over the Chairship of BRICS from

Russia on 01 January 2021, and will be hosting the 13th BRICS Summit in 2021.

At the BRICS Virtual Foreign Ministers' Meeting convened by BRICS Chair, Russia, EAM highlighted the various steps undertaken by India in the wake of the pandemic such as launching of Aarogya Setu Citizen App, Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package and India's supply of drugs and healthcare products to nearly 85 nations. The 2nd virtual meeting of BRICS Foreign

Ministers was held on 4 September 2020, where discussions centred around overview of global situation and the threats and challenges to international peace and security. The 10th

meeting of the BRICS NSA's was held on 17 September 2020, wherein threats to global, national and regional security were discussed.

IBSA

EAM chaired IBSA Foreign Ministers' Meeting through video conference on 16 September 2020. At the meeting, IBSA Ministers exchanged views on furthering IBSA cooperation and discussed various issues of global significance including counterterrorism, climate change, sustainable development, multi-lateral trading system, disarmament, non-proliferation issues and South-South Cooperation. They also shared their experi-

ence on Covid-19 situation in their respective countries. They appreciated the work done by the IBSA Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger. On this occasion, the Ministers also adopted and released the IBSA Joint Ministerial Statement on the Reform of the UN Security Council as a common endeavour of Global South.

14

DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION



The Development Partnership Administration (DPA) was created in January 2012 to effectively handle India's development aid projects through the stages of conception, launch, execution and completion. The DPA functions in close coordination with the Territorial Divisions in the Ministry, which continue to be the principal interlocutors with partner

countries in identifying their developmental needs and priorities. The DPA is progressively developing the expertise required to handle projects in varied sectors and regions through the stages of project formulation, appraisal, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Lines of Credit

A key aspect of India's development assistance in the past few years has been the extension of Lines of Credits (LoCs) or loans

on concessional terms to other developing countries. Over the years, 308 LoCs aggregating more than USD 31.6 billion have

been extended to different countries in various sectors, of which USD 12.87 billion has been extended for African countries, USD 16.4 billion has been extended for Asian countries and USD 2.43 billion for countries in Latin America, Oceania and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). During the year under review (till October 2020), 9 LoCs of about USD 1.36 billion were extended to various countries. 6 LoC Projects have been completed in 2020-21 (till 31 October 2020). Geographically, LoCs have now been extended to Russia and Central Asian countries. Sectorally, LoCs have been extended for financing projects in new sectors like Defence, Connectiv-

ity, ICT, Health, Renewable Energy, Oil Refinery, Water & Sanitation etc.

Of all the completed LoC projects, more than 90% projects were completed within the scheduled budget. Although some complex high value LoC projects got delayed due to the fact that these were being implemented in difficult operating environments in remote and under-developed regions of the world, around one-third of LoC projects were completed within scheduled timelines.

Objective of LoCs

Through LoC, India can help the partner countries through-out various stages of project implementation such as project formulation, technical studies and identifying suitable project management consultants and execution companies. Under LoCs, the partner countries have a benefit of lower interest rates, long moratorium period of 5 years and extended repay-

ment period of 20-25 years. The partner countries have great flexibility in identifying sectors and choosing the projects, based on their national priorities. Further, since substantial part of any development project under LoC is carried out with local sub-contractors utilising local material, it helps the local industry and the economy in the partner countries.

Overseas promotion of Lines of Credit

Government of India is strongly promoting the development partnership initiatives through Lines of Credit across the world through Social Media, Monthly newsletters etc. Under new digital outreach initiatives, a dashboard has also been developed on the website of the Ministry for regular updates on LoCs. Our

Missions are also promoting the significant occasions and milestones like signing of LoC Agreements, foundation stone laying and commencement ceremonies, inauguration ceremonies etc. on various so-cial media platforms.

Country	New LoCs Sanctioned	Amount (USD Million)
Guinea	Construction and upgradation of Regional Hospitals in Kankan and Nzerekore	20.51
Kenya	Power Transmission Lines, Substations and associated infrastructure	93
Nigeria	Two Solar Projects: (i) 50 MW power plant in Bauchi, (USD 66.60 mn), (ii) Solar PV renewable Energy Micro Utility (REMU) in six political zones of Nigeria (USD 8.36 mn)	74.96
Sierra Leone	Rehabilitation of existing potable water facilities in four communities	15
Eswatini	Construction of a new Parliament Building	108.28
Maldives	Greater Male Connectivity Project	400
Sri Lanka	Solar Projects	100
Syria	Tishreen Thermal Power Project, Two new LoC tranches of USD 100 million and USD 40 million	140
Uzbekistan	Social infrastructure and other development projects	448
Vietnam	4 Offshore Patrol Vessels	180
Vietnam	High Speed Guard Boats	120
Vietnam	10 units of submarine batteries	50
Vietnam	Upgradation of Anti-Submarine Warships 159A and 159 AE (Petya Class ships)	150

Country	Completed LoC projects
Kenya	Drilling Rig & Testing Pump unit mounted on trucks in Kenya under LoC of US\$ 15 mn. Construction of Steam Boiler & Vapour Absorption Chillers in Kenya under LoC of US\$ 15 mn. Supply of Biomass briquetting plant in Kenya under LoC of US\$ 15 mn
Myanmar	Supply of Lukas Made Hydraulic re-railing equipment and major parts for Diesel Electric Locomotive under LoC of US\$ 86.31 million extended to Myanmar Supply of Cast manganese steel crossing and Head-hardened switch for turnout (with sleeper bearers) and adaptor rail with fishing devices under LoC of US\$ 86.31 million extended to Myanmar Supply of Spare parts for Carriage and Wagon under LoC of US\$ 86.31 million to the Government of Myanmar.

Development Partnerships: Neighbourhood First

Afghanistan

India has been a steadfast partner in reconstruction and development efforts in Afghanistan despite serious security challenges. The principal focus of India's development assistance to Afghanistan has been to build capacities of Afghan nationals and its institutions for governance and delivery of public service, develop socio-economic infrastructure, secure lives and promote livelihoods.

Some of the key Indian projects in Afghanistan are the new 'Parliament Building in Kabul (2015), and the Afghan India Friendship Dam, earlier known as Salma Dam (2016) which underline India's commitment to the rebuilding of a united, democratic and prosperous Afghanistan. Both countries launched the 'New Development Partnership' in September 2017 to further enhance India's development assistance to Afghanistan. India has agreed to undertake the Shatoot Dam project which will provide drinking water to residents of Kabul besides rehabilitation of existing irrigation and drainage network, and necessary tests and surveys for the project are being carried out.

India is supporting High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs) spread across all the 34 provinces of Afghanistan by extending grants assistance. Since 2005, 4 phases of community-based projects funded by Indian grants and covering areas like agriculture, education, labour, rural development and public health have been implemented by the Afghan government agencies thus building local capacity towards project

management. Under Phase I and II implemented during 2005-2009, USD 20 million was provided for undertaking 116 projects. Under the Phase III launched in 2012, funding of USD 100 million was provided for 420 projects of which 336 have been completed.

Support for education and capacity building programmes is an important aspect of India's development partnership with Afghanistan. Under the Special Scholarship Scheme for Afghan Nationals (SSSAN) administered by the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), 1000 annual scholarship slots are provided to Afghan students for studying in universities and institutes across India. Since 2006, more than 10,000 Afghan students have been trained under this scheme. In addition, another 500 scholarship slots are provided for children/dependents of martyrs of Afghan National Defence and Security Forces and 614 fellowships for Agricultural studies, administered through the Department of Agricultural Research and Education and the Indian Council of Agricultural Research. India is also supporting the establishment of the Afghanistan National Agriculture Sciences and Technology University (ANASTU) in Kandahar which is the first university of its kind in Afghanistan.

During April-September 2020, India supplied 75,000 MT of wheat to the Government of Afghanistan as grant assistance despite the challenges of Covid-19.



Afghanistan-bound consignment of wheat from India being shipped via the Chabahar Port in Iran

Myanmar

India is providing support for three major road connectivity projects in Myanmar which aim to strengthen regional connectivity by building the road network between Myanmar and the North-Eastern States of India. Under the Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Corridor (KMMTTC) Project, an international port has been built at Sittwe in Myanmar. The stretch of Kaladan river connecting Sittwe Port with Paletwa has been developed for navigation and a well-resourced Inland Water terminal has been established at Paletwa. Work is also going on to build a road between Paletwa and Zorinpui on the India-Myanmar border. India has supported implementation of two projects in Myanmar related to India-Myanmar-Thailand

(IMT) Trilateral Highway, namely, re-construction of 69 bridges and their approaches in the Tamu-Kyigone-Kalewa road section (150 kms) and upgradation of the Kalewa-Yargi road section (120 kms). Once completed, the Trilateral Highway will provide seamless connectivity for the North Eastern states of India with Myanmar, Thailand and other ASEAN countries and facilitate movement of goods and traffic.

India also provided support for capacity building projects in Myanmar, namely establishment of the Myanmar Institute of Information Technology (MIIT) in Mandalay and the Advanced Centre for Agricultural Research and Education (ACARE) near Naypyidaw.

Nepal

India-Nepal developmental partnership extends to a wide spectrum of projects, including infrastructure projects in areas of railways, road, electricity transmission lines, police training and vocational training. India is undertaking development of rail links with Nepal for enhancing the ease of movement of people and goods. Under the first phase, Jayanagar-Bardibas Rail Link (68.72 kms) and Jogbani –Biratnagar Rail Link (18.60 kms) are being developed at an estimated cost of around Rs. 950 crores. Preparatory work for construction of a new electrified rail line connecting Raxaul to Kathmandu is being carried out by Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) of India.

Sri Lanka

A modern state-of-the-art Cultural Centre has been constructed at Jaffna under India-Sri Lanka development partnership. The Cultural Centre includes a 2-storied museum, 12-storied learning tower, an auditorium block, a public square and a float-

ing stage for cultural performances. Earlier, India had helped establish an Island wide Emergency Ambulance Services with a total of 209 ambulances in Sri Lanka during 2018 -2019.

Maldives

India and Maldives have a growing development partnership involving both grant and LoC assistance. The projects completed in 2019 include installation of streetlights in Male, launch of RuPay card, gifting of CGS Kamiyaab and MoUs on setting of fish processing plants in Addu Atoll.

India is assisting in construction of a new Ministry of Defence building for Maldives. The construction work of the Institute for Security and Law Enforcement Studies is in final stages. In-

dia provided grants for construction of additional facilities at the Composite Training Centre at Maafilaafushi Island built up with India's assistance.

During 2020, Maldives has been the largest recipient of India's Covid related assistance. India has also announced support for the Greater Malé Connectivity Project through a grant of USD 100 million and a LoC of USD 400 million.

Mauritius

The first phase of Metro Express Project in Port Louis built under the India-Mauritius Development Partnership and operationalized in 2020 proved to be a major success with a record number of ridership reached in the first year. The new Supreme Court building in Port Louis built with grant assistance of USD 28.12 million from India was jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Mauritius on 30 July 2020. Other significant infrastructure and capacity building projects

undertaken in Mauritius are building an ENT Hospital, Social Housing Project in Port Louis and the E-Tablet project to provide teaching aids for primary schools in Mauritius. India also provided grant assistance for construction of a Civil Services College in Port Louis. In the wake of the catastrophic oil-spill off the coast of Mauritius in August 2020, India dispatched 30 tonnes of technical equipment and material to assist in the oil-spill containment operations.

LoC in the Neighborhood

The focus of LoCs has been on development initiatives undertaken in the borrowing countries, particularly in our neighborhood of India based on Gol's Neighborhood First Policy:

Bangladesh: The portfolio of LoC extended by the Government of India is highest in the case of Bangladesh. India has extended 4 LoCs amounting to US\$ 7.862 billion to the Government of Bangladesh which includes US\$ 500 mn LoC for cooperation in defence sector too. 46 Projects have been covered under these LoCs out of which 14 Projects have been completed.

Maldives: Gol has extended 4 LoCs worth US\$ 1.28 bn to Maldives. The Greater Male Connectivity project, the largest infrastructure project in Maldives was announced this year.

Greater Malé Connectivity Project in Maldives : The project involves construction of a 6.7 km long combination of bridge, causeway and road to connect the Malé, Villingili, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafu-shi islands. It is one of the longest connectivity projects in the country and is expected to become the new economic lifeline for Maldives.

Development Projects with Grant Assistance

The development projects being undertaken with Gol grant assistance in neighbouring countries cover a range of sectors from infrastructure development, including construction, roads & bridges, waterways and transmission lines as also power generation, agriculture, capacity building, education, health, rural development etc.

Sri Lanka Housing Project: India's development partnership

with Sri Lanka is based on a consultative approach, factoring in the priorities of the Government of Sri Lanka. The ongoing housing project involving construction of 50,000 houses for resettlement of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Sri Lanka is progressing well. The construction and repair of 46,000 houses for under an owner-driven process Internally Displaced Persons in the Northern and Eastern provinces has been completed.

Development Partnership with the Central Asia Region

EAM announced an Indian LoC offer/availability of USD 1 billion for 5 Central Asian Countries viz. Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan, for priority developmental proj-

ects in fields such as connectivity, energy, IT, healthcare, education, agriculture etc. during the Second Meeting of India-Central Asia Dialogue held on 28 October 2020.

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 211 LoCs amounting to USD 12.87 billion have been extended by the GoI to African countries in varied sectors such as power plants, hydroelectricity, power transmission & distribution networks, dams, roads, railways, ports, agriculture & irrigation, industrial units, skills development, civil construction etc. New sectors such as Telecommunication, Defence and Solar power have also been included under the GoI LoCs to Africa.

Grant Projects in Other Developing States

As part of India's commitment towards South-South Cooperation, it is extending developmental assistance by way of taking up grant assistance projects aimed at economic cooperation and capacity building keeping in view the local requirements. In this context, a Business Incubator Centre at Malawi has been established and Indo-Belize Centre of Engineering at Belize and a Vocational Training Centre (VTC) at Zanzibar are being established under Indian grant assistance.

DPA II also continued to implement the Ministry's commitment

Some large iconic projects by India in Africa include construction of Parliament building, Convention Centres etc. People oriented projects in the arena of Drinking Water and sanitation and Rural Electrification are also being undertaken in African countries. The GoI has also set up first ever manufacturing industries like Cement Plants, Tractor Manufacturing Units, Food Processing Plants, Solar Module Manufacturing Units etc. in various countries of Africa. The GoI is also undertaking several grant-in-aid projects such as supply of 27 Midi Buses (30+1) Seater to Somalia, 10 Ambulances to Tanzania, 5 Ambulances to Mali and medical equipment & CT scan machine to Liberia.

ments to the UN World Food Programme by executing procurement and supply of USD 1 million worth of anti-TB drugs and another USD 1 million worth of wheat to DPRK. India also responded to Iran's request for assistance in combating locust attacks by providing 20,000 liters of Malathion. As part of our continuing engagements with conflict-stricken countries in the WANA region, DPA II executed procurement and supplies of anti-cancer drugs to Palestine, food support to South Sudan and Djibouti; a comprehensive package of medical and food aid to Comoros is currently being executed.

Revamping of IDEAS Guidelines

The Government of India has been extending LoCs to developing countries since 2005-06 under the Indian Development and Economic Assistance Scheme (IDEAS). The IDEA Scheme has been extended twice for 5-year periods in 2010 and 2015 with the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA). The extant IDEAS Guidelines for LoCs were issued in 2015. Keeping in view the significance and strategic importance of the scheme, an extension of the IDEA Scheme has been proposed for the next 5-year period i.e. 2020-2025. Extensive consultations were undertaken between MEA, Ministry

of Finance and Exim Bank of India, and suggestions received from other Ministries/Departments were also considered. It was decided to undertake a review and revamping exercise for the extant IDEAS Guidelines issued in December 2015.

In connection with the proposed extension of the Indian Development and Economic Assistance (IDEA) Scheme for the next 5-year period from 2020-2025, NITI Aayog has been entrusted with carrying out a detailed review of the IDEA Scheme.

G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative

Due to the unprecedented impact of Covid-19 on the poorest countries, the G20 Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors, at a meeting held on 15 April 2020, agreed on the issue of suspension of debt service payment by official bilateral creditors for the poorest countries that request forbearance. In accordance with this G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative (G20 DSSI), the debt service suspension relief is to be made available to the GoI-supported LoC Borrowers, who are IDA/LDC eligible countries, on receiving such requests from the Borrower Governments as per the standard template of G20 DSSI.

Accordingly, Government has approved the request for debt service suspension relief to 13 borrowing Governments as per the G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative namely Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Myanmar, Republic of Congo, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, Togo and Maldives. Requests received from other LoC-recipient countries will also be taken up accordingly.

Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC)

As the flagship capacity building programme of the Government of India, the ITEC programme has a footprint in 160 countries and has contributed to the capacity enhancement of more than 2,00,000 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.

ITEC not only provides capacity building training programmes in the traditional areas of governance, but has also been expanded to include emerging areas like AI, Nanotechnology, forensics and cyber security. ITEC now 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 reputed institutions in the private sector. 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.

During FY 2020-21, in-person ITEC courses remained largely suspended due to the global outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdown. The Ministry organised the successful repatriation of nearly 1200 ITEC trainees stranded at various training institutions in India at the time of the imposition of lockdown on 24 March 2020. Subsequently the ITEC programme was continued by means of online e-ITEC courses which focused extensively on public health, health care delivery and Covid-19 management strategies. A total of 20 such e-ITEC courses were organised during this period. A total of six more ITEC experts are scheduled to be deputed during the period January-March 2021.

Civilian training under ITEC

As of date, ITEC content is provided through nearly 12000 training slots in 383 courses across 98 institutions in India for civilian professionals in developing partner countries under various ITEC programmes. Apart from these regular 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 Gulf, Central Asian and LAC countries), Yoga Trainers, Forensic investigation and Police training (for Seychelles), Proficiency-cum-Professional Development course for Teachers (Bangladesh), Athletics (Maldives), Mid-Career Training Programme for civil servants (Bangladesh and Myanmar), Hospitality and Tourism management (Cambodia), etc.

Apart from the physical/in-India 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 customized 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 trainings like Fertilizer Technology; Fisheries

Technology; Agriculture and allied sectors; Teachers' Training and Research; Open Education Resources; Securities Markets; Wind Energy; Rural Electrification; South-South Cooperation etc. The ITEC Executive is the third channel, which is an exclusive programme for senior level functionaries and policy makers in our partner countries; this channel delivers content through the medium of conferences, workshops and study/exposure visits which provide an understanding of practices and systems in India.

In FY 2020-21, none of the scheduled regular physical/in-India courses, ITEC Onsite programmes or ITEC-Executive programmes could be conducted due to Covid-19. However, the Division kept up a regular calendar of e-ITEC training programmes. Responding to the Prime Minister's outreach to SAARC countries at the onset of the outbreak, the Division promptly organised 12 e-ITEC courses focusing on public health and Covid-19 management. These courses were delivered in partnership with premier institutions like the AIIMS and PGI, Chandigarh. Responding to the request of Bangladesh, training programmes were also organised in Bangla language. Apart from public health, e-ITEC courses were also organised on a wide range of subjects like gender inclusive governance, electoral systems, traditional medicine/Ayurveda and Vipassana meditation.

Defence training under ITEC

During 2020-21, 1351 defence training slots were allotted to partner countries. These cover courses on security and strategic studies, defence management, electronics, mechanical engineering, marine hydrography, counterinsurgency and jungle warfare, Maritime Law and Ops course by Coast Guard headquarters, as also foundation courses for young officers in three

services at premier Indian institutions like NDC, New Delhi and Defence Services Staff College, Wellington. In FY 2020-21, the first defence e-ITEC course was conducted with the help of Armed Forces Medical Services for medical officers of Cambodia, Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam on the subject of management and prevention of Covid-19.

Deputation of ITEC experts

As of date, 37 experts in various fields are on deputation to partner countries in areas of health, Agriculture, Disaster response, Archaeology, Ayurveda, Legal experts, and English teachers etc. Several Defence training teams have also been

deputed to Tanzania, Vietnam, Myanmar, Seychelles, Namibia, Lao PDR. GSLs have been issued for the replacement of the existing IMTT team in Uganda.

Cultural Diplomacy and Development Partnerships

Cultural Diplomacy has been a longstanding integral part of India's Soft Power Diplomacy across the world. India has been involved in cultural and heritage conservation projects in various partner countries. Ministry created a dedicated Division for heritage conservation in January 2020 within the DPA. Current Cultural and Heritage Conservation activities of Government of India range from excavations, restoration of temples and

other heritage/religious sites such as mosques and dzongs to mural preservations, museology related works, iconographic survey, etc. Restoration of the My Son Temple complex in Vietnam, Ta Prohm and Preah Vihear temples in Cambodia, and Vat Phou Temple in Lao PDR are some of the key ongoing projects being implemented by the Division.

Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Activities

DPA II Division is the nodal division for coordination and implementation of HA/DR efforts of the Ministry. Over the years, the Division has acquired institutional expertise in the execution of HA/DR efforts in partnership with various nodal agencies of the Government of India like the NDRF, FCI, NAFED and the Armed Forces.

FY 2020-21 saw the unfortunate occurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic and its ensuing global lockdowns. In keeping with India's reputation as a established first responder and a responsible player in HA/DR activities, the Ministry responded to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic by reaching out to our developing partner countries with much needed medical aid in the form of medicines, Covid protection gear pharmaceutical products and medical expertise. MEA provided Covid-related medical support in the form of free drugs, testing kits and Covid protection gear to 82 countries in the neighbourhood Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is noteworthy that the entire delivery of aid was conducted at the height of the global lockdown, when supply and logistic chains were severely disrupted. This exercise reinforced India's reputation in pharmaceutical manufacturing as well as logistic operations.

Apart from the Covid response, DPA II continued to implement

the Ministry's commitments to the UN World Food Programme by executing procurement and supply of USD 1 million worth of anti-TB drugs and another USD 1 million worth of wheat to DPRK. India also responded to Iran's request for assistance in combating locust attacks by providing 20,000 litres of Malathion. As part of our continuing engagements with conflict-stricken countries in the WANA region, DPA II executed procurement and supplies of anti-cancer drugs to Palestine, food support to South Sudan and Djibouti; a comprehensive package of medical and food aid to Comoros is currently being executed.

As part of our continuing engagements with conflict-stricken countries in the WANA region, DPA II executed procurement and supplies of anti-cancer drugs to Palestine, food support to Sudan, South Sudan and Djibouti; a comprehensive package of medical and food aid to Comoros and Madagascar is currently being executed. Supply of 2.4 million polio vaccines to Tajikistan is being executed during this period.

During the recent tropical storm and subsequent water inundation during December 2020, India supplied Cambodia, Vietnam and Fiji with 3000, 3000 and 1000 flood relief packages respectively as disaster mitigation and relief effort.



Vat Phou Hindu temple complex in LAO PDR

15

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

The Economic Diplomacy Division (ED), as part of its efforts to give a focused direction to the economic diplomacy dimension of the country's foreign policy undertook a number of initiatives during 2020-21.

Diplomatic engagements including bilateral and multilateral initiatives

3rd General Assembly of the International Solar Alliance (ISA)

The Division in coordination with the nodal Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), helped organise the Third General Assembly of the ISA which was held on 14 October 2020 on a customized virtual platform. More than 53 member countries attended the meeting from across the world. The ED Division conducted extensive outreach through Missions and Posts abroad for the re-election of India as the President of the ISA Assembly for another term, and consequently, during the Third General Assembly, the ISA Member countries unanimously elected India as the President of the ISA Assembly for another term, i.e. up to the year 2022.

As on date, 88 countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA, while 70 of these countries have also ratified the Framework Agreement. During the First General Assembly of the ISA, held on 03 October 2018, the Assembly of the ISA considered and adopted the proposal made by India for an amendment to the Framework Agreement for opening up of ISA membership to all Member countries of the UN. As on date, 38 countries have accepted/ratified the amended Framework Agreement of the International Solar Alliance.

Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

The ED Division coordinates the functioning of the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI). The first Governing Council meeting of CDRI was held on 20 March 2020 in New

Delhi under the Co-Chairmanship of the Principal Secretary to Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, United Kingdom. The first Executive

Committee meeting of CDRI was held on 29 June 2020, in which many important projects including projects in power, airport and health infrastructure sector have been approved. At present, 22 members, consisting of 18 national governments and 4 multilateral organizations have joined CDRI. Third International Conference on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure

(ICDRI 2021) will be held virtually from 17-19 March 2021. CDRI has identified seven countries as target countries for its membership- Netherlands, Indonesia, Russia, Canada, Mexico, Bangladesh and South Africa. Ministry is closely coordinating with CDRI for membership of these countries, including by taking up with the host governments.

53rd Session of UN Commission on International Trade Law

The United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) is the core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law. A legal body with universal membership specializing in commercial law reform worldwide for over 50 years, UNCITRAL's business is the modernization and harmonization of rules on international business. UNCITRAL was established by the General Assembly in 1966 (Resolution 2205 of 17 December 1966). In establishing the Commission, the General Assembly recognized that disparities in national laws governing international trade created obstacles to the flow of trade, and it regarded the Commission as the vehicle by which the United Nations could play a more active role in reducing or removing these obstacles. UNCITRAL

carries out its work through the six Working Groups which are assigned specific topics to work on from time to time. The ED Division participated at the 53rd Session of UNCITRAL in September, 2020 and its inter-session working groups. The session aimed at the harmonization and modernization of the law of international trade by preparing and promoting the use and adoption of legislative and non-legislative instruments in a number of key areas of commercial law. Officials from the Division also attended a two day workshop jointly conducted by the Korean Ministry of Justice and the UNCITRAL Regional Centre for Asia Pacific. The Division was also coordinating efforts to host a two day conference in New Delhi which could not go ahead due to the pandemic.

India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave

The Central Europe Division, in collaboration with the Economic Diplomacy Division, and CII organised the 1st India-Nordic-Baltic conclave on 05 November 2020. EAM was

the keynote speaker at the inaugural session which also saw Ministerial level participation from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland and Latvia.



EAM at the India-Nordic-Baltic Conclave on 05 November 2020

Social Security Agreement (SSA)

Social Security Agreements, broadly defined, 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 contract-

ing 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, skilled workers working abroad by providing three benefits- Avoiding making double social security contributions; Easy remittance of benefits (Exportability);

and Aggregating the contribution periods (in two countries) to prevent loss of benefits (Totalization). Ministry is the "com-

petent 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. Till date, India has signed and ratified social security agreements with a total number of 19 countries.

Civil Aviation

On the Civil Aviation front, the Division works closely with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on bilateral air services negotiations. The Division also extends inputs on these issues and on requirement of flight operations or code share to promote tourism and to strengthen bilateral/multilateral relations. The Division also participated in negotiations held with the UK, Israel, Bangladesh, Japan, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

During the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, international flight operations stopped completely. In order to restore minimum essential air connectivity, it was decided to have air bubble transport arrangements on country to country basis. Accordingly, the Ministry of Civil Aviation started sending requests to this ministry to approach various countries through

diplomatic notes. MEA has been involved in the process in depth. MEA is facilitating inputs to the MoCA in terms of eligible passengers from both sides, negotiating terms and conditions with other countries and actively following up / coordinating between MoCA and civil aviation authorities of different countries for finalisation of terms and materialisation of the air bubble transport arrangements. As a result, air bubbles are operational so far with 21 countries namely, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Canada, UAE, Bahrain, Nigeria, Japan, Kenya, Ukraine, Oman, Iraq, France, Germany, Tanzania, Rwanda, Netherland, USA, UK and Qatar. Further, Note Verbales have been issued for air bubbles to Sri Lanka, Australia, Singapore, Russia, Israel, New Zealand, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Malaysia and Thailand.

Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs)

Bilateral Investment Treaties (BIT) and Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS) Arbitration Cases involving GOI: 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 concluding its old generation investment treaties and actively engaged with over 30 countries in negotiating bilateral investment treaties based on the new model BIT of 2015. Matters pertaining to Investment treaties involve origin countries/foreign relations and also issues pertaining to international law. The MEA is an integral part of BIT negotiations and also provides requisite inputs. Correspondence about BIT with other countries is routed through the Ministry by means of Note Verbalism, etc. through the ED Division which is the nodal division in Ministry for Investment Treaty or such matters.

India has been faced with over 30 investment treaty claims with the cumulative sums in claim amounting to over USD 100 Billion. The cases are at various stages including some cases where awards have been rendered. The Division as a part of the Inter-Ministerial Group of the Government of India is actively involved at every stage of the dispute by providing necessary inputs, facilitating the hearings and also facilitating and coordinating other related actions in these cases in foreign jurisdictions.

These cases are before international tribunals seated abroad and involve questions of international law where the advice of

the Ministry is sought. The Division had also attended the Parliamentary Standing Committee meetings on the subject "India and Bilateral Investment Treaties" where the issues pertaining to India and its investment treaties including the disputes under these treaties was discussed.

So far, there have been 35 dispute notices by investors against India, of which India has won 04 arbitrations, lost 04 arbitrations, 02 disputes have been resolved amicably and in 04 disputes, the investors withdrew their claim. 14 disputes are still active at different stages of arbitration and in another 07 disputes, the claimants did not pursue the matter after the initial request under BIPA. The ongoing disputes include CC/Devas, Vodafone, Khaitan Holdings, Maxis communication among others.

Permanent Court of Arbitration: The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), an inter-governmental organisation, of which India has been a member since 1950, has signed a host country agreement with India in 2008 to set up a permanent facility in India. While this is still a work in progress, the PCA has been conducting the PCA-India Conferences and workshops under the ambit of the Host Country agreement which is being facilitated by this Division. Further, most of India's investment treaty cases are administered by the PCA and the Division, through the Mission in the Hague, coordinates with the PCA in such cases.

Market Expansion Activities

To enable our Missions/Posts abroad to effectively respond to the growing demands of Indian industry and business, the Division has a budget Head entitled “Market Expansion Activities”. Funds are allocated under the Budget Head to Missions and Posts abroad based on the volume of bilateral trade handled by them (discounting oil imports). The budget enables our Commercial wings to respond effectively and in a time bound manner to the expectations of Indian private sector in not only handling of routine trade and investment enquiries, providing

information on economic and business climate in the countries of their accreditation but more importantly in identifying new business opportunities by undertaking promotional activities such as market surveys, seminars, workshops, outreach activities targeting Chambers of Commerce, Industry Associations etc. The Expenditure by Missions/Posts under the head is governed by “Expenditure Guidelines for Market Expansion Budget”. This year the Division has allocated Rs. 10 crores to various Indian Missions/Posts abroad.

Website and Global Mapping of Resources

The ED Division revamped its website, which is a one-stop source of all information on Indian economy and business environment in India for foreign enterprises, as well as Indian businesses going abroad and for Indian Missions and Posts. A section of the website is dedicated to the Resources Platform which would provide detailed information on World Resource Endowments and Opportunities in three areas:

(a) Mineral resources: The platform will serve as a global atlas for locating global reserves of minerals strategic to India.

(b) Opportunities for agri-exports: The platform will map the Indian agricultural products with the centres of their demand in countries across the world, thus, helping exporters to identify potential opportunities for agri-exports.

(c) Overseas employment opportunities for our citizens: Keeping in view India’s growing demographic dividend, the platform will help identify employment opportunities available for skilled/semi-skilled labour in countries abroad.

Strategy for Boosting India’s Agricultural exports

The ED Division has been working with the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare (DAC&FW) and Department of Commerce towards boosting Agri exports. Towards this it has been involved in the drafting of the strategy for boosting India’s Agri exports and its implementation through an action plan that includes inter alia country-specific strategies for export promotion, Brand India and Farm to Gulf campaigns for Agri-commodities with time lines and the creation of dedicated nodal points for Agri trade in identified Missions.

The Division is working in close collaboration with the concerned line ministries for expanding our agri-exports to identified focus countries. For this ‘country-specific export strate-

gies’, have been developed based on the inputs received from the Missions in the focus countries, as well as the recommendations made by the concerned Ministries and Departments. These strategies focus on potential areas of increasing exports to identified countries, challenges faced by our exporters and steps and way forward. Enhancing Agri-exports and food-processing will be one of our primary areas of focus in the near future, in line with the Gol’s vision to double our farmer’s income by the year 2022. The identified target countries include: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, UAE, Ukraine, USA, and Vietnam.

Industrial Outreach and Investment Promotion and Publicity

• **India-Canada Agri-tech:** The ED Division, in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare, the Indo-Canadian Business Chamber and the CII, helped organise the India-Canada Agri-Tech Virtual Summit from 06-07 October 2020. It was inaugurated jointly by India’s Minister for Agriculture and Farmer’s Welfare and Food Processing, and Canada’s Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food. The event was organised with a range of stakeholders from India and Canada to discuss solutions that can enhance productivity, bring efficiency in the supply chain, optimize processing, focus on plant-protein and Agri-management systems.

• **15th CII Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership:** The ED Division, in association with the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the CII, helped organise the 15th CII Exim Bank Digital Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership from 22–24 September 2020 over virtual platform.

• **World Solar Technology Summit:** The ED Division, in collaboration with the ISA Secretariat and FICCI helped organise the World Solar Technology Summit on a virtual platform, with a focus on new Technologies and Innovations in the field of Solar, on 08 September 2020.

• **India Myanmar Virtual Business Meet 2020:** The Division, in collaboration with the CII & concerned Territorial Division, helped to conduct the India Myanmar Virtual Business Meet on 22 April 2020.

• **India Thailand Digital Conference, 2020:** The Division, in collaboration with the CII & concerned Territorial Division, helped to conduct the India Thailand Digital Conference & Virtual Business Meet on Pharma and Healthcare Sectors, Auto and Auto Components, on 11 June 2020.

• **Doing Business with Bangladesh:** On 29 June 2020, in collaboration with CII, the Division helped in the organization of Digital Conference on Doing Business with Bangladesh.

• **1st INDO ASEAN Oceanic Business Summit & Expo:** On 04 August 2020, the Division in collaboration with the CII and concerned Territorial Division, helped organise the 1st INDO-ASEAN Oceanic Business Summit & Expo.

• **Global Ayurveda Summit 2020:** On 15 September 2020, the ED Division, in collaboration with the Ministry of AYUSH, CII and our Missions and Posts abroad, helped organise the Global Ayurveda Summit with the theme ‘Ayurveda for Immunity’ on a virtual platform. The event was inaugurated by the Vice President of India.

• **Ayurveda Day 2020:** The Division also coordinated with the Missions and Posts for successful celebration of Ayurveda Day on 13 November 2020, including dissemination of Prime Minister’s message on the occasion

• **India-Philippines Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship:** On 25 September 2020, Division along with CII co-ordinated the conduct of a virtual summit on India-Philippines Bilateral Economic and Trade Relationship.

• **Virtual Global Investor Roundtable:** The ED Division in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance and the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) helped organise the Virtual Global Investor Roundtable, held on 05 November 2020. The event was chaired by Prime Minister, and was attended by the Union Finance Minister, Union Minister of State for Finance, RBI Governor, and other dignitaries. The roundtable witnessed participation from 20 of the world’s largest pension and sovereign wealth funds with a total assets under management of about USD 6 trillion.

• **Virtual Diplomacy:** The ED Division has been participating in several digital webinars that have been hosted by the business chambers, academic circles, think-tanks, etc, including the likes of PHDCCI, NASSCOM, CII, FICCI, ASSOCHAM, ICAI, among others. The digital world is being used effectively to ensure that India’s diplomatic efforts do not lose steam. In view of the fact that the Covid pandemic will bring the possibilities of a physical conduct of trade fairs and buyer-seller meets to a halt, our Missions are working to devise effective marketing and promotion strategies which can be carried out digitally. Organising virtual B2B and B2C meetings between Indian trade chambers and local trade bodies is also a part of the agenda.

• **Dissemination of Business and Economic Outreach Products:** The ED Division supports the Missions/Posts abroad in economic and business outreach activities by providing them with the relevant promotional, publicity and knowledge/information material on India’s policy environment, policy decisions, investment opportunities, trade-related matters, among others.

Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGOS)

The ED Division has been supporting Secretary (East) and Secretary (ER) who represent MEA in the Sectoral Group of Secretaries (SGOS) Groups 3 and 7 on Resources and Economy, respectively. The broad mandate of the group is to improve the investment environment in India, by improving physical connectivity, competitive approvals, investor friendly policies, growing exports and reducing high import dependence.

The key performance indicators pertaining to the MEA include enhancing regional connectivity initiatives, construction of border haats, ICPs, Development Partnership with Africa, and improving 3-Ts (Trade, Tourism, Technology). To this end, the Division has been providing regular updates on progress made on specific connectivity projects and development partnership initiatives.

Coordination on Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Initiative

• As a part of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Initiative, the ED Division has been working in collaboration with Missions to chalk out a detailed strategy to increase exports of India’s goods and services in other countries. The Division

is working to identify the areas and countries where our manufacturers have the potential to emerge as the low-cost preferred alternative for imports. The Missions have been working to promote India’s image as a safe and re-

- liable destination where all investment related requirements can be facilitated for the manufacturing units planning to shift their base to India in the post- Covid situation.
- Missions are providing us with detailed inputs on the Non-Tariff Barriers being faced by Indian exporters in their respective countries of accreditation. The ED Division, in collaboration with the Missions, is also working to identify newer lines of goods and services as well as new destinations where India's exports can be enhanced.
 - ED Division is working with the Missions to build on India's image as the pharmacy of the world, which has lately been strengthened by the efforts to provide paracetamol and Hydroxychloroquine to several countries under the Covid crisis. The Division is working in close coordination with the Missions who are also being encouraged to make use of the available digital platforms such as the India Trade Portal (managed by FIEO) to disseminate real-time information on export opportunities to the exporters and manufacturers in India.
 - In order to identify and plug in the immediate gaps in the global supply chains, the Missions, in collaboration with the ED Division in MEA and the DPIIT, are already in the process of exploring sourcing and export opportunities in various countries and to guide our exporters by putting potential suppliers and buyers in touch with our EPCs and Industry and also facilitate B2B meetings for them. The EPCs/Industry bodies have also been requested to get in touch with our missions directly and seek B2B meetings both to hedge the risks of supplies disruptions and wherever possible to fill in the supply gaps. Support for industry is also being sought as the administrative department for certain product groups, in expeditiously reaching out to their industry stakeholders and ramping up production in areas where we need to fill in supply gaps both in new markets and existing ones.

Regular Covid Reports to Cabinet Secretariat

In March 2020, Foreign Secretary presented to the Committee of Secretaries headed by Cabinet Secretary, a presentation on the Economic Impact of the Covid Pandemic, based on the inputs received from our Missions and Posts abroad. In continuation of this effort, ED Division was compiling weekly reports on the situation of Covid across the world, based on inputs received from our Missions. These reports were forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat on a weekly basis and contained inputs on the economic impact of Covid pandemic on the countries' economies, the impact on various sectors, and the country-specific economic and other relief measures announced by the various Governments, to keep updated on the Covid scenario unfolding across the world.

Efforts on 3Ts: Trade, Tourism, Technology

- On the instructions of the Prime Minister, the Ministry has been working in collaboration with the Missions to promote the 3Ts- Trade, Tourism and Technology, into India. To this end, Missions are being encouraged to focus on the various aspects of our economic priorities in their outreach efforts, including:
- Increasing India's exports to their respective countries of accreditation by identifying the Non-Tariff Barriers being faced by Indian exporters; new lines of goods and services; and new destinations where India's exports can be enhanced;
 - Identify lines of goods that are at present imported by India from their respective country of accreditation, but can be substituted by domestic manufacturing;
 - Enhanced outreach and promotional activities, in collaboration with the State Governments for encouraging in-bound tourism to the States;
 - Promote and facilitate foreign investment flows, in the form of FDI and technology transfer into India, from their respective countries of accreditation;
 - Explore new opportunities for collaboration with the economic actors and other relevant stakeholders in their respective countries of accreditation;
 - As a part of the Aatma Nirbhar Bharat Initiative, promote India's image as the alternate and reliable low-cost manufacturing destination in the region, where all investment related requirements can be facilitated for the manufacturing units planning to shift their base to India in the post-Covid situation;
 - The Ministry through the Missions abroad also identified agri-export destinations in 15 target countries, export items and data on global supply chain disruption where India could fill the gap and promote India's agricultural exports.
- Enhanced export promotion by making use of the available

digital platforms such as the India Trade Portal to disseminate real-time information on export opportunities to the exporters/ manufacturers in the country and help integrate the manufacturing sector with the global production and supply chains.

Inputs to Various Boards/Committees

AS (ER) is a member of the several Boards/Committees such as Export Promotion Council for EOUs & SEZs (EPCES) (Ministry of Commerce & Industry), Project Exports Promotion Council (PEPC), India Trade Promotion Organisation (ITPO), Invest India, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC), WAPCOS, Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC). Other officers of ED Division also represent MEA on Committees such as Fisheries subsidies, Coal Preparation Society of India (CPSI), Group constituted on Cartelisation/hoarding of pulses, Market Access Initiative (MAI). As part of these Boards/Committees ED Division regularly participate in their meetings and provide the necessary inputs and guidance of MEA.

Energy

The ED Division coordinates India's joint association with the International Energy Agency (IEA). ED Division has contributed to the biennial work programs developed between India and the IEA, including the Joint Statement and the Schedule of Joint Action (JS& SJA) for 2015-17, the Statement of Intent (SOI) between NITI Aayog and the IEA, as well as the Joint Program of Work 2018-2021 between the IEA and the Government of India. ED Division is also the primary coordinating agency facilitating Indian energy ministries' engagements with the IEA. The Division is working closely with the IEA, and other line ministries to work out a framework/ Strategic Partnership, for strengthening of institutional ties including potential paths to IEA Membership for India. Besides facilitating India's energy engagements at the multilateral forum, ED Division is also a part of the group of line ministries, involved in pursuing the bilateral energy dialogues with various countries.

Amidst the Covid outbreak, several countries were threatened by the infestation of Desert locusts. Ministry offered supplies of 20000 litres of pesticide Malathion 96% UV to Iran so as to help it contain locust infestation in its Sistan Baluchistan and Hormozgan provinces. This proposal was welcomed by Iran. Accordingly, the Ministry placed an order with HIL to manufacture and supply 25 tonne of Malathion 95% ULV to Iran.

Registration of bidders procuring supply from land border countries for public procurements in India under GFR, 2017 Rule 144 (xi):

In line with the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance (Public Procurement Division)'s amendment of Rule 144 of the GFRs, 2017, on restricting/screening of procurement from other countries, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has constituted the Registration Committee (RC) with members from MEA, MHA and sectoral Ministry. MEA is being represented in this Committee by the ED Division. The Registration Committee is the competent authority to decide the cases of registration. MEA has participated in all 5 meetings of RC held so far. MEA has examined the whole process of the registration in its intent and objectives and has provided substantive detailed inputs to the DPIIT which has been well received by the multi-ministry Registration Committee. These inputs have become part of pro forma to seek detailed information from the applicants and for Administrative ministries' meaningful due diligence process. As most of these applicants are directly or indirectly procuring supply from Chinese entities, these provisions as listed below assume significance. So far, the Ministry has received 40 applications from the DPIIT for views which are at various stages of examination, while inputs in one case have already been sent to the DPIIT.

Regulation of FDI from land border countries

GOI has amended FDI guidelines vide Press Note 3 issued on 17.04.2020, mandating all FDI proposals to undergo government approval route process. DPIIT as a nodal ministry for FDI policy has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) to look into the issues and devise guidelines for processing of such FDI applications. MEA, MHA, DPIIT and Administrative ministries (AMs) are members of the IMC. MEA has given inputs to the DPIIT including the following information which are extremely important in order to examine the FDI proposals especially from China and its territories, including- desirability of the investment; impact on local competitiveness; value addition in terms of number of employment generation and

enhancement of technical/technological competitiveness. So far, Ministry has received about 150 applications of FDI from land border countries. Some of these have been disposed off,

whereas others are at various stages of examination in a time bound manner.

Covid Response

- Vande Bharat Mission: As part of VBM, AS (ER) oversaw the evacuation of 132,963 persons to the State of Telangana in 976 flights and 38,191 persons to the State of Andhra Pradesh in 284 flights until 19 November, 2020. All requisite details/ clearances / issues etc. were timely dealt with, coordinated and shared with the concerned states. This helped in the seamless evacuation/ movement of Indian passengers coming from various flights from different countries into the respective states.
- Regular Covid Reports to Cabinet Secretariat: In March 2020, AS (ER) presented to the Committee of Secretaries, headed by Cabinet Secretary, a presentation on the Economic Impact of the Covid Pandemic, based on the inputs received from our Missions and Posts abroad. In continuation of this effort, the ED Division was compiling weekly reports on the situation of Covid across the world, based on inputs received from our Missions. These reports were forwarded to the Cabinet Secretariat on weekly basis and contained inputs on the economic impact of Covid pandemic on the countries' economies, the impact on various sectors, and the country-specific economic and other relief measures announced by the various Governments, to keep updated on the Covid scenario unfolding across the world.
- Empowered Group 6 on Covid Response: AS (ER) was a part of the Empowered Group 6 constituted to devise an effective Covid response in close collaboration with the line ministries, industry representatives, NGOs, CSOs, International Organizations, UN and allied organizations, among others. The Division, in coordination with the Missions, identified potential opportunities for enhancing product exports in view of the globally disrupted supply chains.

16 STATES DIVISION

States Division facilitated external economic engagement of States through the network of Indian Missions and Posts abroad and Branch Secretariats/Regional Passport Offices in India. The States Division pursued its mandate proactively and held events like the 3rd edition of Deccan Dialogue (16 November, 2020 at ISB Hyderabad), which was attended virtually in 2020, to facilitate Diplomatic Outreach of States and promote economic diplomacy dialogue at the state

level, using State Facilitation and Knowledge Support Funds. Liaising with State and UT governments through regular interactions with their Resident Commissioners continued. Several MoUs between state governments and cities with their foreign counterparts to establish sister-state and city partnerships were facilitated by the Division.

Facilitating Diplomatic Outreach By States

The States Division actively participated in the India - Vietnam Business Forum held on 20 October 2020, co-organised by the Indian Chamber of Commerce and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The event was chaired by Secretary(East), in the Ministry.

The Division facilitated the participation of Haryana in the 1st Forum of SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organisation) Member States' Heads of Regions (administrative -territorial units) held on 29 October 2020, Chaired by Chelyabinsk Region Governor. The Chief Secretary, Government of Haryana represented India at Heads of Regions' Forum.

Deccan Dialogue: 3rd edition of the Deccan Dialogue, under the theme, "Crisis and Cooperation: In the Times of Pandemic and Beyond", was organised in collaboration with Indian School of Business, Hyderabad on 16 November 2020. EAM

addressed the inaugural session. Minister for Housing & Urban Affairs (I/C); Civil Aviation (I/C); & Minister of State, Commerce & Industry, along with several Ambassadors, business leaders, opinion makers and other dignitaries participated in the event. It witnessed enlightening and enthusiastic discussions, especially, on the way forward, the economic realities as well as on the opportunities, in context of India and the world battling an unprecedented crisis.

To promote inbound tourism, the States Division facilitated a Virtual Conference with tour operators, travel agents, media representatives and opinion makers from Brazil which was organised with the participation of the States of Maharashtra, Gujarat and Kerala in December 2020.

A policy decision has been taken to launch North Eastern Dialogue, as part of the government's para diplomacy initiative.

The States Division will organise this Dialogue, scheduled to be held early this year. Drawing from the success of the Decan Dialogue Initiative, this Dialogue will also be an exercise in bringing together multiple stakeholders on a common platform

to facilitate external engagement and economic development of the strategically important North East Region, in partnership with educational institutions and think tanks focusing on the Region.

State Facilitation Abroad By Missions/ Posts

States Division organised State facilitation activities through Indian Missions and posts abroad, to promote investments and tourism were conducted through Indian Missions and Posts from their country of accreditation to States and UTs. Funds made available by the Division, under the budget head, 'State Facilitation Abroad' were utilised for these activities.

Overcoming the challenges posed by the Covid Pandemic, virtual events, promotions, contests, etc. were organised to facilitate State promotion, for e.g.:

- The Embassy of India in Bhutan conducted a virtual conference on organic farming between stakeholders from Bhutan and Sikkim on 08 December 2020.
- CGI, Johannesburg organised Onam Festival.
- CGI, New York held an event showcasing the weaving tradition of Himachali weavers.

Liaising With State and UT Governments

States Division served as a bridge connecting MEA with State and UT governments, by facilitating, among others, coordination of incoming and outgoing visits of high-level trade delegations.

- The State Division participated on behalf of MEA in inter-ministerial consultations on issues of North-Eastern States through several webinars, held in the context of North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) in November- December 2020.
- The Division also facilitated the appointment of Nodal Officers, to act as points of contact between MEA and the State/UT governments.
- In a major initiative, the States Division conceived and organised a week long Special Program for Training Senior Officers from States at the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service during 04-08 December 2020. The program was launched to equip the States and Union Territories in international engagement and is aimed to promote

team spirit, making States an integral part of Team India in engaging the world. The specially designed training program encompassed topics such as 'India's Foreign Policy', 'Common Areas of Interest, including Para-Diplomacy', 'Connectivity Issues: Air, Water & Land, Attracting Foreign Tourists To India', 'Managing Covid Pandemic-Role of States & UTs : India's Success Story', 'Consular & Diaspora Issues, Issues Faced By Foreign Businesses In States & UTs' And 'Protocol Matters- Incoming & Outgoing Visits By Foreign Dignitaries.'

- The States Division is for the first time facilitating familiarization visits for foreign media in the year 2021-22. This gives States/UTs an opportunity to showcase the possibilities for collaboration and highlight the socio-economic development that States have been registering, which quite often goes under-reported. Nagaland, Gujarat and Maharashtra are likely to be covered in the first round.
- The Division commenced its role as primary buyer on GeM Portal to facilitate procurement by Branch Secretariats.

Facilitation of MoUs With Foreign City/States

During the year 2019-20, States Division has facilitated signing of the following MoUs, (some are under process currently), with foreign entities, such as cities and state Governments:

ii) Sister-city/Sister state Partnerships

- Agreement on Twinning Relationship between the Municipality of Sines (Portugal) and the Kozhikode Municipal Corporation, State of Kerala (India). (Cleared by EW Division)
- Sister Port City Agreement Between Port Blair And Sabang(Indonesia).
- Sister City Arrangement Between Saas Fee (Valais Switzerland) And Almora (Uttarakhand).
- Agreement on the establishment of Cooperation and Friendly Relations between Mumbai, India and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
- MoU on the Establishment of Sister State relations be-

tween Chiang Mai Province, Thailand and Assam, India.

- Sister State And Sister City Partnership Agreements Between Tamil Nadu/Chennai, India And Fujian / Guanzhou City(China).

ii) Other agreements

- MoU between the Government of State of Kerala of the Republic of India And The Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport of The Government of the Kingdom of Netherlands on Technical Cooperation in the field of Sports Development.
- MoU between Urban Development Department, Government of Karnataka, of the Republic of India and Karnataka Urban Infrastructure Development & Finance Corporation and Innovation Centre Denmark, Bengaluru.
- MoU between the Ministry of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade, Ontario, Canada and Department of Industries, Government of Maharashtra, India.
- MoU between Punjab Bureau of Investment Promotion, Government of Punjab and American Chamber of Commerce in India For Promotion of Investment and Ease of Doing Business in Punjab for US Member Companies of AMCHAM India.
- Agreement between the GIZ (Gesellschaft fur Internationale Zusammenarbeit) and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry.
- Agreement on MoU between Invest UP and American

Chamber of Commerce in India.

- Agreement on MoU between Uttar Pradesh and Indo Scandic Organisation.
- Agreement on MoU between Invest UP and EBG (European Business Group) Federation, New Delhi.
- MoU of Water Technology Alliance between Narmada, Water Resource, Water Supply And Kalpsar Department, Government of Gujarat and Governmnt. of Denmark through Royal Danish Embassy, New Delhi on Water Technology Alliance, India.
- MoU between Government of Gujarat (Industrial Extension Bureau, Industries & Mines Department) and UK India Business Council.
- MoU to be signed among Skill, Employment and Entrepreneurship Department of the Government of Assam and the Nanyang Polytechnic International, Singapore.

iii) Interaction of states with foreign diplomats

- The Division facilitated the meeting of Ambassador of Israel, Ron Malka, with Secretary NEC, on 03 November 2020 in Shillong.
- Secretary (ER) hosted an interactive event on 05 January, 2021 during the Special Training Program that included the participation of Resident Commissioners of States and UTs, Dean of Diplomatic Corps in India, Regional Heads of Diplomatic Corps, Business Leaders and Media Representatives, etc.

State Facilitation Abroad Fund To Missions/ Posts

The Division after taking into account the demands from various Missions/Posts abroad and the availability of funds under the head - 'State Facilitation Abroad' in financial year 2020-21, issued sanctions amounting to Rs. 4.42 crores to 131 Indian

Missions/Posts abroad on 25 June 2020 and subsequent sanctions amounting to Rs. 1,419,200 to several more Missions/Posts during September-October 2020.

State Facilitation And Knowledge Support Fund

- Several activities, such as business seminars with leading trade bodies like FICCI/ASSOCHAM, a series of seminars under the title, 'Connect to reconnect' etc. were organised through Branch Secretariat, Kolkata. These include Bihar and Bhutan etc.
- The Division supported the Regional Passport Office, Raniichi for participation in the event, India International
- Mega Trade Fair 2019-20 to promote Jharkhand's foreign trade.
- The Division organised a day long programme on West Bengal's Global Reach through Art and Artistry through Branch Secretariat, Kolkata.

Clearances To State Projects, Funded By External Agencies

During the period April 2020 to March 2021, the Division facilitated MEA's approval of 38 Externally Aided Projects to be undertaken in North Eastern States, funded by multilateral and bilateral agencies such as WB-IBRD, ADB, JICA, etc. Several more projects are currently under process for approval.

17

DISARMAMENT AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

1st Committee Of The United Nations General Assembly

At The 75th session, the First Committee of the UN General Assembly in New York from 06 October-10 November2020, India contributed to the debate on disarmament and international security and reiterated its commitment to the goal of global, non- discriminatory and verifiable nuclear disarmament. Foreign Secretary delivered a video message on the occasion of the United Nations General Assembly's High-level plenary meeting to commemorate and promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons.

India's traditional resolution titled "Measures to prevent terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction", was again adopted by the First Committee in 2020 without a vote. The resolution calls upon UN Member States to take measures aimed at preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons of mass destruction and to support international efforts in this regard. India's two other resolutions on:

(a) Convention on prohibition of use of nuclear weapons, which

reiterates the call to the Conference on Disarmament to commence negotiations on an International Convention for prohibiting the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons under any circumstances; and (b) Reducing Nuclear Danger, which highlights the need for a review nuclear doctrines and immediate steps to reduce the risk of intentional or accidental use of nuclear weapons, including through their de-alerting and detargeting, were also adopted by broad support of the UN member States.

Another India-sponsored resolution on the "Role of Science and Technology in the context of International Security and Disarmament" was adopted by consensus. The Resolution encourages outreach events at the national, regional and international levels to facilitate multilateral dialogue concurrent developments in science and technology and the potential impact on international security and disarmament efforts. The UNSG's Report, mandated by the 2019 Resolution, reviewed scientific developments and their potential impact.

Conference On Disarmament

India participated actively in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), putting forth its position on nuclear disarmament, prevention of an arms race in outer space, new types of weapons of mass destruction, and transparency in armaments, at its sessions from January-September 2020. Despite lack of consensus on CD's programme of work, there were deliberations where India presented its perspective on the four core issues on the CDs Agenda, including nuclear disarmament, Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) and Negative Security Assurances (NSA). India called for adoption of a Programme of Work by the CD in order to resume Substantive Negotiations. India also expressed

its support for the commencement of negotiations in the CD on a non-discriminatory and internationally verifiable FMCT in line with india's commitment to global nuclear disarmament.

Further, in line with its support for efforts towards nuclear disarmament, India continued to participate in the meetings on the initiative of Creating an Environment for Nuclear Disarmament (CEND). India was selected to participate in the 25-member Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) On Nuclear Disarmament Verification (NDV), which would commence its session in 2021.

United Nations Security Council

India coordinated with the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Committee, established pursuant to UNSC Resolution 1540 (2004) which obliges States, inter alia, to refrain from supporting non-State actors from developing, acquiring, manufacturing, possessing, transporting, transferring or using nuclear, chemical or biological weapons and their delivery systems, by any means. India submitted its latest National Report to the United Nations, highlighting the measures and activities undertaken in the area of export controls and implementation of UNSCR 1540.

As a part of the 2021 Comprehensive Review, UNSCR 1540 Committee reviewed India's matrix to the 1540 Committee

to be published by the 1540 committee in 2020. The matrix assesses national-level implementation of UNSCR 1540 provisions in terms of legal compliance (both regulatory and enforcement) of prohibitions, measures and controls related to weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, equipment and technologies.

After joining the UNSC as a member in January 2021, India participated in deliberations affecting international security affairs. India also engaged with relevant committees of the UN on specific matters relating to the measures on non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction decided by the UNSC.

UNSG's Advisory Board On Disarmament Matters (ABDM)

India's representative participated in the 73rd and 74th Sessions of the UNSG's ABDM held in Geneva from 29-31 January 2020 and virtually on 15, 19, 24 and 25 June 2020 respective-

ly, which published its report on disarmament affairs to the UN Secretary General.

Chemical Weapons Convention

As a member of the Executive Council (EC) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), India was an active participant on the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), encompassing chemical weapon destruction, industry verification, national implementation and international cooperation and assistance. India engaged with OPCW States Parties on implementation issues during various sessions of EC during the year. India has filed its initial Declaration to the OPCW in September 2020 for creation of a Single Small Scale Facility in India, apart from annual submissions on

various matters under the CWC.

Pursuant to the decision of the 24th Conference of States Parties adding chemicals to Schedule 1 of the annex on chemicals to the CWC, a Gazette notification (dated 12 May 2020) under the CWC Act, 2000 adopted changes in the Schedule 1 list in the Annex on Chemicals to the Convention. The first part of the 25th Conference of State Parties (CSP) was held from 30 November to 01 December 2020 which adopted the OPCW budget for the year 2021.

Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention

Biological & Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) deliberations were limited to activities conducted via virtual mode owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. In the context of the upcoming 9th

Review Conference of the Convention planned in 2021, India has reiterated its call for institutional strengthening of the Convention, including negotiation of a comprehensive and le-

gally binding Protocol, providing for an effective, universal and non-discriminatory verification mechanism to strengthen the implementation of the Convention by States Parties. The Annual Meeting of Experts and Meeting of States Parties for the

year 2020 has been postponed to the next year. India continued to consult with States Parties to establish an Article VII database to facilitate provision of assistance to countries by matching specific offers and requests for assistance.

Convention On Certain Conventional Weapons

The Convention on certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) meetings were conducted in a hybrid format during 2020 with very limited physical participation and virtual contribution by the experts from the capitals. India participated in the meeting of Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems from 21-25 September 2020, the Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War Meeting of Experts (28 September 2020) and Amended Protocol-II Group of Experts (29-30 September 2020). Other meetings of High Contracting Parties to CCW scheduled in November 2020 had to be

postponed to 2021 due to worsening Covid-19 situation in Geneva.

India participated as an Observer at the 18th meeting of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention held in a virtual format from 16-20 November 2020. In the context of anti-personnel mines and CCW Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, India respects the provisions of international humanitarian law.

Small Arms And Light Weapons

India submitted its annual national report for the year 2020 under the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects (UNPoA) which provides a compre-

hensive set of national, regional and global measures. India also remained engaged on submissions and implementation of the UNPoA and the International Tracing Instrument.

Export Control Regimes

India participated in multilateral export control regimes towards contributing to the goals of non-proliferation through guidelines for export controls and lists of specific goods and technologies of concern. India became a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in June 2016, Wassenaar Arrangement (WA) in December 2017 and the Australia Group (AG) in January 2018.

Multi-agency delegation from India participated at the AG Inter-Sessional meeting in February 2020 and AG Sub-group virtual meetings in October and November 2020. Due to the Covid-19 situation, meetings of MTCR and WA scheduled in 2020 were postponed or cancelled, but exchanges under these regimes were held digitally.

During the year, India's export control list of Special Chemicals, Organisms, Materials, Equipment and Technologies (SCOMET) was updated on 11 June 2020 (effective from 10 July 2020), to harmonise it with the 2019 guidelines and control lists of the relevant multilateral export control regimes and changes to Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Ministry continued to contribute to the Inter-Ministerial Working Group (IMWG), chaired by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT), for the licensing of controlled dual-use items under SCOMET. Similarly, the Ministry worked together with the Department of Defence Production (DDP) on authorization for export of Category 6 (Munitions List) items of SCOMET. The Ministry also contributed to the national enforcement mechanisms pursuant to the export control system.

The Ministry worked together with its partners, including DGFT and CBIC for outreach activities as an integral part of the implementation of the export control system. The Ministry partnered with Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC), for a workshop for industry and other stakeholders on Export Controls in the Eastern region of India, in March 2020 at Kolkata and for the Southern, Western and Northern regions of India in June, July and September 2020, respectively. An outreach event in the form of three webinar sessions on Strategic Trade Authorization (STA)-1, Updates on India's SCOMET list and export control system, was organised in July 2020 with U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC) and Society Of Indian Defence Manufacturers (Sidm).

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

India participated in the 64th session of the IAEA General Conference (GC) held in Vienna from 21-25 September

2020, as well as in the various meetings of the Board of Governors held in March, June and September 2020. India an-

nounced placing of three more facilities under IAEA safeguards since the 63rd GC, bringing the total number of Indian facilities under IAEA safeguards to 29. It also announced that the first indigenously built 700MWe Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor at Kakrapar achieved first criticality on 22 July 2020. The Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) served as an institutional structure on peaceful use of nuclear energy. India also contributed to activities in support

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

An Agreement between Government of India and European Atomic Energy Community for Research and Development Co-operation in the field of Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy was concluded on 15 July 2020. An Arrangement extending the duration of the MoU between the Government of India and the Government of United States of America concerning coop-

of various applications of radiation technologies, such as in healthcare, agriculture, etc.

India participated in the sessions of the European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN) Council, the Finance Committee and Scientific Policy Committee during the year, as an Associate Member of CERN since 2012.

eration with the Global Center for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India was announced on 27 October 2020. An MoU between India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board and Vietnam Agency for Radiation and Nuclear Safety was signed on 21 December 2020.

Outer Space

Apart from meetings on outer space in the Conference on Disarmament, India participated in the meetings of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in Vienna and its subsidiary bodies, wherein India presented its technological capabilities and perspectives with regard to the peaceful uses of outer space. Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Legal Subcommittee (LSC) and COPUOS took decisions via written procedures in order to ensure continuity of the activities of its subsidiary bodies. India also continued to collaborate bilaterally with various coun-

tries on the peaceful uses of outer space through multifarious activities and provision of space services.

As a participant in the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) since June 2016, India continued to observe its provisions on transparency and confidence building measures, including pre-launch notifications of India's ballistic missile and space launches. India participated in the 19th Annual Regular Meeting of HCoC, which was held in Vienna on 12 October 2020. India also submitted its annual declaration under the arrangement.

European Organisation For Nuclear Research (CERN)

India continued to participate in the sessions of the CERN Council, the Finance Committee and Scientific Policy Commit-

tee during the year, as an Associate Member of CERN since 2017.

Maritime Security Affairs

India has significant interests in collaboration for enhancing maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region and globally. In this direction, India continued active engagement with various partner countries bilaterally, plurilaterally and through regional entities. The Information Fusion Centre-Indian Ocean Region (IFC- IOR) has steadily grown as an important platform for maritime security partnership with friendly countries and enhancing maritime domain awareness collectively. Efforts progressed for expanding the cooperation with other countries, including White Shipping agreements with 22 countries.

India joined the Djibouti Code of Conduct-Jeddah Amendment (DCOC-JA), as an observer, following the high level meeting of the DCOC-JA held virtually on 26 August 2020. The DCOC is aimed at cooperation for repression of piracy and armed robbery against ships in the western Indian Ocean Region, the

Gulf of Aden and the Red Sea. India has also participated in the working level meetings of the Friends of Gulf of Guinea (G7+FoGG), since August 2020, towards consultation with the participating countries on maritime matters in the region.

India participated in the meeting of the Friends of the Chair of the Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS) held on 23 September 2020 and the plenary meeting of the CGPCS from 17-18 December 2020, both in virtual format.

India has been an active member of Co-operative Mechanism setup in 2007 on the Straits of Malacca and Singapore (SOMS) under the International Maritime Organization's (IMO's) "Protection of Vital Shipping Lanes" initiative. India has been contributing to and participating in the meetings of Aids to Navigation Fund (ANF) Committee in the region.

The Hague Code Of Conduct

As a participant in the Hague Code of Conduct (HCoC) since June 2016, India continued to observe its provisions on transparency and confidence building measures, and regularly issued pre-launch notifications of India's Ballistic Mis-

siles and space launches. India participated in the 19th Annual Regular Meeting of HCoC, which was held in Vienna on 12 October 2020. India also submitted its annual declaration for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Conference On Interaction And Confidence Building Measures In Asia (CICA)

A Special Ministerial Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the CICA States held virtually on 24 September 2020 was attended by EAM. The meeting discussed the vision of the new CICA chairmanship of Kazakhstan and deliberated on ideas to respond to Covid-19 pandemic. EAM highlighted India's contribution to partner countries in CICA and

beyond and our perspectives on Covid-19 response and developments in the region. India actively participated in CICA events during the year, including an Online Roundtable Discussion on 'Digital Economy and its role in the development of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in CICA Countries' on 20 October 2020.

Asean Regional Forum (ARF) And ADMM+

Pursuant to India's 'Act East' policy, India participated in the Inter-Sessional Meetings (ISMs) and the Senior Officials Meetings (SOMs) held under the aegis of the ARF. Minister of State attended the 27th ARF Ministerial meeting held virtually on 12 September 2020 which discussed regional global developments of wider interests. The meeting adopted the List of ARF Track I Activities for Inter-Sessional Year 2020-2021 where India will co-chair the ARF event on International Ship and Port Facility Security Code (ISPS Code), and a workshop on

Implementing UNCLOS with ARF partner countries.

The ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting Plus (ADMM Plus) was attended by Raksha Mantri on 10 December 2020 in a virtual format. India and Indonesia are the present co-Chairs of the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group (EWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR), for sharing experiences and holding exercises among participating countries.

Disarmament Education And Fellowship

As part of India's commitment to disarmament and non-proliferation, and recognizing the role of education and understanding in the field of disarmament, India engaged with the wider community in India and abroad. This includes the Annual Disarmament and International Security Affairs Fellowship Programme for foreign diplomats in January 2020. India's initia-

tive also embraces the mandate of UNGA Resolution 71/57 "United Nations Study on Disarmament and Non-proliferation Education" and is in line with the focus on 'Disarmament Education' in UNSG's Disarmament Agenda 'to Secure our World and our Future'.

18

LEGAL AND TREATIES DIVISION

The Legal and Treaties Division is responsible for handling all legal and treaty related matters regarding the MEA. In the previous year, India signed 120 agreements with over 52 countries/ organizations; ratified 15 agreements; and processed full powers for 10 undertakings. (Details regarding the above mentioned may be found on Indian Treaties Database maintained by the L&T Division and as part of Annexure-I)

United Nations and International Law

Sixth Committee (Legal) of the United Nations General Assembly

The Sixth Committee, which is one of the main Committees of the United Nations General Assembly and a primary forum for consideration of international legal issues, met during the 75th session of the General Assembly, from 06 October to 19 November 2020.		Teaching, Study, Dissemination and Wider Appreciation of International Law,
Important subjects/topics considered by the Sixth Committee at the Seventy fifth session of the UNGA include –	(v)	Report of International Law Commission on the work of its seventy-second session,
	(vi)	Diplomatic Protection
	(vii)	Report of the Committee on relations with the host country,
	(viii)	Criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on mission,
	(ix)	Expulsion of aliens
	(x)	Responsibility of International organizations
(i)		Rule of law at the national and international level;
(ii)		The Scope and application of the principle of Universal Jurisdiction;
(iii)		Report of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on the work of its fifty-third session,
(iv)		United Nations Programme of Assistance in the
	(xi)	Crimes against humanity
	(xii)	Strengthening and promoting the international treaty

- framework
- (xiii) Status of the Protocols Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and relating to the protection of victims of armed conflicts and
- (xiv) Report of the Special Committee on the Charter of the UN and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization. The agenda item entitled “Protection of persons in the event of disasters” was deferred to next session.

The Sixth Committee also considered and debated oral Report of the International Law Commission.

During the main session of the Sixth Committee of the UNGA, India delivered nine statements virtually, including the one on measures to eliminate international terrorism; rule of law at the national and international levels; criminal accountability of UN officials and experts on missions; the scope and application of the principle of universal jurisdiction; on Reports of the Special Committee on the Charter of the United Nations and on the Strengthening of the Role of the Organization, International Law Commission (ILC), UN Commission on International Trade

Law (UNCITRAL); and the International Court of Justice (ICJ) - at the GA Plenary.

India participated actively in the meeting of the Working Group held in October 2020 for negotiations on CCIT. During the WG’s negotiations, attempts were made to resolve outstanding issues and overcome differences between the member states.

Due to the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic, the General Assembly, inter alia, decided to hold the seventy-second session of the ILC in 2021 and also decided that the terms of office of the current ILC members should be extended by one year (until 31 December 2022).

In addition, Sixth Committee has also considered the Observer Status for (i) Small Island Developing States Dock (introduced by Belize), (ii) Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation Institute (introduced by China), (iii) Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (introduced by Republic of Korea), and (iv) Global Dryland Alliance (introduced by Qatar) without a vote.

India actively participated in the discussions and made statement on few of the topics.

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL)

The Legal and Treaties Division participated in the following Working Groups constituted under the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL):

The Working Group I on Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

34th Session of the Working Group I continued its deliberations on the draft legislative guide relating to UNCITRAL Limited Liability Organization. A few important provisions in the draft Legislative Guide were deliberated upon. The discussion is expected to continue in the forthcoming Session as well.

The Working Group II on Arbitration and Conciliation / Dispute Settlement

The Working Group, while noting that it had yet to determine the final presentation of the expedited arbitration provisions (EAPs), the Working Group decided to consider the EAPs as they would appear as an appendix to the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules (UARs) and to discuss the form and presentation at a later stage of its deliberations. It was generally felt that it would be useful to prepare an accompanying guidance material or explanatory note to the EAPs (hereinafter, “guidance document”). It was stated that while the EAPs themselves needed to be clear and easily understandable, such a guidance document could assist the users of the EAPs, particularly those not familiar with such procedure. During the discussion, it was mentioned that the work of the Working Group should avoid any overlap with the work of other working groups, in particular that of Working Group III (ISDS Reform).

The Working Group III on Investor-State Dispute Settlement Reform.

The Working Group, in its 39th session held from 5-9 October 2020 at Vienna, continued its deliberations on Investor-State Dispute Settlement Reforms. In particular, shareholder claims and reflective loss, dispute prevention and mitigation - Means of alternative dispute resolution, interpretation of investment treaties by treaty Parties, security for cost and frivolous claims, multiple proceedings and counterclaims and multilateral instrument on ISDS reform. UNCITRAL Secretariat and ICSID Secretariat had also drafted a draft Code of Conduct for the adjudicators and sought inputs from stakeholders.

The Working Group IV on Electronic Commerce.

The Working Group continued its consideration of legal issues related to IdM and trust services. The Working Group approved the draft provisions with the agreed modifications for its further consideration. The representative of the Legal and Treaties Division participated in the deliberations and decisions of the Working Group. The Working Group considered whether

to adopt its report during the forty fourth session. It was reminded of the decision adopted by the States members of UNCITRAL on 19 August 2020 according to which the Chair and the Rapporteur would prepare a draft summary reflecting the deliberations and any conclusions reached during the session. Having reviewed the draft summary circulated by

the Chair and the Rapporteur, the Working Group agreed to adopt it for transmission to the Commission as its own report. The Working Group also agreed to possibly hold informal consultations to discuss topics included in the provisional agenda for this session that were not discussed.

International Dispute Adjudication Involving India

a. Enrica Lexie case (Italy and India):

The Arbitral Tribunal constituted under Annex-VII of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) rendered its Award on 21st May, 2020. The award The Arbitration was instituted by Italy on 26th June, 2015 in respect of the dispute concerning the Enrica Lexie incident. In accordance with the provisions of the UNCLOS and Rules of Procedure agreed by the parties, the Award has been pronounced. Following are the ighlights:

- The Tribunal upheld the conduct of the Indian authorities with respect to the incident under the provisions of the UNCLOS. It held that the actions of the Italian military officers and, consequently, Italy breached India’s freedom of navigation under UNCLOS Article 87(1)(a) and 90.
- The Tribunal observed that India and Italy had concurrent jurisdiction over the incident and a valid legal basis to institute criminal proceedings against the Marines. The Tribunal rejected Italy’s claim to compensation for the detention of the Marines. However, it found that the

immunities enjoyed by the Marines as State officials operate as an exception to the jurisdiction of the Indian courts and, hence, preclude them to judge the Marines.

- The Tribunal took note of the commitment expressed by Italy to resume its criminal investigation into the events of 15 February 2012.
- The Tribunal decided that India is entitled to payment of compensation in connection with loss of life, physical harm, material damage to property and moral harm suffered by the captain and other crew members of “St. Antony”. The Tribunal also held that the Parties are invited to consult with each other with a view to reaching agreement on the amount of compensation due to India. The Tribunal also decided that it shall retain jurisdiction should either Party or both Parties wish to apply for a ruling from the Arbitral Tribunal in respect of the quantification of compensation due to India.

b. Investment related Arbitration Cases:

The various Arbitral Tribunals constituted under the auspices of Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruled on the following investment treaty disputes brought against the Republic of India.

- **Deutsche Telekom case, under the India-Germany bilateral investment treaty:** Deutsche Telekom were an investor in Devas Multimedia Ltd. The claims against Government of India arose out of cancellation of a contract between Antrix and Devas on National Security Grounds. The tribunal after having rendered its award on merits earlier, rendered its award on the quantum this year.
- **CC Devas under the India – Mauritius bilateral investment treaty:** CC Devas was one of the investors in Devas Multimedia Ltd who had entered into a contract with Antrix. The claim arose out of the cancellation of the Antrix-Devas contract on grounds of National Security. After the award on merits earlier, the tribunal rendered its award on quantum this year. However, proceedings on challenging the award on merits is pending before the

Dutch Courts.

- **Vodafone Case:** The arbitral tribunal constituted in the dispute between Vodafone and India under the India Netherlands bilateral investment treaty rendered its Award in September 2020, holding India liable of violation of the Fair and Equitable Treatment provision of the treaty.
- **Nissan Motor Co. Ltd Case:** The dispute between Nissan and India-Japan CEPA was settled amicably by the parties and the arbitration proceedings thus came to a closure.
- **Khaitan Case:** In the dispute between Khaitan Holdings Mauritius Limited v. Republic of India, dispute under the India- Mauritius BIPA, the hearing on jurisdiction was held virtually in August 2020 and the award on jurisdiction is awaited.
- **GPIX Case:** An arbitral tribunal was also constituted under the India-Mauritius bilateral investment treaty in a dispute brought by GPIX against India. The case is currently administered by the PCA.

Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH)

Seventh meeting of the, the Experts’ Group on the Parentage/ Surrogacy Project met via video conference from 12 to 16

October 2020. It was attended by 26 Experts, 3 Observers and members of the Permanent Bureau (PB) of the HCCH. The

Experts represented 23 Member States from various regions. The discussion focused on potential provisions for inclusion in both a general private international law instrument on legal

parentage (the Convention) and a separate protocol on legal parentage established as a result of an international surrogacy arrangement (the Protocol).

Treaty Negotiations

Legal & Treaties Division actively participated in bilateral and multilateral negotiations pertaining to various subject matters of national and global importance. Most notable multilateral negotiations among them are:

- The Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) on Developments in the field of Information and Communications Technologies in the Context of International Security and the Group of Governmental Experts on Advancing State Responsibility in the field of ICTs in the context of international security were held informally through online platforms from time to time since June, 2020.

- The meeting (hybrid meeting) of Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on lethal autonomous systems (LAWS) was held from 21 to 25 September 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland. It discussed issues of applicability of IHL, definition of LAWS, human in loop, and the possibility of a legally binding instrument to deal with LAWS.
- The Legal & Treaties Division participated in the process of negotiations and examination of documents relating to Bilateral Investment Agreements with Philippines, UAE, Mexico and a few other countries.

Online Treaty Database

Indian Treaties Database maintained by the Legal & Treaties Division of the Ministry of External Affairs adds a great value to the Government authorities as well as the general public in providing with the information relating to Treaties/Agreements concluded by India. The online treaties database is being

constantly updated to reflect the latest treaty information. The Treaty database can be accessed in the following web link: <https://www.mea.gov.in/TreatyList.htm?1>. It comprises of the treaties covering the period from 1950 till 2020. Currently there are more than 3,300 such treaties.

Examination/Vetting of Legal Documents

Legal & Treaties Division has examined a number of international law instruments including MoUs, treaties/agreements as well as Cabinet notes and rendered legal opinion. The Division, inter alia examined and provided its views on treaties, agreements, MoUs in the areas including defence co-operation, agriculture, railways, SAARC, Health, bio-technology, outer space, science and technology, BRICS (conglomeration of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), agreements

relating to international terrorism, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking/narcotics; also agreements on confidentiality; sharing of hydrological data; gas and energy; bilateral agreements on cultural cooperation, audio visual cooperation, road transport, trade and investment, projects to be implemented in foreign countries, education, tourism, climate change, protection of natural resources; water resources; bio-diversity; solar alliance; Ozone depleting substances; hydrography, twinning/sister city or sister state agreements and customs cooperation agreements, etc.

List of Treaties

India has signed/ratified a number of multilateral/bilateral treaties/agreements with foreign countries and International Organizations during the year 2020. A comprehensive list of such Agreements/Treaties is placed at Annex-I. The list of

Instruments of Ratification/Accession issued during the year 2020 is at Annex-II; and the list of Instrument of Full Powers issued during the year 2020 is at Annex-III.

19

POLICY PLANNING AND RESEARCH
DIVISION

Foreign Secretary interacted with select heads of Delhi-based think-tanks on 28 August 2020

The Policy Planning and Research Division is the nodal division of the Ministry for policy planning and organising public diplomacy initiatives with the strategic and academic community. It undertakes flagship conference initiatives with Indian and international think-tanks and research institutions and conducts in-house policy analysis

for the Ministry on a regular basis. The division also leads the Ministry's efforts in cross-cutting initiatives especially those which involve coordination with other ministries in the Government of India.

The PPR Division is the administrative division for matters pertaining to ICWA and RIS - two autonomous bodies which function under the Ministry. It is also administratively in-charge of the MEA Library and the Boundary Cell.

Despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic, the PP&R Division added high momentum to its mandate. The core functional framework of the division, viz. holding Policy Planning Dialogues, public diplomacy initiatives with think-tanks through conferences and Track 1.5/2 Dialogues, providing research and policy inputs on parliamentary matters, engagement with domain experts, specialised inter-agency matters, preparation of

periodicals like Newsletter Think-Tank Compendium etc., and other policy specific tasks assigned by other divisions of the Ministry - saw substantial expansion in 2020-21. Besides, the division undertook several key policy analysis assignments in niche areas of health diplomacy, climate change action, counter-terrorism, global supply chains, reformed multilateralism, maritime connectivity, regulating Big Tech and other emerging technologies.

On 25 December 2020, the division organised the 1st Atal Bihari Vajpayee Annual Memorial Lecture. The lecture was delivered by Nisha Desai Biswal, President of the U.S.-India Business Council and Senior Vice President for South Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. EAM delivered the opening remarks on the occasion.

Policy Planning Dialogues

Annual Policy Planning Dialogues constitute one of the core mandates of the PP&R Division. The Dialogues are held with our bilateral and multilateral diplomatic partners to develop a commonality of understanding on important regional and global issues. In 2020-21, the Division engaged robustly with the policy planning units of foreign countries and held a total 11 Policy Planning Dialogues. Due to Covid pandemic, all of these dialogues were held via virtual platform, often through multiple rounds. The new adaptation to virtual mode facilitated the policy planners to have frank and in-depth exchange of bilateral

views.

In 2020-21, Policy Dialogues were held with Australia, Denmark, Germany, Israel, Poland, Turkey, Vietnam, UK, USA, the EU and the BRICS. These dialogues enabled rich exchange of perspectives on emerging geopolitical and geoeconomics trends. The strategic import of these dialogues will have significant bearing on the Ministry's long-term foreign policy planning.

Public Diplomacy Outreach

During 2020-21, the Division considerably enhanced the Ministry's engagement with the strategic community by institutionalizing interaction with high functionaries. It organised a high-level interaction between Foreign Secretary and select heads of Delhi-based think-tanks on 28 August 2020. In the succeeding months of September-November 2020, the Division organised multiple rounds of interaction of senior ministry officials with select domain experts and academics.

In 2020-21, the Division facilitated Track 1.5 Dialogues with Canada, EU, Japan, South Korea and the US, by partnering with Indian and international think-tanks.

As part of its mandate, the PP&R Division continued to organise flagship conferences both in India and abroad in partnership with prominent think tanks and academic institutions. These conferences focus on the themes of geo-politics, geo-economics and public policy pertaining to emerging technologies, and are structured as a multi-stakeholder, cross-sectoral conclaves

which engage decision-makers at the level of Ministers and high-level government officials as well as policy practitioners; leading personalities from business and industry; and members of the strategic community, media and academia.

The Global Technology Summit was held in December 2020 via virtual platform. The Raisina Dialogue, Asian Economic Dialogue and Indian Ocean Conference are scheduled to be held later in 2021, intensifying the Ministry's engagement with wider policy community. New public diplomacy events in the North-East involving BIMSTEC/BBIN sub-regions are also in the pipeline.

During the year, the division expanded its support to Universities in undertaking research projects on a case-to-case basis. It provided financial assistance to academic seminars on international relations and foreign policy issues in partnership with research institutions.



EAM delivered opening remarks for the First Atal Bihari Vajpayee Memorial Lecture on 25 December 2020

Other Administrative Functions

The Division provided administrative guidance to the functioning of two autonomous bodies, ICWA and RIS, that work as research institutions within the Ministry. It supervised the expansion of library activities. Significant improvements in

the procurement of books and journals and subscriptions to international newspapers and databases were achieved during 2020-21.

Indian Council of World Affairs

The Division is the administrative division for processing the grant in aid for ICWA as well as for administrative matters pertaining to the governance of ICWA. For FY 2020-21, the grant for ICWA was Rs.13 crore.

The ICWA continued to accord high priority to research and study of political, economic and security developments in Asia, Africa, Europe, United States, the Indo-Pacific Region, and the wider global geo-strategic environment. The conclusions were disseminated in the form of Issue Briefs, Viewpoints and Special Reports, which were published on the ICWA website. Further, ICWA continued the process of translating its academic output in Hindi which have been regularly posted on its website. In addition, since April 2020, the Council has published books, and Sapru House Papers.

During 2020-21, ICWA Fellows undertook study and research on subjects of all major political, security, and economic trends

and developments in foreign policy and international affairs. The research outputs were published in the form of Issue Briefs, View Points, Special Reports, and Sapru House Papers. During the period from 1 April -30 October 2020 the Council published 76 web articles written by Research Faculty which include 48 Issue Briefs, 24 Viewpoints and 4 Special reports. Out of these 44 web articles (31 Issue Briefs and 13 Viewpoints) were specifically related to tracking the impact of Covid in different regions across the globe. The Research faculty also published various articles in the media and other academic journals.

In order to reach out to a wider audience, ICWA continued to publish translated versions of its academic articles in Hindi. In pursuit of this objective, 45 Issue Briefs and 22 viewpoints and 3 Special reports have been translated in Hindi and uploaded on the Council's website.

Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS)

The Division is the nodal division for processing the grant in aid for RIS as well as for administrative matters pertaining to the governance of RIS. RIS specialises in issues related to international economic development, trade, investment and technology. It fosters effective policy dialogue and capacity-building among developing countries on global and regional economic

issues. RIS promotes South-South Cooperation and collaborates with developing countries in multilateral negotiations in various forums. Through its intensive network of think tanks, RIS seeks to strengthen policy coherence on international economic issues and the development partnership canvas.

During 2020-21, RIS organized a number of policy dialogues focused on Covid-19 pandemic. These included, among others, prospects and perspectives on India-Vietnam S&T cooperation, BIMSTEC in post-Covid era, Indonesia's Covid-19 exit plan and potential for bilateral and regional Cooperation, expanding South-South Cooperation in the interdependent world, strengthening cooperation initiatives between India and Côte d'Ivoire, STI for SDGs, multilateral response to Covid-19 from South Asia, need for South Asian Cooperation for accelerating recovery from Covid-19, strengthening ASEAN-India partnership and the 5th meeting of the BIMSTEC Network of Policy Think Tanks (BNPTT) with the support of the Ministry bringing together the think tanks of BIMSTEC countries.

Webinars with the participation of national and global thinkers

were organized on priorities for India's G20 Presidency in 2022 and the role of Engagement Groups. The Global Development Centre at RIS also conducted a series of virtual Webinars in association with PHFI with its partner countries on training of health professionals to deal with the pandemic and carried out two GDC Fellowship Programmes for engagement with Asian and African countries for possible replication of India's flagship programmes for their economic development.

During the year, a consultative framework to expand the functional scope and mandate of ASEAN India Centre – a specialized body within RIS that conducts research on ASEAN sub-regional studies – was deliberated and put into executive action. For FY 2020-21, the grant for RIS was Rs.12.46 crore.

Library and Boundary Cell

MEA Library is administratively handled by JS (PPR). The MEA Library, apart from maintaining a holding of rare books, current books and journals, is also in charge of providing the subscriptions to international newspapers, journals and databases.

The Boundary Cell is administratively handled by PPR Division. Boundary Cell deals with the vetting of International Boundary (IB) on the maps received by Survey of India and other

agencies; sending the same to territorial division for their no objection/comments after duly checking the alignment of IB; interaction with territorial divisions on boundary-related matters; compiling and processing the requests related to funds for Boundary related tasks along India-Pakistan border and issuing the sanction for the same; and handling the complaints and grievances related to incorrect depiction of International Boundary of India on maps.



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MEA Library is one of the oldest and biggest in Ministries of Government of India. This library was renamed from Foreign Department Library to MEA Library after independence. The library has a unique and rare collection. This is a very special library in the field of International Relations covering topics of Foreign Policy, Foreign Relations, Area Studies, History, Political Science, International Trade and Economy, Indian Diasporas, Terrorism and related subjects.

The Ministry's Library has over one hundred thousand books, rich resource material and a large collection of maps, microfilms and official documents.

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20

COUNTER-TERRORISM

The issue of countering terrorism continued to find prominent mention in various bilateral and multilateral meetings at all levels during 2020-21. During all such interactions, India reiterated its commitment to combating the menace of terrorism globally and strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. India's call for zero tolerance to terrorism, rejection of any justification for any act of terror, de-linking terror from religion, need for all countries to unite in the fight against terrorism found greater acceptance among the international community and is reflected in a number of outcome documents issued after bilateral Summits and Ministerial meetings with various countries and at regional and multilateral fora.

India currently engages with senior interlocutors of 25 countries and regional and plurilateral groupings such as European Union, BIMSTEC and BRICS through the Mechanism of Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism (JWG-CT). During the year, India continued to hold structured consultations through JWG-CT with various partner countries despite the limitations caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. In the year 2020-21, India held bilateral counter terrorism consultations through the mechanism of JWG-CT with France and virtually with Australia, European Union (EU), the UK and the USA. The 3rd India-US Designation Dialogue was also held in September 2020 along with JWG-CT Meeting. India also participated in the BRICS Counter

Terrorism Working Group and Sub-Group Meetings virtually from 31 August 2020 to 02 September 2020. A BRICS Counter Terrorism Strategy document was approved during the said meeting.

The JWG-CT meetings provide a useful forum for counter-terrorism cooperation enabling sharing of information, experience and assessments regarding global terrorism including cross border terrorism, training and capacity building, inter alia, in relevant technologies and equipment, strengthening of multilateral efforts in the fight against terrorism and terrorist financing, expediting mutual legal assistance requests, facilitating agency-to agency cooperation and emphasizing the importance of early adoption of a Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) under the auspices of the UN.

India has been in the forefront of global counter terrorism efforts and has taken part in all major global initiatives against international terrorism. India has signed bilateral Agreements/MoUs on security cooperation with 28 countries, Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties with 42 key countries, Extradition Treaties with 47 countries and extradition Arrangement with 11 countries. India is party to all 13 United Nations' Sectoral conventions relating to terrorism. During the year, India and the USA signed a statement of intent in support of the continuing cooperation on law enforcement counter terrorism training programmes in October 2020.

During 2020-21, Secretary (East) participated in the 2nd Ministerial Meeting of the Group of Friends of Victims of Terrorism which took place virtually on 28 September 2020. An inter-ministerial delegation led by Joint Secretary (CT) also participated in the Virtual Counter Terrorism Week organised by the UN office on Counter Terrorism (UNOCT) in July 2020. As a founding member of Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), India regularly participates in its various meeting. During the year, India participated in the 17th meeting of GCTF Coordinating Committee virtually on 29 September 2020 and several other meetings of the GCTF's various working groups. India has been a member of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) since

2010 and have been regularly participating in various working groups and Plenary meetings. During the year India participated in the FATF Virtual Plenary and working group meetings held in June, October 2020 and February 2021. India is also a member of FATF style Regional bodies (FSRBs) viz. Eurasian Group (EAG) and Asia Pacific Group (APG) and participated in their meetings held during the year. Indian representatives also regularly attended meetings of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Regional Anti-Terrorist structure (SCO-RATS).

During 2020-21, India's premier Counter Terrorism Force, National Security Guard (NSG), organised capacity building courses on counter terrorism for officials of Sri Lanka.

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CYBER DIPLOMACY,
E-GOVERNANCE & IT

Cyber Diplomacy (CD)

The Cyber Diplomacy Division of the Ministry deals with international cyber issues, at bilateral and multilateral levels. Cyber Diplomacy Division acts as the nodal point for discussions on cyber security issues, data protection and internet governance, in consultation with other agencies like 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 Organization (DRDO), Department of Telecommunication (DoT), etc.

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 governance, India has been engaged in activities with the private sector, civil society and academia to shape and strategise cyber policy.

(i) Bilateral relations with Individual countries

The Cyber Diplomacy division is instrumental in organising bilateral cyber dialogues. During 2020-21, India has signed a Framework with Australia on cyber and cyber-enabled critical technology cooperation on 4 June 2020, along with a Five Year Plan of Action (2020-2025) in order to promote an open, free, safe and secure internet, in adherence with international law, and to provide an enabling environment to deliver increased prosperity to the two nations. The Five Year Plan of Action under the Framework is being implemented. This inter-alia includes formation of Joint Working Groups (JWGs) on ICT and on Cyber Security; creation of "Australia India Strategic Research Fund" to prioritise research focused on innovation in the digital economy, promoting stronger cyber forensic and investigation capabilities, and collaboration on research into the practical applications of Quantum Computing, Artificial Intelligence etc.

India and Japan have finalised a bilateral Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in the field of Cyber Security.

On 15 September 2020, India and USA conducted a Cyber Dialogue virtually, led by Deputy NSA R. Khanna. The Indian side comprised representatives from NSCS, MHA, DoT and MEA. India and the US also held an ICT Working Group meeting virtually on 01 October 2020.

The 5th India-Germany Cyber Dialogue was held on 11 December 2020 over the virtual platform.

The 6th India-EU Cyber Dialogue was held virtually on 14 December 2020. JS (eG&IT & CD) led the Indian delegation comprising of representatives from NSCS, MHA, DoT and MeitY.

India also signed a CERT to CERT MoU with Israel in July 2020, and with France in October 2020.

(ii) Regional and Multilateral cooperation in the area of cyber issues

Indian delegation led by the Ministry participated as one of the select 25 experts in the ongoing 6th United Nations Group of Governmental Experts (UNGGE) for the period 2019-2021. The first session of the 6th UNGGE was held on 09-13 December 2019 in New York and the second session of UNGGE was held from 24-28 February 2020 in Geneva, Switzerland. India has also been participating in Open Ended Working Group (OEWG) meetings which aim to deliberate on cyber related issues. The last substantive meeting of OEWG was held from 10-14 February 2020 in New York. In preparation for the next substantive meeting proposed in March 2021, OEWG is holding informal virtual meetings. The last such virtual informal meeting, attended by the Indian delegation, led by JS (eG&IT & CD), was held from 29 September to 01 October 2020. The third and fourth session of OEWG informal meeting was held from 17-19 November 2020 and 01-03 December 2020 respectively. The final session of the OEWG meeting is proposed to be held from 08-12 March 2021.

India participated in the UNODC 6th session of the International Expert Group (IEG) virtual meeting on cybercrime from 27-29 July 2020. JS (eG&IT & CD) led the Indian side, which comprised representatives from NSCS, MHA, CBI, and Ministry's L&T Division.

India actively takes part in ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) meetings on cyber issues. The last such meeting was held from 14-16 January 2020 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. India participated in an online East Asia Summit Workshop on 'Regional Cyber Capacity Building: Seizing the Fourth Industrial Revolution' held from 21-22 September 2020. The workshop provided EAS participating countries with a forum to discuss their cyber capacity building needs, share information on best practices on cyber capacity building, form partnerships to develop regional capacity building programmes, and enhance cooperation that is already underway through the ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity, the ASEAN-Singapore Cybersecurity Centre of Excellence (ASCCE) in Singapore, and the ASEAN-Japan Cybersecurity capacity building centre in Bangkok. JS (eG&IT & CD) led the Indian side, which comprised representatives from NSCS, MeitY and CERT-In, in the meetings.

India also participated in the 5th Singapore International Cyber Week (SICW) and the 5th ASEAN Ministerial Conference on Cybersecurity (AMCC) organised virtually by the Cyber Security Agency in Singapore from 05-09 October 2020. The theme of the conference was "Co-operation in a Post-Covid future". India participated in the 6th meeting of the BRICS Working Group, on security in the use of ICTs, that was held, virtually, on 26-27 August 2020.

India also participated virtually in the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Expert group meeting on International Information Security on 29 July 2020.

India joined the call on the International Statement on end-to-end encryption and public safety on 11 October 2020.

E-Governance & Information Technology

E-Governance and Information Technology (eG&IT) Division among other tasks has been involved in design, development, implementation and maintenance of various e-Governance applications for the Ministry. eG&IT Division also provides all Information Technology (IT) related support to the Ministry and Missions/Posts abroad for procurement, maintenance and up-keep of all IT infrastructure.

During the period, eG&IT Division has taken steps to implement different components of Digital India Programme in the Ministry and all Missions and Posts abroad. Automation and networking is being exploited as a tool to achieve synergy at all levels of functioning in the Ministry and render efficient

services to government officials. The following e-governance projects have been implemented during the period 01 April - 31 October 2020:

MEA Performance Monitoring Dashboard developed under the supervision of eG&IT Division, focuses on three target areas capturing all major schemes, programmes and initiatives of Ministry with many major indicators sliced and diced across five clusters (Diaspora Engagement, Development partnership, International engagement, Trade & Commerce & Citizen services). The dashboard has been upgraded to include a new module, showcasing the details of various projects undertaken by the Ministry.

Vande Bharat Mission Portal (Repat Portal) available on the URL <https://repat.videshapps.gov.in> was launched on 06 May 2020 by the Ministry to bring back Indian nationals home during the Covid-19 pandemic by facilitating their travel on a Mission mode. The portal provides registration and access to stakeholders involved in the repatriation process. The data has been shared amongst the stakeholders in real time to facilitate the entire process.

MEADOWS App is an inhouse portal being developed as a basket comprising a number of utilities viz, APAR filing, Leave Management, Inventory Management, Bills Management, Deployment of personnel, etc. It is in the development stage and likely to be rolled-out in due course.

RISHTA Portal focuses on engaging Indian Diaspora abroad. RISHTA portal and App is a vision project envisages to connect with the Overseas Indian Community (NRIs, OCI & PIO) by facilitating and connecting them to various new and existing government schemes benefiting them in various areas of interest. This portal and App will also assist during any crisis management and lend a helping hand to the Indian Diaspora. The Pravasi Rishta portal was launched on 30 December 2020 by the Minister of State.

Global Indian Student Portal focuses on engaging Indian students studying abroad. It is a vision project under development, which will have information regarding various courses and schemes offered by the Foreign Universities. This portal will be of immense help and will provide first-hand authentic

information to our students going abroad to pursue professional courses at undergraduate & postgraduate levels.

Integrated Mission Accounting System Ver 2.0 (IMAS 2.0) Portal: The latest version of Mission Accounting System will provide real time financial figures of all the Missions & Posts. The IMAS 2.0 is expected to be rolled out to all Missions and Posts in due course.

The security architecture has been reviewed in the Ministry and existing IT infrastructure has been upgraded with new generation networking and threat management devices to meet the ever growing challenges of cyber security. The Division from time to time, has organised a number of classes/lectures on the Fundamentals of Cyber Security, Implementation of Cyber Security Policy for the Ministry officials to increase awareness about the cyber security and enable them to manage and mitigate cyber threats.

Apart from implementing e-governance services projects, eG&IT Division has also given several lectures and training on Cyber Security, Safe & Secure Computing and other related topics at Foreign Service Institute to the Foreign Diplomats and Officer Trainees.

Video Conferencing: Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the eG&IT division has configured and conducted 500+ video conferencing for the officials of the Ministry at all levels, including the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas.

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CONSULAR, PASSPORT AND VISA SERVICES

CPV Division in the Ministry provides attestation and apostille (under the Hague Apostille Convention) services for authentication of educational, personal, and commercial documents through online (e-sanad) and manual modes for personal and commercial use in countries abroad.

In February 2015 as part of good governance initiatives to resolve consular grievances of Indian abroad, MEA launched a web portal MADAD (online Consular Services Management System). All Indian Missions and Posts abroad as well as the

MEA Branch Secretariats and State/UT governments have been integrated with this portal for redressal of consular grievance. The MADAD online portal has led to qualitative improvement in handling of consular grievances, through online registration, forwarding, tracking and escalation until their eventual resolution.

During the year, the division has conducted various Consular dialogues, visa waiver agreements, extradition treaties, recommended Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) and e-Visas scheme etc., which are explained in detail below:

Visa-Exemption Agreements

India has signed visa waiver agreements in respect of diplomatic and/or official passport holders with 114 countries, out of which 101 are presently operational while the remaining are at various stages of ratification. During this year, visa exemption agreements for holders of diplomatic and/or official passport

were signed with Grenada and Marshall Islands. Also, visa exemption agreements for holders of diplomatic and/or official passport were operationalized with Costa Rica, Equatorial Guinea, Oman, and Marshall Islands.



www.meadashboard.gov.in

Consular Dialogue Mechanism

As part of the established mechanism for comprehensive review of consular matters with various countries, Consular dialogues were held with Iran, Indonesia, Tajikistan, Nigeria, Russia, Canada, Saudi Arabia, Austria and Switzerland in 2019,

and USA, Italy, France and Turkmenistan in 2020. Out of these, Consular dialogues with Indonesia, Tajikistan, Nigeria, and Canada were held for the first time. At present, India has Consular Dialogue mechanisms with 24 countries.

Extradition

The MEA has been actively pursuing negotiations with various countries for bilateral extradition treaties to provide a legal and institutional framework to prosecute people involved in international terrorism, financial frauds, drug trafficking and other transnational organized crimes. It is the policy of the Government to conclude Extradition treaties with as many countries as possible to ensure that fugitive criminals do not escape justice. The MEA also facilitates negotiations for agreements on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty in Criminal Matters, Mutual

Legal Assistance Treaty in Civil and Commercial Matters and Agreement on Transfer of Sentenced Persons. To facilitate extradition of fugitive offenders, Government of India has signed extradition treaties with 50 countries as on date. Besides, India has entered Extradition arrangements with 11 countries. During the year, India received 17 extradition requests, and has sent 18 extradition requests to various foreign countries. In the year 2020, two fugitive criminals were extradited by foreign countries to India.

Consular Issues

Indian Missions/Posts render various consular services viz. attestation of various categories of documents, registration of birth and death of Indian nationals & issue of birth and death certificates, facilitating transportation of mortal remains of Indian nationals back to India, solemnization/ registration of marriage of Indian nationals, consular access for Indian nationals lodged in foreign jails, serving summons of Indian courts to Indian nationals residing abroad, providing welfare assistance etc. Missions/Posts also advise, assist, and guide the Indi-

an community when required, and conducts Open Houses at Missions/Posts and Consular Camps at different locations to attend to grievances and provide timely assistance to Indian nationals. In Gulf countries where there are large numbers of Indian workers, our Missions and Posts have specialized Community Welfare Wings and Labour Wings. SEWA, an online consular service module has been launched this year in 19 Missions as a pilot project.

Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) Card Scheme

On the recommendation of a High-Level Committee on Indian Diaspora, Government of India launched the Overseas Citizenship of India Card scheme in August 2005 for persons of Indian Origin. OCI Card is a lifelong visa for visiting India. The erstwhile Person of Indian Origin (PIO) Card scheme, launched in 1999, was merged with OCI scheme in 2015. In September 2019, system of submission of OCI Card application in USA was further streamlined and restrictions on jurisdiction in sub-

mission of OCI application within USA has been removed. In 2020, OCI card facility has been extended up to 6th generation to Indian diaspora of St. Denis, Reunion Island. Earlier in 2017 and 2019, similar facilities were extended to Indian diaspora of Mauritius and Suriname, respectively. As on date, total 37,05,568 OCI cards have been issued until now. The number of OCI Cards issued during the year is 1,91,613.

e-Visa scheme:

The Government of India had launched the e-Visa scheme on November 27, 2014. Initially the scheme was open for e-Tourist visas for only 43 countries and entry was restricted only at five airports. During the last five years, the scheme has been gradually liberalized and extended to other countries. Presently, the scheme is extended to 171 Countries/Territories and 28 Indian airports and 5 Indian Ports have been designated for providing e-Visa service. The scheme has been implemented in completely online mode. In March 2019, e-Visa has been

sub-divided into 5 categories i.e. e-tourist visa, e-Business visa, e-Medical visa, e-Conference and e-Medical Attendant and duration extended to 1 year. In August 2019 further liberalization in e-Visa regime has been made. Duration of e-Tourist visa has been further extended to 5 years and a new category of e-Tourist visa of three- month duration (with stay stipulation of 30 days) at a reduced fee was introduced. The fee of 3-month e-Tourist visa has been further reduced in off season month (April-June). The share of e-visas with respect to normal paper

visas is around 46 % for 2019. The trend of e-Visa applicants is continued to be in upward direction. However, since March

2020 the e-Visa scheme has been under suspension due to ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

PASSPORT SERVICES

The Passport Seva Programme (PSP) Division of the Ministry provides passport 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 of External Affairs through the Central Passport Organization (CPO) and its all-India network of 36 Passport Offices, the CPV Division (only 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 426 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSK) (in association with the Department of Posts) as extended arms of these 36 Passport Offices. The total number of Passport Seva Kendras functioning in the country was 519 as on 31 December, 2020, including PSK and POPSK. For Indians living abroad, passports and Emergency Certificates are being rendered by 196 Indian Missions/ Posts abroad.

Passport Seva Programme (PSP)

The Passport Seva Programme (PSP), a Mission Mode Project, being implemented in the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) mode with M/s Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) as the Service Provider, has completed seven and half-years of its successful operations since it went "Live" on 12 June, 2012.

EAM delivered Keynote Address during the Passport Seva Divas Celebrations on 24 June 2020

Passport services in India and Missions/Posts abroad

During 2020, the Ministry received over 66.8 lakh passport and passport related applications in India and through its Missions/Posts abroad.

The Ministry processed nearly 55.80 lakh passport and pass-

port-related applications in India during the year 2020, as compared to 1.18 crore in the year 2019. However, 58.44 passports and related documents were issued in India.

The Indian Missions/Posts abroad received 10.99 lakh passport and passport-related applications and issued 9.82 lakh passports, Emergency Certificates (ECs) and other passport-related miscellaneous documents. This included 362,556 Police Clearance Certificates (PCCs) and 24,507 Emergency Certificates (ECs), more than half of ECs were issued on gratis basis to citizens abroad during amnesty schemes, to mitigate their hardships and travel back to India. Thus, the Government of India, issued more than 68.26 lakh passport and passport-related documents during 2020.

Revenue earned

The Ministry earned total revenue of Rs. 1346.60 crore from all passport services during 2020 as compared to Rs. 1853.85 crore during the year 2019. Thus, the Ministry lost revenue to the tune of more than Rs.507.25 crore due to Covid-19 pandemic as Passport Seva Kendra received very less application during 2020 because of lockdowns and travel bans and restrictions.

Improvements in passport service delivery

There has been noticeable improvement in passport service delivery in the country with the implementation of the PSP and continuous efforts being made by the Ministry. Quality service being provided to the people from the Passport Seva Kendras (PSK) established with good amenities across the country in Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. Under this system, the applicants are required to apply for their passports online, upload relevant documents, make the payment online through debit/credit card or State Bank of India (SBI) net banking/ SBI Challan, schedule an appointment and then visit the designated PSK/ POPSK. A user-friendly portal has been made available. When an applicant visits the PSK/ POPSK, an Electronic Queue Management System (EQMS) working on the principle of First-in First-out is available at all PSK/ POPSK to monitor the flow of applicants. The applicants can track the status of their applications themselves through portal and also SMS services. In the current system of passport issuance, there is no manual intervention at any stage, and the complete process is digitally flown with re-engineered process through a single visit clearance.

mPassport Seva Mobile App

The mPassport Seva Mobile App with additional facilities to apply, pay and schedule appointments for passport services is available both in Android and iOS platforms. In the year 2020, 1.87 lakh applications were filed using the mPassport Seva Mobile App. 8.06 lakh applications have been field using this app since its roll out in July 2016. Citizens do not require access to a computer and printer to apply for passport services. The mPassport Seva App supports enhanced set of passport services such as:

- i. New User Registration
- ii. Sign In to Registered User Account
- iii. Application form filing to apply for Passport and Police Clearance Certificate
- iv. Pay for Passport Services
- v. Appointment Scheduling
- vi. Application Availability Status
- vii. Document Advisor
- viii. Fee Calculator

Applying from anywhere in India

An applicant can now apply for passport from anywhere in India. This initiative has enabled 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 is 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 9.11 lakh applications were submitted under this scheme during the calendar year 2020.

Appointments

Awards & Recognition

The Passport Seva Project has received recognition at the highest levels in the Government, has been the subject of case studies, and has won several awards, including the following conferred in the year 2020:

- (i) On 28 February 2020, Passport Seva Program won the Silver Stevie award in the category of Innovation in Customer Services. The award acknowledges the transformation brought in the Passport Issuance System in India.

The Ministry released nearly 45,000 appointments per day, including nearly 16,000 appointments, on an average, at the 426 POPSKs. Securing online appointments for submission of passport applications at PSK has been simplified. The current provision is allowing 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 passport easy and quick.

As on 31.12.2020, appointments were available the next working day at 410 Passport Kendras, between 2 and 7 working days at 72 Passport Kendras, and beyond 7 working days at 37 Passport Kendras.

Volume of applications

Top five states in terms of number of passport applications received were Kerala (6,59,728), Maharashtra (5,71,861), Punjab (4,77,822), Tamil Nadu (4,77,599) and Uttar Pradesh (4,75,612), accounting for nearly 48% of the total applications received (55.8 lakh) country-wide till 31 December 2020.

Top five Passport Offices in terms of number of applications received in the year 2020 were Mumbai (3,63,708), Bengaluru (3,33,983), Chandigarh (3,32,908), Kozhikode (2,91,918) and Ahmedabad (2,91,506) till 31 December, 2020.

Offsite Passport Seva Camps and Melas at PSK

Passport Seva camps are organized at locations to cater to the demand for passports and to reach out to people located far away from the PSK/ POPSK.

The Passport Offices also organized weekend Passport Melas to address difficulties faced by citizens in obtaining appointments and to meet increased demand for passport services. 62 Passport Melas were conducted during 2020. A total of 24,188 applications were processed in these Melas.

- (ii) On 28 November 2020, 'Skoch Gold Award' was conferred to Passport Seva Project, PSP Division, Ministry of External Affairs in the category of 'Response to Covid' acknowledging the timely enabling of digital ecosystem for delivery of services to citizen during the pandemic.

Outreach of passport Services

A. Passport Office

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. The objective of the Government has been to cater to the demand for passports and to reach out to the people located far away from the Passport Offices. The list of the 36 Passport Offices is at Annexure.

B. Passport Seva Kendras (PSK)

Towards this end, the Ministry has opened 16 PSK since May 2014 which includes all the States in the North East of India. There are 93 PSK functioning in the country as on 31 December, 2020. The list of these 93 PSK is at Annexure.

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 functionalized 426 POPSK till 31 December 2020 as per list at Annexure.

The POPSK are functioning like the other existing PSK. The process of issuing passports has not changed after the opening of the POPSK. 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 necessary prior to the issue of the passport. The photographs, biometrics and the supporting documents would be electronically captured at the POPSK and the applicant will not have to revisit them prior to the issue of the Passport.

D. Integration of Indian Missions/ Posts abroad into the PSP

The process of integrating the Indian Missions/ Posts abroad into the PSP commenced in October 2018 and is continuing. The aim is to provide a uniform centralized passport issuance application process working on a single centralized database for the Indian citizens living abroad and seeking Passport-related services. The Ministry has successfully integrated the passport issuance systems in 147 Indian Missions/ Posts into PSP system. These Missions/ Post issue more than 95% of the total passports abroad. The Ministry is working to complete the integration of remaining 45 Indian Missions/ Posts abroad at the earliest. Annexure may be referred.

Police Verification

Police Verification plays an important role in the timely issuance of passports. The Ministry engaged closely with the Police Departments across States/ Union Territories (UT) to speed up police verification. The all-India average for the number of days taken to complete the police verification is now 18 days in 2020. 88% of the police verifications were completed within 21 days in 2020 (87% in 2019).

Some States/ UTs have consistently maintained low Police Verification processing times. For example, Himachal Pradesh completes police verification in just two days and Andhra Pradesh & Haryana in four days and Kerala in six days. Constant and concerted efforts by the Ministry have resulted in increasing number of Districts switching over to the preferred District Police Headquarters (DPHq) Verification Model. So far, 795, out of the 833 Police Districts, have adopted the new system and are working on the District model.

The Ministry has launched Android-based mPassport Police App for end-to-end paperless digital flow. The app has the capability to capture passport applicant's personal particulars and photograph and transmit the same electronically to concerned stakeholders. The app would also capture the location co-ordinates of the applicant's place of residence ensuring the authenticity of the field verification by police. 243 DPHQs in 18 States & UTs are using mPassport Police App. Till 31 December 2020, a total of 84,42,181 applications have been submitted through mobile app since inception of the mPassport Police App.

Functional Enhancements/Simplification of Procedures for realizing Minimum Government Maximum Governance

- (a) In order to ease the hardship to the citizens living in India and abroad, all re-issue cases up to 3 years after expiry of passport on the date of submission will be dealt on No-PV basis.

- (b) Guidelines for PCC which inter-alia states that any change in personal particulars i.e. change of address; spouse name etc. necessitated the applicants to apply for a new passport first and then apply for PCC have been suitably liberalized. There is now no need for the applicant to apply for a new passport if there is change in present address and addition of spouse name for the issue of PCC.

Passport Seva Divas 2020

The Passport Seva Divas was celebrated on 24 June, 2020 to commemorate the enactment of the Passports Act on 24 June, 1967. A Special Event was organized by MEA to mark this occasion at which EAM and Minister of State addressed the Passport Officers through video conferencing.

In his keynote Address, EAM noted that there had been a complete transformation in the passport delivery system during the last six years of the present Government. He mentioned that the focus of MEA would be to further strengthen the outreach efforts to take passport services closer to the people by opening more POPSKs in the country. He reiterated that efforts must continue to further simplify the rules and processes of making passports. Further, steps must be taken to leverage the use of modern technology. Initiatives such as mPassport Police and mPassport Seva Apps had led to improvements in systems and customer satisfaction. The production of e-Passports would be another important step in this regard.

In his address, Minister of State highlighted the efforts of all the Passport Issuing Authorities in India and abroad for working to ensure transparent and efficient passport delivery systems for the benefit of our citizens. He also noted that a robust Grievance Redressal Mechanism, which was recognized for its efficiency in CPGRAMS, had further improved delivery of our services.

Passport Seva Puraskars were announced for the best performing Passport Offices and the personnel of the Service Provider. As Police verification is an important component of the process of issue of passport, special mention was made of the Police Departments for their efforts in providing speedy police clearances.

Public Grievance Redressal Mechanism

Under the Passport Seva Project, MEA has put in place a strengthened Grievance Redressal system whereby a multilingual National Call Centre with a toll free number (1800-258-1800), operating in 17 languages and on 24X7 basis, has been set up to cater to dissemination of information about various passport-related services, including handling of grievances and citizen feedback, which at present works on a central system platform. It handled approximately 9,000 calls per day in the year 2020 (out of which 46% were in Hindi, 29% in English and 25% in regional languages). The Passport portal has also an email-based helpdesk, where suggestions and grievances can be logged. Citizens can also monitor the status of their passport application/grievance online through this portal.

A Public Grievance Redressal Cell (PGRC) has been established in the PSP Division under the supervision of Joint Secretary (PSP) & CPO, who is also designated as the Director of Public Grievances of the Ministry for Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS). It deals with grievances received through telephone, e-mail and post directly from general public and also references from various Government offices such as President’s Secretariat, Prime Minister’s Office, Cabinet Secretariat and Central Vigilance Commission, etc. In addition, all Passport Offices (POs) handle public griev-

ances through the CPGRAMS website of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions (<https://pgportal.gov.in>) and Passport grievances i.e. Service Request Number (SRN) received through Passport portal. Information and Facilitation Counters, Public Grievance Cell, complaint/ suggestion boxes and Help Desks have been set up at strategic locations in PO and PSK to assist applicants and to attend to grievances/ complaints expeditiously. The name, address and phone number of the Public Grievance Officer are also displayed in the PO/PSK and on the website of the PO. There is a Public Grievance redressal mechanism in all POs to enquire into and redress any complaints from citizens in a timeframe.

Under CPGRAMS, 25,237 grievances were received during the period 1 January to 31 December 2020 (inclusive of outstanding 119 of 2019) out of which 25,050 grievances have been disposed off. During this period, 58,464 public grievance petitions (inclusive of 33,227 received by email, post, fax, related to grievances/inquiries and CPGRAMS as mentioned above) were received out of which 58,254 grievances have been disposed off. The latest position on their application, along with directions for further action, is posted on the website, which can be accessed by the public.

Passport Adalats

Passport Offices hold Passport Adalats regularly to redress the grievances of passport applicants. These Adalats have been very useful in disposing of some 7000 old and complex cases through direct interaction with the applicants in 2017.

Haj pilgrims

As decided by the Haj Committee of India (constituted under Act of Parliament, No. 35 of 2002), only valid passport holders can apply for Haj. Like previous years, instructions have been issued to all Passport Issuing Authorities to accord high priority to process passport applications of prospective Haj pilgrims and ensure timely issuance of passports in such cases upon completion of requisite documentation, police verification and other formalities by means of nominating a nodal officer, opening of facilitation counter, reserving appointment slots for such applicants and attending to requests/grievances petitions received from such citizens in a very prompt manner.

Inspection of Passport Offices

Passport Offices as well as PSK and POPSK in various States are inspected regularly with a view to improving their procedural and operational efficiency and ability to render citizen-centric services in satisfactory manner. Passport Seva Kendras, in operation all over India, were also inspected under the Non-technical Serviced Level Agreements (SLA) on regular basis.

Right to Information Act (RTI)

Central Public Information Officer and First Appellate Authority have been appointed in every Passport Office to provide information to applicants under the RTI Act. Central Public Information Officers have also been appointed in the PSP Division. Joint Secretary (PSP) & Chief Passport Officer (CPO) is the First Appellate Authority for the matters related to the PSP Division in the Ministry only. From 17 June 2014, a CPIO portal has been created online in all Passport Offices. During the year 2020, a total number of 5,880 online RTI applications were received, out of which 5,454 were disposed off.

Appeals (u/s 11 of the Passports Act)

The appeal against the decisions of PIAs is a statutory right conferred upon the affected persons under Section 11 of the Passports Act. Joint Secretary (PSP) & Chief Passport Officer is the Appellate Authority for these cases. Up to December 2020, 16 appeal sessions took place at which 41 appellants/counsels were heard.

Manufacturing and Personalization of Travel Documents

All Indian travel documents are manufactured by the India Security Press, Nashik, which is a unit under the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Limited (SPMCIL). In order to improve the overall quality, functionality and security of Indian passports, various measures have been taken. Passport booklets in new design and layout have been introduced in Passport Offices in a phased manner. All Passport Offices, Headquarters and select Missions/ Posts abroad have been provided with machine readable passport printers. All Passport Offices issue machine-readable passports as per the guidelines laid-down by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

For 168 Embassies/Consulates abroad and Office of Assistant Secretary (Passport) Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Port Blair, Machine Readable Passports (MRP) with ghost image security feature are printed at Central Indian Passport Printing System (CIPPS) of the PSP Division, New Delhi. CIPPS printed 1,43,858 passports up to December 2020 (inclusive of 487 diplomatic passports and 397 official passports). 1,91,613 OCI cards were also personalized during the year at CIPPS/OCI Cell and Missions abroad.

E-Passport

In accordance with ICAO recommendations to incorporate biometric data in the Machine Readable Travel Documents, India has also decided to upgrade its existing passports and issue chip enabled e-passports to citizens with advanced security features and better printing and paper quality. The Government has given its approval for procurement of electronic con-

tactless inlays for manufacturing of e-passports to India Security Press (ISP), Nashik. E-passport provides greater protection against fraudulent practices and tampering.

International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

India served as a member of the Technical Advisory Group (TAG) on Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD) of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and has been implementing the ICAO guidelines on MRTD. The ICAO, in terms of Document 9303 as the central reference, has established ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD), on cost sharing basis, to promote a globally inter-operable e-passport validation scheme for electronic travel documents to support ICAO’s strategic objectives to improve civil aviation security. The PKD Board members are nominated by PKD participating countries and appointed by the ICAO Council. India has been a member of ICAO PKD since February 2009.

Central Passport Organization

The Central Passport Organization (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 1 January 2021, the sanctioned strength of CPO was 2741 and the working strength was 1804. In addition, 15 Technical and 6 supporting staff man the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the Passport Seva Project. There are presently 38 vacancies at Group ‘A’ level, 541 at Group ‘B’ Gazetted and Non-Gazetted level and 358 at Group ‘C’ level, totaling to 937. The vacancies at Group ‘A’ level are filled up by taking officers on deputation from other Government Departments. Ministry has also deployed 347 Data Entry Operators and 51 Office Assistants (MTS) 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 Staff Selection Commission has been indentured to fill the vacancies for the posts of 4 Assistant Superintendent, 17 Junior Passport Assistant, 8 Office Assistant (MTS), 33 Junior Translator and 1 Stenographer (Grade-II).

The Ministry has taken several steps to improve the service conditions of the CPO personnel by re-structuring and expanding of the CPO cadre, to ensure that vacant posts available are filled by faster promotion with necessary amendments in the Recruitment Rules. The Productivity Linked Incentive Scheme (PLIS) financially incentivizes individual performance

measured against pre-set and mutually agreed upon norms. This is a unique scheme for the GOI employees. With a view to recognizing meritorious services rendered by CPO employees and thus, contributing to improving governance in the country, Passport Seva Puraskars have been instituted. The Puraskars are given away annually to the selected employees of Passport Offices during the Passport Officers Conference every year.

Regular meetings of the Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) have been held in the CPO during the year. Up to December 2020, 04 Senior Superintendent from Superintendent, 160 Superintendent from Assistant Superintendent, 02 Assistant Superintendent from Senior Passport Assistant, 26 Senior Passport Assistant from Junior Passport Assistant, and 09 Senior Translator from Junior Translator have been approved for promotion. DPC proposals for promotion of Senior Superintendent to the post of Assistant Passport Officer (APO) have been submitted to the Union Public Service Commission. Eighteen

officials of CPO were considered for MACP in different grades. Out of 18, 3 Assistant Superintendent, 1 Senior Passport Assistant, 9 Junior Passport Assistant, 1 Junior Translator, 02 Office Assistant and 2 Driver have been given MACP. Confirmation of 82 officials i.e. 22 Assistant Superintendents, 16 Junior Passport Assistants, 37 Office Assistants, 3 Junior Translators and 4 Stenographer (Grade-II) have been in different grades.

Cadre Review: In view of the 100% increase in the Passport applications processed by the Central Passport Organisation (CPO) from 2010 to 2020 through a network of 36 Passport Offices, 93 Passport Seva Kendras, and 426 POPSKs, need is felt for Cadre restructuring and reviewing the cadre strength of the CPO. A proposal for the physical inspection and staffing study of CPO by the Staff Inspection Unit (SIU) of the Department of Expenditure has been sent to the Ministry of Finance in November 2019.

23

OVERSEAS INDIAN AFFAIRS

OIA-I

2020-21 has been very challenging with Covid-19 pandemic ravaging the world and the resultant country-wide lockdown which had to be imposed as a safeguard to protect lives of our countrymen from this virus. While Vande Bharat Mission flights were started by the Government to bring back lakhs of Indians

stranded abroad, help in all possible forms were extended to the stranded Indians all over the world. Due to the lockdown, several plans and targets of the Division suffered considerably, though efforts were made to carry on the work using online platforms, wherever possible.

Indian Community Welfare Fund (ICWF)

ICWF, set up in 2009, is aimed at assisting overseas Indian nationals in times of distress and emergency in the most deserving cases on a means tested basis. ICWF has been a critical support during Covid-19 pandemic. Drawing support from the Fund, our Missions/Posts proactively helped distressed and stranded Indian nationals, in accordance with extant guide-

lines. As of 31 December 2020, around Rs. 33.5 crores were utilised to extend assistance to more than 156, 000 Indians. Assistance was given for evacuation, boarding and lodging, medical care, repatriation and other miscellaneous matters such as providing masks, food packets and dry ration.

Welfare and Protection of Indian Migrant workers

During 2020-21, a Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with Japan to facilitate mobility of Indian skilled workers, under the scheme of "Specialised Skilled Worker" visa category of Japan, on 18 January 2021.

The third Project Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting for Technical Project under India-EU Common Agenda for Migration

and Mobility (CAMM) was held virtually on 2 July 2020. The meeting concluded with the mutual agreement on the activities to be undertaken during the next one year keeping into consideration balanced implementation of all the four pillars of CAMM. India also participated in the online GFMD-ADD regional consultative processes, on migration and mobility, chaired by UAE, in July 2020.

A Joint Committee Meeting with Qatar on Indian Labour Welfare was also held during 2020-21. Besides, further progress was made on negotiations with a number of countries, like

Russia, Benelux countries, Portugal and UK on the signing of Agreements/MoUs on cooperation in Migration and Mobility matters.

Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

Pravasi Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PKVY), a joint collaborative partnership between MEA and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), aims at enhancing the skills set of potential emigrant workers in select sectors and job roles, in line with international standards, to facilitate their overseas employment.

The scheme comprises two components. The first one is a technical top-up training, involving recognition of prior learning, assessment and certification, to be provided by MSDE, through the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The 2nd one is a one day training programme on soft skills, called "Pre-Departure Orientation and Training (PDOT)", to be imparted by MEA.

While a market-based, top-up skill training programme is being developed by MSDE, PDOT training being implemented by MEA has been progressing at a considerable pace. Out of the 28 PDOT Centres, opened by Ministry in collaboration with MSDE and the State Governments, five new training centres at Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Amritsar & Jalandhar were opened in October 2020. The opening of many more centres at major overseas Migration specific places in the country has been planned. Training has already been imparted to about 96,000 prospective emigrants by 20 January 2021. To meet the target of imparting training to 5 lakh workers, an online PDOT model has been adopted, in addition to the present offline classroom training model.

India Centre for Migration

The India Centre for Migration (ICM) is a research think-tank of the Ministry on all matters related to international migration. The broad areas of ICM's activities include research, capacity building and assisting the Ministry on matters relating to international migration and mobility. During the year, ICM prepared two special reports on impact of Covid 19 on international migration from India and on the flow of returnee migrants so that suitable reintegration measures may be introduced. ICM has

also developed two handbooks on law enforcement agencies and women workers from India were launched in December 2020, during the General Council Meeting of ICM. Eighteen panel discussions on relevant themes pertaining to Migration and Mobility with special focus on impacts of Covid-19, have been organised during 2020-21 and more are in the pipeline. Besides, one Training of Teachers Workshop for training of PDO Training Teachers, was also organised.

OIA-II

The Overseas Indian Affairs Division-II deals with issues relating to engagement with Indian Diaspora. Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention, Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conferences, Regional Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, Know India Programme, Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children, Bharat Ko Janiye Quiz, NRI

marital disputes, Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora, Students issues, grievances pertaining to diaspora, any other issues pertaining to diaspora and new initiatives taken from time to time by the Government are among the major Programmes and Schemes handled by the Division.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD)

Since 2015, PBD has been celebrated once every two years to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India, and to help them reconnect with their roots in India. During the Convention, selected overseas Indians are also honoured with prestigious "Pravasi Bharatiya Samman" Awards, to recognize their stellar contribution in various fields in India and abroad.

In the run up to the main PBD convention, theme-based PBD conferences are organised in Delhi between two PBD conven-

tions, which later feed into plenary sessions organised during PBD conventions.

The 16th PBD convention was held in virtual or Hybrid mode on 9 January 2021 in New Delhi on the theme "Contributing to Aatmanirbhar Bharat". The PBD convention was inaugurated by Prime Minister. The convention saw eminent members of the diaspora hold discussions on the role the diaspora can play in advancing the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat, and on the post-Covid world. Rashtrapatiiji delivered a valedictory address, marking conclusion of PBD.



Prime Minister inaugurated the 16th PBD Convention on 09 January 2020

Scholarship Programme for Diaspora Children (SPDC)

SPDC was introduced by the Government of India in the Academic Year 2006-07 to make higher education in Indian Universities/Institutes in different fields (except Medical and related courses) accessible to the diaspora children and promote India as a centre for higher studies. Presently, under the Scheme, 150 scholarships are awarded to Children of Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs), Non-resident Indians and Indian Workers in ECR countries. It consists of grant of financial assistance to each

admitted student up to an amount of USD 4000 per annum for undergraduate courses in Central Universities in India, institutions accredited 'A' grade by National Assessment and Accreditation Council and recognised by University Grant Commission and other institutions covered under the DASA Scheme. Since, 1227 scholarships have been granted during the academic year of 2006-07. The Scheme for the academic year 2020-21 has not been announced yet due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Pravasi Teerth Darshan Yojana (PTDY)

PTDY was introduced in the financial year 2018-19 to provide the Persons of Indian Origin in the age group of 45-65 year an opportunity to reconnect with their roots. The programme is available for those Persons of Indian Origin in Girmitiya countries (Fiji, Guyana, Mauritius, South Africa, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Reunion Island) who belong to lower income groups and are unable to afford a visit to India. It is a 17-days pro-

gramme and conducted with coordination of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. 04 editions of this programme have been conducted successfully so far with the participation 160 PIOs. Two editions of KIP are scheduled for FY 2020-21 but have not been announced yet due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Promotion of Cultural Ties with Diaspora (PCTD)

Under PCTD, OIA-II Division provides grants to Indian Missions and Consulates to support their initiatives aimed at strengthening ties with the Overseas Indian Community; to preserve, maintain and showcase the glory of India's heritage and culture. The scheme aims to nourish and strengthen the cultural bonds between India and its Diaspora. The projected outcome of the scheme is to reinforce the cultural identity of the persons of Indian origin. Grants are also provided to think-tanks

and organisations in India which organise events pertaining to the overseas Indian community. Financial assistance to 40 Missions/Posts have been given in this Financial Year.

Financial grant to Antar Rashtriya Sahayog Parishad (ARSP) for research activities of Data Research and Resource Centre (DRRC), New Delhi have also been given.

Know India Programme (KIP)

KIP was introduced in the financial year 2003-04. The aim is to connect diaspora youth aged between 18-30 years with their motherland and to motivate them by acquainting them with transformations taking place in contemporary India. The programme also aims to expose them to India’s diverse forms

of art, heritage, and culture. Since its inception, the Ministry has, so far, conducted 57 editions of this programme, with the participation of a total number of 2061 diaspora youth. 06 editions of KIP are scheduled for FY 2020-21 but have not been announced yet due to Covid-19 pandemic.

Awareness Campaign and Media Plan

As advised by Advertisement Approval Cell (AAC), ads could be prepared by involving prominent personalities in regional languages and disseminated through social media at minimum expenditure. Accordingly, the Division approached various prominent personalities for their support on a gratis basis. Many Prominent personalities have agreed to give bytes (40-50 seconds) for media awareness campaigns, on gratis basis.

As per recommendations of Standing Committee on External Affairs, the Indian Institute of Mass Communication, is conducting Impact Assessment Study. The report based on Desk Research Activities was submitted in November 2020 followed by preliminary findings of the study in December 2020. Final Report was submitted in January 2021.

MEA-State Outreach Conferences

MEA in recent years has launched several initiatives aimed at welfare and protection of the overseas Indian community and strengthening our engagement with the Indian Diaspora worldwide. With this objective, MEA initiated State Outreach Programmes under the banner “Videsh Sampark” in 2017, which is an in-depth dialogue between the Ministry and the State governments. State Outreach Events have been organised in partnership with the State Governments of Telangana (2017), Maharashtra (2017) and Kerala (2017), Gujarat (2018) and Madhya Pradesh (2018) to seek cooperation in address-

ing issues pertaining to welfare and protection of our citizens abroad and brief the State Governments about Ministry’s initiatives pertaining to engagement and welfare of the overseas Indian community and curbing illegal migration.

From 2019 onwards, EAM approved to expand the scope of the engagement to cover investment, trade and foreign relations. With this new mandate, Videsh Sampark Programme was held in Bengaluru, Karnataka on 26 February 2020.

NRI-Marital Disputes

MEA has been receiving a large number of petitions and complaints about marital issues faced by Indian nationals, mostly women, who are married to overseas Indians and are deserted or harassed by their Non-Resident Indian spouses. Most complaints pertain to issues such as abandonment, harassment, cheating, domestic violence by their spouses residing abroad, to ascertain whereabouts of NRI spouses. Requests are filed for extradition, deportation of spouse to India, as well as maintenance, divorce or child custody and legal and financial assistance to file a case against the NRI spouse. Between

01 April 2020 and 31 October 2020, the Ministry addressed 618 complaints of distressed Indian women deserted by their NRI spouses. The Ministry ensured that the petitioners are provided with counseling, guidance and information about procedures, mechanisms for serving judicial summons on the Overseas Indian spouse, filing a case in India, issuing Look Out Circulars, impounding and revocation of Indian passport of the spouse, getting access to lawyers and NGOs empaneled with Indian Missions.

Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ)

In pursuance of an announcement made by Prime Minister at the 13th PBD Convention on 8 January 2015 in Gandhinagar, as part of efforts to strengthen engagement with young overseas Indians and encourage them to know more about their country of origin, an online “Bharat ko Janiye” Quiz was organised for young overseas Indians of 18-35 years of age in 2015-16. Second round of the quiz was organised in 2018-19.

The 3rd round of Bharat Ko Janiye (BKJ) Quiz 2020-21 was launched on 30 September 2020. The Quiz consisted of 4

rounds in online format. The BKJ was open for 3 categories of participants – PIO, NRI & Foreigners between 18 to 35 years. The link for BKJ is www.bharatkojaniye.in. With participation over several competitive rounds, a total of 15 winners (5 in each category) are chosen, and the top three winners in each category are awarded. The finalists of the BKJ quiz were awarded during the PBD event in January 2021. All 15 winners of the latest edition of the quiz will be invited for a tour of India after the Covid situation improves .

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NEW, EMERGING AND STRATEGIC TECHNOLOGIES DIVISION

There is a growing need to understand, analyse and anticipate the impact of disruptive, futuristic, emerging, strategic, and critical technologies that underpin economies, employment, security, social equity, and global relations while identifying forward looking opportunities.

Set up in January 2020, the New Emerging and Strategic Technologies Division engages in new technology diplomacy aspects and also deals with the foreign policy and international legal aspects of such discussions in global forums. It would be the coordinating point for positions taken by India in negotiations regarding technology governance rules, standards and architecture in the multilateral or plurilateral context, including at the UN and relevant international organizations.

NEST Division will build interfaces with key partner countries and international organizations in this context. It is assessing demand driven requirements of new emerging and strategic technologies in India in collaboration with line Ministries and facilitating, as synapses, the interlocutor/ partner interfaces for their acquisition, strengthening, in particular, the role of Indian Missions in this process.

NEST Division has participated in robust dialogues on the new Science Technology Innovation Policy 2020 deliberations currently underway in Government of India.

NEST Division helped shape the outreach to Diaspora and the international scientific community under the VAIBHAV [Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik] Summit 2020, together with the sister Ministries and Institutions in India.

It was nodal to the suggestion for the National Portal “Pravasi Bharatiya Academic and Scientific Sampark” (PRABHASS) that is being set up for effectively engaging with Indian Global S&T Community.

It also worked with Missions to facilitate international participation at the Responsible AI for Social Empowerment (RAISE 2020), organised by MeitY in October 2020.

NEST Division is coordinating Inter-Ministerial consultations within the Government of India, on emerging technology areas such as data security, with DoT (for ITU related aspects on new technologies); MeitY (for Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence); and Ministry of Mines .

NEST Division launched an Emerging Technologies Initiative on 31 August 2020 together with the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA), and the Science Policy Forum for accelerating India's technology intensity in new emerging and strategic technologies. It has been launched on the website: www.thesciencepolicyforum.org/initiatives/eti and has received an overwhelming response.

"NEST Monthly Newsletter" has been issued since May 2020. In this, NEST related developments within the country are reported intra-MEA and to Missions/Posts. Examples covered

include technologies related to Covid; solar/EV cells; AI/quantum technologies, etc.

NEST Division related developments abroad (as reported by Missions) are forwarded to respective Ministries/agencies in Government of India/ States. Some examples which are being explored for collaborations include: Lithium-ion Battery supply (Japan), Ocean wave electricity generation technology (Israel), supply of strategic minerals (Canada, others) and Hydrogen filling stations (Switzerland).

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PROTOCOL

Regarding work performance, Protocol-I deals with incoming visits of Head of States/Head of Governments/Vice-Presidents and Foreign Ministers, outgoing visits of President, Vice President and Prime Minister, entertainment (official lunches, dinners, and receptions on behalf of the MEA) and ceremonial functions, airport passes, access to ceremonial and reserve lounge etc. Details of Bilateral Visits and Virtual Summits are outlined in Annexure-II.

Protocol-III and Protocol Special Sections

From April 2020 to March 2021, Protocol-III and Protocol (Housing) Section facilitated movement of HOMs and Diplomats for smooth functioning of all Foreign Representations resident in New Delhi, including liaising for requisite clearances for departure of diplomats. The Foreign representations were duly informed and regularly sensitized regarding Circulars/Orders/Guidelines issued by various Ministries (pertaining to various aspects such as travel/visa restrictions, medical facilities, changing lockdown guidelines etc.) of Government of India in view of Covid-19 pandemic. A briefing was organised for resident Heads of Missions and diplomatic community on development of Covid-19 vaccine by India.

It also provide permission to foreign diplomats for enrolment in Indian Universities; security arrangement for foreign representations and their residences in India; privileges and immunities to international organisations recognised under Article 3 of United Nations (Privileges & Immunities) Act, 1947; and issues related to tax exemptions on the principle of reciprocity; forwarding of court summons issued by various courts in

respect of diplomats/officials and diplomatic missions in India and processing requests of purchase/registration/sale of motor vehicles & custom duty-free imports.

Protocol-III performs the following regular work:

- Arrange Credential Ceremony in Rashtrapati Bhawan, where incoming Heads of Missions handover their Credential papers to Hon'ble President of India.
- Provides Protocol facilities to Heads of Missions on their first arrival and final departure.
- Gives approval for establishing new Consulates General, Deputy High Commissions, Trade Offices, and Cultural Centres.
- Processes permanent Airport Entry passes every year with respect to foreign diplomatic missions/posts in India subject to reciprocity, which is determined after obtaining and scrutinising inputs from all our missions/posts abroad.

- Appointment of Honorary Consuls, Consul Generals, Deputy High Commissioners (Head of Posts for Commonwealth countries) of foreign countries and preparing Ex-equaturs/Gazette Notification thereafter.
 - Processes approval regarding awards given by foreign countries to Indian Officials.
 - Forwarding messages from VVIP (President, Vice President, Prime Minister, EAM) to Heads of States and Heads of Government of foreign countries. Onward transmission of messages from Heads of States and Heads of Government of foreign countries to President, Vice President, Prime Minister, EAM and Government of India Officials.
- Facilitates Heads of Missions and diplomats (wherever applicable) during Republic Day, Independence Day, Joint Session of Parliament, Swearing-in Ceremony of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, Yoga Day etc.
 - Courtesy requests by HOM/HOPs and other official work entrusted.
 - Arranges Chief Guest for National Days of foreign countries celebrated by foreign missions in India and ensuring protocol guidelines are maintained in the venue.
- See Annexure-II for details.

Protocol Housing Section

Protocol Housing section is responsible for the maintenance of upkeep of the Hyderabad House in cooperation with the Horticulture, Civil and Electrical wings of CPWD. This includes repair and maintenance works of Electrical/Civil/ Horticulture.

In addition, this section also handles processing of payment to ITDC on account of their administrative, management and operational expenditure; matters relating to purchase/ sale/ allotment of land, built up property, lease etc. in respect of all diplomatic Missions and international organisations in Delhi which involves communication with State Governments for land allotment, signing of perpetual lease deed etc; disputes/ court cases between landlords and diplomatic missions in Delhi and other states; Civic issues of the Missions were taken up on priority with local agencies like NDMC, DDA, MCD, Jal Board, MTNL, Electricity Board etc and most of the issues are resolved; running and operation of the VVIP Receptor at Air Force Station, Palam with the help of Military Engineering Services (MES) and CPWD and assisting the diplomatic Missions regarding services like NDMC, MCD, DDA, MTNL etc.

Further, for the last few years, this section has also been co-ordinating with various stakeholders on the upcoming second Diplomatic Enclave Project in Dwarka, New Delhi. A total of 85-acre land is available for allotment to Foreign Missions which require land in New Delhi. They need to send their realistic requirements and possible land use.

List of Resident Missions/ Trade offices/ Consulate Generals/Deputy High Commissions/ Honorary Consuls approved from 01 April 2020 to 31 January 2021

- Resident Missions: Nauru, Saint Vincent, and Grenadines
- Consulate Generals/ Deputy High Commissions:

1	Chile	Mumbai
2	Italy	Mumbai
3	Australia	Kolkata
4	UAE	Mumbai
5	Australia	Mumbai
6	Israel	Mumbai
7	Bangladesh	Agartala
8	Afghanistan	Hyderabad
9	France	Puducherry
	TRADE OFFICERS: NIL	
	CULTURAL CENTRE: NIL	

Honorary Consulates General/ Honorary Consulates:

1	Mexico	GOA
2	Kazakhstan	Kolkata
3	Luxembourg	Chennai
4	Austria	Hyderabad
5	Poland	Bengaluru
6	Serbia	Bengaluru
7	Mozambique	Chennai
8	Saint Vincent and Grenadines	New Delhi
9	Maldives	Kolkata
10	Tanzania	Chennai
11	Maldives	Mumbai
12	Israel	Guwahati
13	Mongolia	Mumbai
14	Lesotho	Hyderabad
15	Morocco	Mumbai
16	Morocco	Kolkata

From 01 April 2019 to 11 January 2021, 53 new posts have been created in Foreign Diplomatic Missions in India. The details of 53 new posts are given in the table below:

1	APRIL	10
2	MAY	2
3	JUNE	2
4	JULY	4
5	AUGUST	5
6	SEPTEMBER	2
7	OCTOBER	7
8	NOVEMBER	13
9	DECEMBER	7
10	JANUARY (UPTO 11.01.2021)	1
	TOTAL	53

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EXTERNAL PUBLICITY & PUBLIC DIPLOMACY DIVISION



External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division continued with its efforts to effectively articulate India's position on key foreign policy issues in accordance with its mandate. Simultaneously, pro-active efforts to project the 'India Story' and other notable achievements of the country to an

international audience continued apace. While the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic presented their own set of challenges, with the creative use of virtual platforms, the Division was able to maintain the momentum of its activities during the year.

Engagement with the Media

Press Coverage

Due to Covid-19 induced lockdown and thereafter restrictions on movement of people between countries, not many visits took place during the period. However, Covid-19 resulted in a lot of interactions through virtual platforms, including at the Summit level which were covered by Division and due publicity given to the events.

Some prominent virtual events covered by XPD Division during the period include Prime Minister's virtual Summit with Prime Minister of Australia in June 2020, India-EU Summit held virtually in July 2020, virtual Summit with Denmark PM, India-Sri Lanka Summit at Prime Ministers' level and Special Keynote Address by Prime Minister at the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum in September 2020. In November 2020, Prime Minister's engagement included virtual Summit with Italy's Prime

Minister, 20th Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State, launch of Rupay Card Phase II virtually along with PM of Bhutan, 17th ASEAN-India Summit, 12th BRICS Summit, India-Luxembourg virtual Summit and 15th G20 Leaders Summit. In December 2020, Prime Minister held a virtual Summit with the President of Uzbekistan, Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Prime Minister of Vietnam.

EAM's notable engagements included the BRICS Foreign Ministers' virtual meeting in April 2020, SCO Foreign Ministers virtual meeting in May 2020, virtual meeting with the US Special Representative on Afghanistan Reconciliation. India-France and India-Germany Foreign Office Consultations were held at EAM level in June 2020 virtually, which were duly covered. Launch of India's candidature for the UNSC elected seat, India-Spain and

India-US Foreign Office Consultations were attended virtually by EAM in July 2020. 17th India Vietnam Joint Commission Meeting, India-UAE Joint Commission Meeting, IBSA Sherpa meeting were held virtually in August 2020. EAM's engagement in September included CICA Virtual meeting, IBSA ministerial meeting, ASEAN-India Ministerial meeting, ARF Foreign Ministers meeting, EAS Foreign Ministers meeting, BRICS Foreign Ministers Video Conference, G20 Foreign Ministers virtual meeting, India-Argentina and India-Palestine Foreign Office Consultations. India-Mexico Joint Commission Meeting, India-Central Asia Dialogue, 7th India EU Foreign Policy & Security Consultations, India-Chile Joint Commission Meeting, India-Norway Joint Commission Meeting, 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers Strategic Dialogue, 2nd India Australia Japan USA Ministerial Meeting and India Myanmar Foreign Office Consultations were all held virtually in October 2020. In November 2020, EAM participated in India-GCC political dia-

logue, 4th India-Philippines Joint Commission, virtual meeting with his Brazilian counterpart, and representing India in 15th East Asia Summit. EAM had virtual meetings with Foreign Ministers of Oman and Spain and also co-chaired India Mongolia Joint Committee on Cooperation, in December 2020. All these events were duly publicised and media coverage was ensured.

EAM visited Moscow for the SCO Ministerial meeting and Japan in September 2020. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman, High Commission for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan visited India in October 2020 and India-US 2+2 Dialogue was also held in October 2020. EAM visited Bahrain, UAE and Seychelles in November 2020 and in December 2020 hosted the UK's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Commonwealth and Development Affairs apart from visiting Qatar. All these events were also publicized by the Division.

Professional Training Courses

XPD Division organised a training module on social media for all Heads of Mission and Posts in October 2020. This module

was conducted virtually in four sessions.

Digital outreach

MEA Website

MEA's website www.mea.gov.in communicates India's stand on her foreign policy and foreign relations including bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral relations. The website is bilingual, user friendly, scalable, flexible, consistent and compliant to standard specifications. MEA website serves as a single stop for information on MEA's announcements, India's foreign policy and foreign relations, service rendered by MEA and its affiliated organizations, links to important Government websites, information on all Missions/Posts and links to their websites, Public Diplomacy outreach (multimedia content), information

on important events like Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas, Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, International Day of Yoga etc., all outgoing and incoming visits at the level of President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, India Treaties Database etc. MEA website is also accessible to visually and hearing impaired. Since its formal launch in September 2012 the web portal has registered more than 55 million hits with more than 4.8 million hits since January 2020. Mobile app of the Ministry (MeaIndia) is also available in Android and iOS platforms.

Social Media Platforms

MEA has been a pioneer in GoI to embrace a robust social media presence and digital identity with a consistently growing number of followers across platforms.

a. MEA has a total of 3.6 million followers on Twitter with @MEAIIndia having 2.1 million followers and @IndianDiplomacy having 1.5 million followers, adding approximately 200,000 followers since 2019-20. Mission and Posts have also continued to increase engagement with the diaspora and the local population in the host country through actively using social media platforms. Today around 189 Indian Missions/Posts have a presence on Twitter and 185 Missions/Posts have presence on Facebook and around 73 Missions have a presence on Instagram with more being encouraged to join the platform. This all-round digital outreach by the Ministry has enabled faster, direct and accurate dissemination of information on the Ministry and Mission/Posts' activities to an audience not just in India but all across the world.

b. Twitter is a critical medium for immediate dissemination of significant information for the Ministry. @MEAIIndia is now the third most followed handle among all MOFAs across the world. The platform is used to tweet updates on India's foreign relations. During bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral engagements Twitter is updated on a real-time basis. Both twitter handles have used multimedia content which has increased their reach and impact.

c. MEA's YouTube channels - The Division manages two YouTube channels for the Ministry; MEA India channel has a total of 1,00,000 subscribers, Indian Diplomacy channel has 121,000 subscribers as of November 2020, with a combined view count of over 27 million views across both channels, an increase of more than 27% over last year.

d. MEA has made a phenomenal increase in its followership on Instagram which is a visual-rich platform. With a growth of

What's New in Missions

EMBASSY OF INDIA ORGANIZES "FLAVOURS OF INDIA" FOOD FESTIVAL (Guatemala) ... February 13, 2021

Statement by India at the 29th Special Session of Human Rights Council on the human r... February 12, 2021

10th Chartered Flight for repatriation of Indian nationals from Brunei to India on 12... February 12, 2021

View All

Indian Missions Abroad

Brief on Foreign Relations

CPV Division

PSP Division

A-to-Z Indian Missions

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- Important links
- > 1 Year of Modi 2.0
 - > List of countries in which development grant projects are undertaken w.r.t. Order (Public Procurement No. 2) dated 23 July 2020
 - > List of Countries to which LoC has been extended w.r.t. Order (Public Procurement no. 2) dated 23 July 2020
 - > WEBSITE ON COVID-19 for the SAARC REGION
 - > India's Diplomatic Journey 2014-18 "Unprecedented Outreach Unparalleled Outcomes"
 - > Prime Minister's National Relief Fund
 - > Indian Treaties Database
 - > Youth and Education
 - > MEA Media Campaigns
 - > National Voters' Service Portal
 - > Project Preparation Facility (PPF) for Lines of Credit
 - > Revised Guidelines for Lines of Credit
 - > Emergency numbers : Indian Missions/Posts
 - > 24/7 Help-lines in Gulf Countries & Malaysia
 - > Migrant Resource Centres Kochi, Hyderabad, Gurgaon, Chennai and Lucknow
 - > NGOs and Law Firms to assist Distressed Indians in Foreign Countries
 - > Recruitment - Consultants for PMU
 - > Japanese Language Teachers' Training Centre
 - > Atal Bhashan Yojana
 - > India-Afghanistan - A Historic and Time Tested Friendship
 - > Draft Emigration Bill, 2019
 - > Announcing the Opening of the 2020-2021 Fulbright Fellowship Application Season
 - > Hindi at United Nations
 - > Common Terms and Uses in the Ministry of External Affairs

31% over last year, MEA now has a followership of approximately 523,000 followers. Its popularity is increasing among the young, with content especially curated for that segment of the population.

e. MEA Flickr account (MEAphtogallery) continues to serve as a repository of photos for all of MEA's major events, in India and abroad, with a photo bank of 42,417 HD photos as of November 2020.

f. Ministry's SoundCloud account (MEAIndia) is a useful audio clip database for accessing audio clips of all media briefings. Video Clips of all media briefings are also uploaded on YouTube.

g. MEA has also registered a significant growth in the number of followers on LinkedIn with a total of 25,280 followers over last year, an increase of 620%.

h. The Ministry has also been proactive in marking important

occasions across social media platforms such as the 151st birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, International Day of Yoga, 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji etc. The Ministry has also publicized Gol's efforts in combating the Covid-19 pandemic as well as India's assistance to friendly countries in their battle against the pandemic.

i. In the wake of the pandemic, the Ministry and its Missions/ Posts have particularly leveraged the power of digital when physical gatherings have had to be avoided. It has been ensured that Indian community outreach, outreach with our interlocutors and promotion of India's soft power continues uninterrupted even in challenging conditions.

The popularity and success of MEA's efforts in expanding digital outreach and branding itself as a 'digitally forward' Ministry is demonstrated by the continuous growth of its followers across social media platforms.

Visual Outreach – Films and Documentaries

XPD Division commissions documentary films and videos projecting a positive image of India abroad. These documentaries are uploaded on MEA's YouTube channel "Indian Diplomacy" for wider social outreach. In 2020-21, around 10 documentary films/ publicity videos were commissioned by the Division to mark events like the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, Gandhi @150 celebrations, India's development cooperation, India's role in UN peacekeeping missions etc. In addition to that, the Division also commissioned a number of short videos for use on social media platforms on themes like India's response to Covid-19 pandemic, on socio-economic development in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (J&K: Marching Ahead) etc. Division has procured eight titles of Indian classical (instrumental & vocal) music cards for use by our Missions/Posts for presentation/publicity purposes.

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Public Outreach

Due to the disruptions caused by Covid-19 pandemic, public outreach through hardcopy publications had to be discontinued temporarily. The Division commissioned eBooks to showcase significant events and activities during 2020 such as 'A New Dawn' on the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir;

India: A Constructive and Dependable Actor Globally; Life in Era of Covid, India @75. In addition to these, the Division is bringing out an updated edition of 'What Gandhi Means to Me: An Anthology' which was released in 2019 to commemorate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

Books and Periodicals

Book Committee

The Book Committee which was established in 2003 as a public diplomacy tool to select books for the Missions' library as well as for presentation purposes held its 42nd meeting in November 2020. The 42nd Book Committee selected titles from categories such as Indian Classics, Foreign Policy & Affairs, Technology & Popular Science, Hindi & Sanskrit, Art & Culture. An online portal has been created for seamless processing of requests from Missions and Posts and this portal continues to be extensively utilised by them to upload their demands.

India Perspective

The bimonthly flagship magazine of the Ministry is now available in a digital format in 16 languages. The web version of the magazine allows customisation of the content and option to download and electronically disseminate it through social media by the Missions and Posts. The magazine covers selective themes such as partnership, life & style, innovation & institutions, economy and sports, tour & travel etc. It can be read online at www.indiaperspectives.gov.in and www.mea.gov.in.



ADMINISTRATION, ESTABLISHMENT, AND RIGHT TO INFORMATION

Administration

The main responsibility of the Administration division in the Ministry is to provide manpower resources both at Headquarters and in 197 Indian Missions/Posts, and 3 Representative Offices. In this regard, the division oversees cadre management exercises which involve recruitment, training, postings/transfers, deputations and career progression among others.

In addition, the Division also deals with formulation, amendments, and reforms of all the relevant rules and regulations relating to Indian personnel posted abroad and local employees serving in Indian Missions and Posts.

The division is also responsible for vacancies in headquarters and announced them through intranet for Officers to exercise their choice, thus bringing in more openness to the deployments.

The Division actively utilised technological tools such as the e-Samiksha portal, an online interface between Headquarters and the Missions/Posts as an effective platform for idea-exchange, digitised procedures, information gathering and effective monitoring of func-

tional areas of Missions/Posts. Efforts are also underway in digitising administrative procedures including leave, pension processes etc.

In pursuance of the Cabinet approval in March 2018 for the opening of 18 new Missions in Africa during 2018-21, the opening of six Missions in the first phase – Rwanda, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso and Guinea and three Missions in the second phase - Eswatini, Eritrea and Cameroon - was completed. Between June, 2019 and September, 2020, six more Missions were opened in three phases – Sierra Leone, Sao Tome & Principe, Liberia, Republic of Togo, Republic of Chad and Mauritania. Preparatory administrative and establishment related measures were initiated towards setting up of new Missions in Cape Verde, Guinea Bissau and Somalia. Cabinet has recently accorded approval to open three new Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic.

The current sanctioned strength of the Ministry is 4297 (Annexure VI) with around 53% of these posts being in Missions and Posts abroad. The total strength is distributed across different cadres of the Ministry such as the IFS, IFS General Cadre Branch B, Stenographers

Cadre, Interpreters Cadre, Legal & Treaties Cadre, among others. As part of cadre management, the Ministry augmented its manpower by recruiting personnel at various levels through Direct Recruitment (DR) and Departmental Promotions (DP) in the Recruitment Year 2018-19.

The Ministry focused due attention to training of all its cadres along with specialized modules on economic diplomacy, international law,

Establishment

In continuation of its activities under Swachh Bharat Mission, ED organised "Swachhta Pakhwada" as well as Shramdan in all its various offices in India and in Missions/Posts abroad.

Besides, various Missions/ Posts abroad were also provided with essential medicines and medical equipment to be used by Indian national keeping in view the shortage of such materials locally. SPM Section in ED procured and supplied various essential items like rubber stamp, Godrej safe, padlocks, khadi/silk Indian national flags, etc. through GeM Portal to various Missions/Posts abroad. In accordance with the provision provided under GFR, tender for supply of crockeries, cutlery, and kitchen utensils for residences of HOMs/HOPs in Missions/ Posts abroad was undertaken during the year. Toshakhana Section is in the process of e-Auctioning of the gift items received by various dignitaries from foreign sources. In this regard, an e-Portal is being developed by NIC for the e-Auctioning of gift items.

Establishment Division also operates three departmental pantries in JNB, South Block and Patiala House and two outsourced canteens at JNB and South Block and two pantries at Shastri Bhawan and Akbar Bhawan.

During the reporting period more than thirty proposals for replacement/purchase of official vehicles were received from the Missions/Posts abroad out of which around 12 proposals were sanctioned by the Ministry.

Global Estate Management (GEM)

The Global Estate Management Division actively pursued acquisition, construction and renovation of properties for Indian diplomatic Missions/Posts abroad. An initiative to augment the available residential accommodation in New Delhi for officers of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was taken, with a view to effectively address the exist-

ing shortfall in availability of such accommodation and to meet the enhanced future housing requirements of MEA.

Acquisition of properties was pursued in Tehran (Annex to Chancery), Paramaribo (land for Chancery & Residences) and Abidjan (land for Chancery, Ambassador's Residence and other Residences). The Delhi Development Authority allotted 50 flats located at the Commonwealth Games Village Complex, New Delhi, to MEA, proposed to be used as residential accommodation for MEA officers. MEA took formal possession of the plot of land in New Delhi, measuring approx. 2.5 acres, allotted by the Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs, for construction of an additional office of MEA.

Construction projects proceeded at a fast pace and the projects nearing completion include Khartoum (Chancery and Staff Residences), Port of Spain (Cultural Centre), Bangkok (Ambassador's Residence & Residences), Islamabad (Residential Complex) and Kathmandu (Chancery and Residential Complex). Substantial progress was made in respect of construction projects at Kabul (Residences), Wellington (Chancery and Residences) and Phuentsholing (Chancery and Residences). Construction projects at Brunei Darussalam (Chancery, Ambassador's Residence and Staff Residences) and Geneva (Chancery) moved forward from the design stage to the construction stage.

Notable achievements on the renovation front include completion of major renovations at Dar-es-Salaam (Ambassador's Residence), Harare (Ambassador's Residence), Yangon (India Centre) and Helsinki (Residences). Major renovations were completed at the Regional Passport Office building in Hyderabad which increased the effective available space and allowed other offices of MEA viz. Branch Secretariat, ICCR Regional Office and Protector of Emigrants to be accommodated within the same premises.

Personnel & Training (DOP&T) on Suo—motu disclosure, uploading of RTI applications/appeals/responses & monthly RTI figures on public domain has been implemented.

All Central Information Commission (CIC) hearings have been attended to by the concerned Central Public Information officers (CPIOs) and a representative of the RTI Cell. Quarterly return has been filed with CIC as required, on schedule.

In collaboration with 'Sushma Swaraj Insitute of Foreign Service', implementation of online suo moto disclosure (transparency audit) by all the CPIOs in the Ministry in a time bound manner, as per the instructions of CIC, has been commenced.

Right to Information (RTI)

RTI Cell conducts all matters related to the implementation of Right to Information Act 2005 in the ministry. From April to October 2020, a total of 1570 RTI applications and 183 First Appeals seeking information under the RTI Act 2005 have been received and have been disposed of satisfactorily. Applications, in general, covered subjects such as foreign relations, administrative issues, bilateral visits, Namaste Trump event, Covid-19 pandemic, Vande Bharat Flights and expenditure incurred on the same.

The system of online acceptance & disposal of RTI applications has been implemented in 192 Missions/Posts abroad by aligning them with the RTI web portal.

During the pandemic, in keeping with instructions of Department of

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IMPLEMENTATION OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGE POLICY

For the Ministry to promote and implement the Official Language Policy of the Government of India has always been a topmost priority. As a result of consistent effort made by the Ministry through its Missions, Hindi is now being taught in the territorial jurisdiction of more than 70 Missions and Posts.

Since 2008, the division has set up 'World Hindi Secretariat' in Mauritius under a bilateral agreement with the Government of Mauritius, with the objective to promote Hindi worldwide. The Budget of the World Hindi Secretariat is shared equally by both the countries.

The Ministry extended financial support to Missions/Posts abroad to engage teachers to conduct Hindi classes. In addition, teaching material and books were also provided through our Missions for organising Hindi classes.

On 10 October 2020, 1st Sub-Committee of the Parliament on Official Language carried out an inspection on the progressive use of Hindi in official work of the Ministry and suggested ways for improvement.

Hindi Pakhwada was organised in the Ministry which saw considerable participation despite prevailing conditions of Covid-19. Secretary, Department of Official Language, graced the occasion with his presence during one of the competitions.

MEA was recognised for outstanding work in the translation competition held through 'KANTHASTH' organised by the Department of Official Language, Ministry of Home Affairs.

Atal Bhashantar Yojana (ABY) has been instituted by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for training language experts towards creating a pool of 'Specialised Interpreters' for interpretation to and from Hindi language in Arabic, Chinese, French, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

Under this Yojana, three candidates of the first batch, one each in Arabic, Chinese and Russian, have already been sent to the Universities in USA for pursuing the Post-Graduation program in Interpretation and Translation. They have completed their first year and have now proceeded to the 2nd and final year of their training programme.

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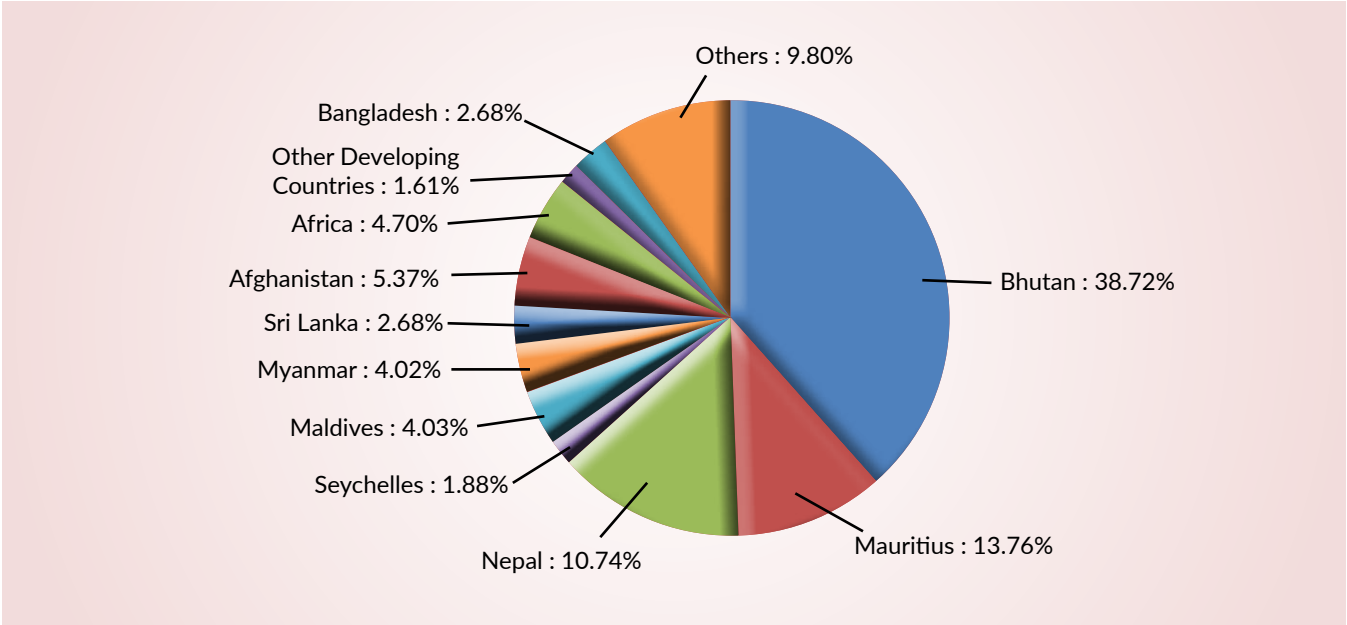
FINANCE AND BUDGET

The total budget allocated to the Ministry for the Financial Year (FY) 2020-21 is Rs. 17,346.71 crores in the Budget Estimates (BE) stage. The budget's sectoral distribution for major allocations is given below:

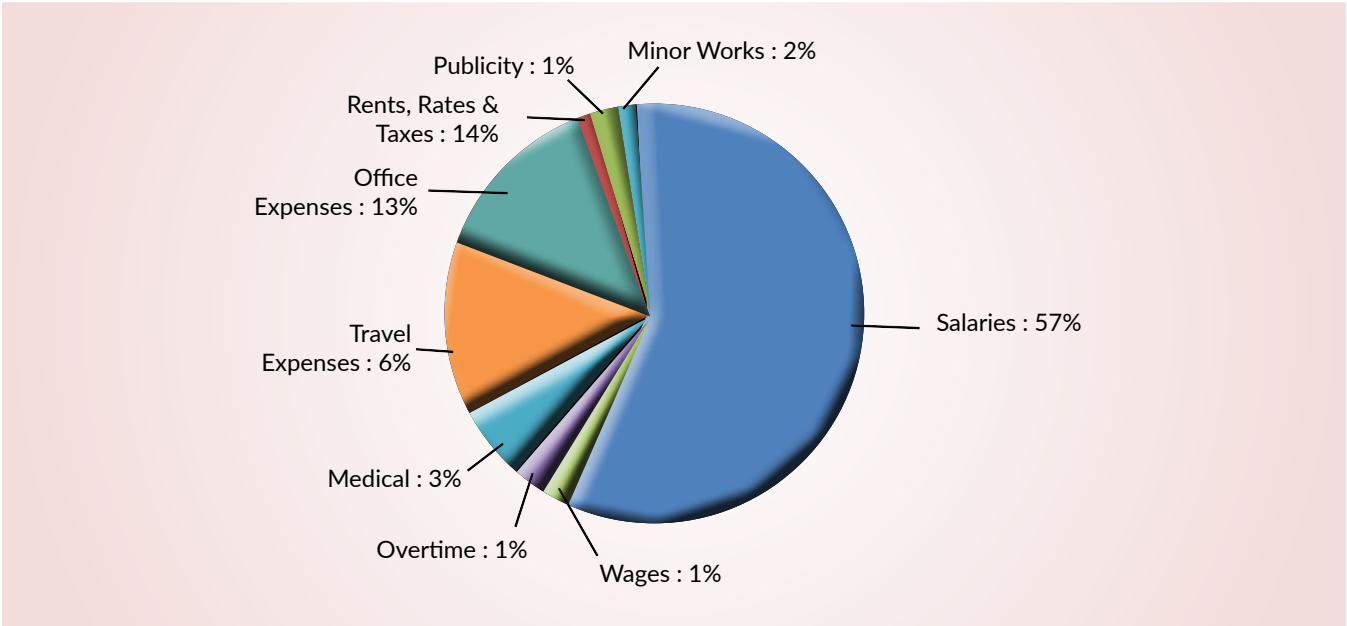
Sector		Allocation (In Rs. Crores)
Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) with foreign countries	Grants	6617.37
	Loans	832.28
	Total TEC	7449.65
Indian Missions and Posts abroad		2994.06
Special Diplomatic Expenditure		2800.01
Passport and Emigration		1348.59
International Cooperation		1084.56
Capital Outlay on Public Works and Housing		500.00
MEA Secretariat		520.96
Assistance to Autonomous Bodies and Other Institutions		323.72
Others		325.16
Total BE for FY 2020-21		17,346.71

The largest allocation in the Ministry's budget is for Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) with foreign countries through assistance as grants and loans. In FY 2020-21, of the total budget of Rs. 17,346.71 crores, the TEC outlay is 42.95% or Rs. 7449.65 crores, of which Rs. 6617.37 crores (38.15%) is for grant programmes and Rs. 832.28 crores (4.80 %) is for loans.

Technical and Economic Cooperation (TEC) Heads		Allocation (In Rs. Crore)	% of Total TEC Allocation
Aid to Bangladesh		200.00	2.68%
Bhutan	Grant	2052.37	38.72%
	Loan	832.28	
	Total Bhutan	2884.65	
Aid to Nepal		800.00	10.74%
Aid to Mauritius		1025.00	13.76%
Aid to Afghanistan		400.00	5.37%
Aid to Seychelles		140.00	1.88%
Aid to Myanmar		300.00	4.02%
ITEC Programme		220.00	2.95%
Aid to African Countries		350.00	4.70%
Aid to Sri Lanka		200.00	2.68%
Chahbahar Port, Iran		100.00	1.34%
Aid to Maldives		300.00	4.03%
Aid to Other Developing Countries		120.00	1.61%
Investment Publicity & Promotion Programme		250.00	3.36%
Indo-Pacific Cooperation		45.00	0.60%
Aid to Eurasian Countries		45.00	0.60%
Multilateral Economic Relations Programme		20.00	0.27%
Aid to Latin American Countries		20.00	0.27%
Aid for Disaster Relief		20.00	0.27%
SAARC Programmes		8.00	0.11%
Aid to Mongolia		2.00	0.03%
Total		7449.65	



The second-largest allocation in the Ministry's budget is for maintenance of the more than 190 Indian diplomatic Missions and Posts abroad. In FY 2020-21, the allocation for all Missions and Posts together is 17.26% or Rs. 2994.06 crores of the total budget of the Ministry, the head-wise distribution (percentage-wise) of which is given below:



Of the total budget for FY 2020-21 of Rs. 17,346.71 crores, the bifurcation of allocations between establishment heads and non-establishment heads is 28% (Rs. 4890 crores) and 72% (Rs. 12457 crores) 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:

FY	BE Allocation	RE Allocation	Actual Expenditure	Utilization as % of BE	Utilization as % of RE
	In Rupees Crores; Rounded Off				
2010-11	6375	7120	7154	112 %	100 %
2011-12	7106	7836	7873	111 %	100 %
2012-13	9662	10062	10121	105 %	100 %
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%

The Ministry has revenue receipts of Rs. 758.14 crores till 31 October 2020 in FY 2020-21, from passport services (Rs. 583.56 cr), visa fees (Rs. 24.85 cr) and other receipts (Rs. 149.73 cr). The revenue receipt for the last 5 financial years from FY 2016-2017 to FY 2020-2021 is given below:

Year	Heads	Amount	Percentage
2016-17	Passport	2285.85	45%
	Visa	2018.04	40%
	Others	717.07	14%
	Total	5020.96	
2017-18	Passport	2479.08	47%
	Visa	2152.15	41%
	Others	668.38	12%
	Total	5299.61	
2018-19	Passport	2679.75	44%
	Visa	2688.9	44%
	Others	680.06	11%
	Total	6048.71	
2019-20	Passport	2522.71	49%
	Visa	1792.11	35%
	Others	856.16	17%
	Total	5170.98	
2020-21 (*figures upto 31 Oct 2020)	Passport	583.56	77%
	Visa	24.85	3%
	Others	149.73	20%
	Total	758.14	

In January 2019, the Ministry had only 1 Para pending from Report No.12 of 2017 of the Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG). 4 more paras were included in C&AG's Report No.6 of 2020. The status of submission of Action Taken Notes (ATNs) for these five paras is given below:

Year	C&AG Report	Total No. of Paras	Final ATNs Submitted	ATNs Under Process
2017	Report No.12 of 2017	4	3	1
2018	Report No.4 of 2018	5	5	Nil
2019	No Report generated by C&AG for MEA	-	-	-
2020	Report No.6 of 2020	4	Nil	3
Total		13	8	4

The details and status of these C&AG Paras are as below:

C&AG Report No.	Para No.	Subject	Status
12 of 2017	9.3	Receipts and Expenditure outside Government account in Eol Tokyo	The PAC process for this para started even before the C&AG process could be complete. In its hearing on 13 Oct 2017, the Hon'ble Members of the PAC instructed the Ministry to carry out their recommendations on various aspects of this Para. The same was carried out and thereafter, to fulfil the requirements of the C&AG process, the First ATN was submitted to C&AG on 03 Dec 2019 which was vetted by Audit on 29 Jan 2020. Revised Draft ATN submitted on 24 July 2020 was vetted by Audit on 26 August 2020. Final ATN is under preparation by the Ministry.
6 of 2020	8.1	Delay in Establishment of SAARC Museum of Textiles and Handicrafts	Draft ATN is under preparation by the Ministry
	8.2	Incorrect adoption of Exchange Rate by HCI Wellington resulting in less collection of revenue	Draft ATN submitted. Vetted comments awaited from Audit.
	8.3	Excess expenditure on Speed Post services of Rs.4.11 crore by RPOs	Draft ATN is under preparation by the Ministry.
8.4		Incorrect adoption of overhead rates and cess/taxes resulting in extra cost by Nalanda University	Draft ATN is under preparation by the Ministry.

PAC Paras

Year	PAC Report No	Total No of Paras	ATRs Submitted	ATRs Due	Remarks
2018	PAC Report No. 112	7	7	-	Final ATRs submitted. Paras settled.
2020	PAC Report No.17	3	Nil	3	ATRs under preparation by the Ministry.

Details and status of Outstanding PAC paras are as under:

Lok Sabha No.	Report No.	Para No.	Subject	Status
17	17	12	Committee's observations on Action Taken by the Ministry on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their 112 th Report (16 th Lok Sabha) on "Incorrect Adoption of Exchange Rate in Ottawa and its Consulates" as contained in C&AG Report No.11 of 2016 Chapter VII Para 7.1 [The Committee reiterated that (i) action be taken against those responsible for not adhering to stipulated rules and guidelines, (ii) basic/refresher training may be imparted to all Mission staff, and (iii) a review may be carried out of all Missions to check that such errors are not occurring. Ministry may furnish specific data on real-time monitoring of such issues since the integration of passport issuance project.]	Draft Action Taken Report (ATR) is under preparation by PSP Division
		17	Committee's observations on Action Taken by the Ministry on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their 112 th Report (16 th Lok Sabha) on "Undue benefit to the Service Provider by the HCI London" as contained in C&AG Report No.11 of 2016 Chapter VII Para 7.2 [The Committee desire to be apprised of the detailed findings of the enquiry team led by the CVO MEA, the recommendations made by the team and the status of implementation thereof. The recommendations of the inspecting team be considered and implemented within a fixed time frame].	Draft Action Taken Report (ATR) is under preparation by CPV Division
		22	Committee's observations on Action Taken by the Ministry on the Observations/ Recommendations of the Committee contained in their 112 th Report (16 th Lok Sabha) on "Incorrect Adoption of Exchange Rate in Ottawa and its Consulates" as contained in C&AG Report No.11 of 2016 Chapter VII Para 7.1 [The Committee would like to be apprised of the details of the Global Passport Seva Project as well as the resultant impact on monitoring and real time reporting. The Committee would also like to know if the implementation of this project specifically addresses the concerns raised by them in earlier recommendation].	Draft Action Taken Report (ATR) is under preparation by PSP Division

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PARLIAMENT AND COORDINATION DIVISION

Parliament Section

The endeavour of the Ministry has been to ensure effective and timely response to the issues raised by Parliament including assistance on issues related to Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Exchange Programme, Parliamentary Friendship Groups etc. Parliament Section is the interface and the focal point for all Parliament related work of the Ministry.



EAM chaired Consultative Committee Meeting on 'India's Global Strategy' on 16 January 2021



EAM participated in Lok Sabha during the Budget Session 2020

During January-December 2020, the Parliamentary Standing Committee on External Affairs held 17 meetings on the following subjects:

- i. Anti-Maritime Piracy Bill 2019
- ii. Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill 2019
- iii. Demand for Grants for the year 2020-21
- iv. Covid-19 Pandemic – Global Response, India's Contribution and the Way Forward
- v. India's Soft power and Cultural Diplomacy: Prospects and Limitations
- vi. India and International Law, including its Extradition Treaties with foreign countries, asylum issues, international cybersecurity and issues of financial crimes
- vii. India and Bilateral Investment Treaties
- viii. India's Neighbourhood First Policy.

On 18 January 2020, EAM chaired the Consultative Committee Meeting on 'India's Neighborhood First Policy' highlighting India's consultative, non-reciprocal and outcome-oriented approach of engagement.

On 16 January 2021, EAM Chaired the first Consultative Committee Meeting of the year 2021 on 'India's Global Strategy'.

During the Budget Session of Parliament, 128 Questions were admitted and replied. During Zero Hour, under Rule 377 and Special mention, 40 matters of public importance were replied to.

Whereas during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, 57 Questions were admitted and replied to and responses on 10 issues of urgent public importance were raised during Zero Hour and under Rule 377.

Coordination Section

The Coordination Section effectively carries out interaction between the Ministry and other Government of India Ministries, State Governments / Union Territories, autonomous bodies and private institutions, including NGOs.

This section coordinates Ministry's responses to the Cabinet Secretariat's Portal and Ministry's participation in Prime Minister's PRAGATI video-conference on grievance redressal and review of programmes and projects.

The Division also coordinates work relating to various awards including Padma Awards, Gandhi Peace Prize, Tagore Award, Presidential Award of Certificate of Honour to Scholars of Indian Classical Languages and Presidential Award for Classical Tamil.

Further, the Division streamlined the issuance of political clearance related to sports events.

Education Section

The Education Section continued its agenda of facilitating admission of foreign students in Indian educational institutions, and to create an environment for projecting India as a centre of excellence for the education of foreigners in India.

The Education Section deals with the selection, nomination and admission of foreign students from 57 countries for MBBS, BDS, MD/MS, B.Arch., BE, B. Pharmacy and Diploma courses in various educational institutions in India under the Self-Financing Scheme. Persecuted religious minority migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan based in India are also offered seats under the scheme. The Education Section also processes applications in respect of foreign students seeking direct admission to graduate and postgraduate courses

in Engineering, Medicine, Management and other professional courses including elective training/internship/research in various fields and thus coordinates with educational institutions and various organs of the government. Till November 2020, 16 seats were allotted for Engineering and Pharmacy courses and process for allocation of 42 seats for MBBS and BDS are under progress, 05 applicants were granted clearance for elective training, observerships & short-term training. This year due to Covid-19, international flights were not operational and as a result, there were few foreign students for elective training. 1831 applications of foreign students appearing in various postgraduate entrance examinations were processed and 67 foreign students were given admission at Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra.

Monitoring Cell

The Monitoring Cell has been mandated to coordinate the review of MOUs/Agreements signed with foreign countries by Ministries/Departments of Government of India from the angle of their continued relevance and status.

A total of 3178 MOUs/Agreements exist out of which 3038 MoUs/Agreements have been reviewed so far. It has been decided by Ministries/Departments to continue 2294 MoUs/

Agreements and discontinue 744 MoUs/Agreements. Out of 744 for discontinuation, 694 MoUs/Agreements have been examined by the Ministry while 50 are under process of examination. Out of 694 MOUs examined by the Ministry, it has been decided for the discontinuation of 602 MOUs while 92 have been recommended for continuation.

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CONFERENCE DIVISION

Conference Division (CD) provides all logistical arrangements to various Divisions of the Ministry of External Affairs in organising meetings/events/seminar/conferences including international & multilateral involvement of foreign Ministers/delegates in India and abroad. In view of specific nature of organising events involving protocol, security of delegates and highest degree of precision, CD has empanelled 08 Event Management Companies (EMCs). Selection of EMC for the event is done as per requirements of the concerned division of the Ministry.

During the period from 01 April 2020 to 31 October 2020, most of the scheduled events were postponed/cancelled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. CD however did provide all logistical support to the 2nd CCCS Seminar held at Delhi on 20-21 October 2020.

In addition, CD also acts as nodal agency for Sushma Swaraj Bhawan (SSB) (formerly PBK) which was inaugurated by the

Prime Minister on 02 October 2016. Since the inauguration of PBK, the President has attended 3 events, Vice President has attended 09 events and Prime Minister has attended 15 events as Guest of Honour. Further Prime Minister has also chaired 06 meetings of Council of Ministers at SSB. SSB continues to be a preferred venue for official events, seminars, conferences, conventions, workshops etc. organised by various Ministries/Departments and other government organisations. The year wise number of events held at SSB is given below:-

SN	Period	Number of Events
1	Oct 2016 to March 2017	45
2	April 2017 to March 2018	144
3	April 2018 to March 2019	210
4	April 2019 to March 2020	89
	TOTAL	488

The organisation wise total number of events held at SSB is as follows:

SN	Event organised by	Oct 2016 to March 2017	April 2017 to March 2018	April 2018 to March 2019	April 2019 to March 2020	TOTAL
1	Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)	23	69	89	23	204
2	Other Ministries/ Department	16	59	95	40	210
3	Other Government Organization	0	10	3	18	31
4	Other organization	6	6	23	8	43
	TOTAL	45	144	210	85	488

SSB is now undergoing upgradation/creation of facilities to serve as G20 Summit Secretariat with a working space for nearly 300 officers and is expected to be operational in due course.

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ARCHIVES

Archives & Record Management (ARM) Division of the Ministry deals with all the matters related to archives and record management. Upgradation of Record Management Software (REM), replacement of existing software and replacement of existing server with new server as well as old desktops which are being used for accessing data through the Record Management Software is being undertaken regularly. Upgradation of REM, replacement of existing software, and the replacement of existing computers with new computers is a process currently underway.

During the period, computer room, browsing room, compactor rooms, six compactors with 282 racks with files were cleaned by record sorters and all the files were packed in the boxes for shifting.

ARM Division of the Ministry is presently operating from two locations, namely from a few rooms in the third floor of the ISIL

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SUSHMA SWARAJ INSTITUTE OF
FOREIGN SERVICE

At campus, every year SSIFS execute several projects with regard to maintenance, renovation, upgradation and modernization of infrastructure and facilities at the

Cadre Training Programmes for Indian Foreign Service (IFS) Officers

Induction Training Programme

Thirty IFS OTs of the 2019 batch and two Bhutanese diplomats joined SSIFS for the six-month Induction Training Programme from 09 December 2019, which got extended beyond the stipulated six months period to 24 July 2020 on account of Covid-19 restrictions. The training programme of the OTs at SSIFS included modules on theories of international relations, foreign policy, bilateral relations with neighbouring countries and big powers, and multilateral organisations. It also included modules on finance, accounts, administration, establishment, consular work, passport and visa, international law, protocol, economic & commercial diplomacy, defence diplomacy, S&T,

Institute. Moreover, It conducts various kind of training programmes for IFS officers which are described below in details:

cyber security, domestic policy, health module, tourism, hospitality and media management. Soft power and communication skills were stressed upon. For effective dissemination of knowledge to trainees, experienced civil servants, retired Ambassadors, senior faculty and research fellows from various Ministries, institutions and think tanks were invited as resource persons. Additionally, SSIFS also invited Ambassadors/ High Commissioners of foreign countries (including from the P5 countries) to interact with the IFS OTs. The Canadian Foreign Service Institute (CFSI) also provided training on bilateral and multilateral negotiations to the OTs under the aegis of the MoU signed between SSIFS and CFSI.

Various innovative pedagogical approaches were adopted to



EAM interacts with IFS Officer Trainees of 2020 batch and Bhutanese Diplomats on 22 December 2020

train the IFS OTs and state-of-the-art Information Technology (IT) tools were used in conducting the training programme (both offline and online). The pedagogical tools included interactive lectures, simulations, role plays, workshops, hands-on training, case studies, success stories, structured mentoring programmes, interactions between foreign and Indian diplomats, field visits and exposure through various attachments.

The OTs had a week-long Mission Orientation Attachment from 03 to 07 February 2020 with Indian Missions under the Indo-Pacific framework viz. Indonesia, UAE & Vietnam, to familiarize themselves with the work of Indian Missions abroad. The OTs also had a one-week attachment with the Indian Army (09-13 March 2020) to build a better perspective about border management and interaction with army officers in the field. A 10-day long Bharat Darshan tour (15-23 March 2020) to acquaint them better with the rich cultural diversity, heritage and tourism potential of the country had to be curtailed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The OTs attended the Indian Ocean Dialogue (13 December 2019), Delhi Dialogue (14 December 2019) and Raisina Dialogue (15-16 January 2020) as delegates.

The OTs performed duties in the Control Room of the Ministry and were the frontline workers in dealing with MEA's Covid-19 related work. Specifically, they were assigned various countries/regions to answer queries from Indian citizens/NRIs/PIOs in those countries/regions, including for the Vande Bharat Mission flights. This provided the OTs with first-hand experience

of crisis management.

Starting with the IFS 2019 batch, SSIFS introduced a new system of objective and transparent assessment of OTs in line with the prescribed mandate. The year also witnessed the introduction of online courses in 'Cyber Security' from 11 February to 25 May 2020 conducted by the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University, Gandhinagar) and 'Rapid Reading' from 29 April to 01 May 2020 conducted virtually by Iris Reading, Chicago for the OTs.

To mark the conclusion of training of the 2019 batch of IFS OTs with SSIFS, a valedictory function was organised on 24 July 2020 which was presided over by EAM as Chief Guest. EAM's Gold Medal for the Best OT of the 2019 Batch, MoS Silver Medal for esprit de corps, Ambassador Bimal Sanyal Memorial Medal for the Best Dissertation, trophy for best committee (Cinema Committee) and trophies for Bhutanese diplomats were awarded on the occasion.

24 IFS OTs of the 2020 batch will begin their training at SSIFS on 21 December 2020. On completion of the Orientation Module in December 2020, Phase-I of the ITP covering International Relations (Bilateral and Multilateral), Defence and Security, Neighbourhood, Major Powers, Disarmament, Environment & Climate, Administration matters is scheduled to commence on 4 January 2021. The Induction Training will conclude on 18 June 2021.

Mid-Career Training Programme-III

A supplementary Mid-Career Training Programme-III for a 1994 batch IFS Officer was conducted from 05-09 October 2020. The training programme consisted of a Foreign Policy module and a paper on foreign policy.

Mid-Career Training Programme-I

A Mid-Career Training Programme-I (MCTP-I) for the 2008 batch IFS officers is being conducted online from 23 November to 04 December 2020. The training programme consisted of a Foreign Policy module, a foreign policy paper and book review on India's foreign policy.

Other Training Programmes

- Promotion related Training Programme for Interpreters' Cadre: A promotion-related training programme for seven officers of the Interpreters' Cadre of the Ministry was conducted by SSIFS through online mode from 06-17 April 2020. The training programme consisted of two elements - foreign policy module and interpretation module.
- Online Training Module for Heads of Missions/Posts on social media: A two-day training programme for Heads of Missions/Posts on social media was conducted by SSIFS in coordination with the External Publicity (XP) Division of the Ministry from 12-16 October 2020. The training programme was held virtually and the Missions/Posts actively participated in the programme.
- A one-week training programme for Officers from States and Union Territories is proposed to be conducted in collaboration with the States Division of the Ministry from 04 to 08 January 2021. The training programme aims at enhancing the capacity of the Officers of the States/Union Territories and provide them with necessary orientation, knowledge and professional skills to engage with the world so as to attract FDI, technology tie-ups, joint ventures, trade and tourism etc. for their respective States/UTs.

Non-Representational Grade Training Programmes for Branch B of IFS

- During the period under review, the following training courses were organised through webinar for training of Non-Representational Grade (NRG) officials:
- 76th IMAS (Integrated Mission Accounting System) Training Programme from 10-12 June 2020 attended by 88 participants.
 - IVFRT (Immigration, Visa, Foreigners' Registration & Tracking) Training Programme on 13 June 2020 attended by 51 participants.
 - Promotion related Training Programme for Assistant Section Officers (ASOs) and Personal Assistants (PAs) from 31 August - 04 September 2020 attended by 90 participants.
 - Half Yearly English Stenography Test for the Direct Recruit Personal Assistants and Stenographers on 09 September, 2020 attended by 19 participants.
 - IVFRT Training Programme from 14-15 September, 2020 attended by 54 participants.
 - Quarterly Typing Test for Direct Recruit Assistant Section Officers on 25 September 2020 attended by 04 participants.
 - Promotion related Training Programme for Senior Secretarial Assistants (SSAs), Junior Secretarial Assistants (JSAs) and Stenographers from 28 September - 05 October 2020 attended by 62 participants.
 - 77th IMAS Training Programme from 12-16 October 2020 attended by 83 participants. IVFRT Training Programme from 24-25 November, 2020 attended by 72 participants.
 - 78th IMAS Training Programme from 14-18 December 2020 attended by 66 participants.
 - Half Yearly English Stenography Test for the Direct Recruit Personal Assistants; Stenographers and Accounts Training Programme (in preparation for IMAS Training); 79th IMAS Training Programme were conducted in the first quarter of 2021.

Training programmes for Foreign Diplomats

SSIFS conducted following training programmes for Foreign Diplomats in 2020:

3rd special course for Syrian diplomats and 4th special course for Iraqi diplomats jointly held from 24 February - 07 March 2020 and attended by 14 Diplomats.

1st Special Course on Protocol for Surinamese Diplomats conducted online from 14-25 September 2020 which was attended by 19 Diplomats.

Sushma Swaraj Lectures 2020 on Introduction to India in association with India Foundation from 15-16 October 2020 (Part-I) and 19-20 November 2020 (Part-II) which was attended by 39 Diplomats.

Memoranda of Understanding

During 2020, SSIFS signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with the following foreign counterpart institutions:

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic on 14 February 2020.
- Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on 25 August 2020.
- Venancio Da Silva Moura Institute of International Relations, Ministry of External Relations, Republic of Angola on 07 September 2020.

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INDIAN COUNCIL FOR CULTURAL RELATIONS



Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) functions as the principal organ for soft and cultural diplomacy of the Government of India. It aims to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.

The council organises major webinars commemorating signif-

icant events, online celebration of ICCR's Foundation Day by various Regional Centres of the Council, poetry writing and essay writing competitions. Under its mega project, it initiated a dedicated web portal for providing knowledge capsules on Indian traditional knowledge and culture.

Achievements (2020-21)

It offered 3454 scholarships offered to foreign nationals to pursue UG / PG / MPhil / PhD level course in Indian Universities / Institutes from 131 countries under 26 schemes Against 3454 scholarship slots, 2617 admission have been confirmed.

During the pandemic, ICCR facilitated online classes through Universities / Institutes to more than 900 newly admitted students to avoid loss of their academic year.

Besides this, students interested in going back to their home countries were facilitated and about 503 students were evacuated over a period of two months i.e. from March to May 2020.

To promote Indian Studies and Indian languages abroad, ICCR in consultation with Indian Missions abroad, established Chairs of Indian Studies (Political Science, Philosophy, History, Sociology, Economics and Buddhist Studies) & Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, and Bengali (Dance & Music) in different foreign universities across the globe.

The Council establishes Chairs based on a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Council and the host University. As of October 2020, ICCR had 57 operational Chairs across the globe.

Conferences

Every year ICCR organises and supports several international & national Conferences on subjects like Indology, Buddhism, Sufism, Indian linkages, Indian studies etc. During Covid-19, ICCR took the initiative of conducting virtual conferences and seminars individually and in collaboration with other agencies.

On 26 May 20 June and 05 August 2020, the Centre for Roma Studies and Cultural Relations (CRSCR)-ARSP (established on 24 July 2019) organised three Virtual International Roma Conferences. In April 2020, an Essay Competition was conducted online on the 70th Foundation Day of ICCR for two categories i.e., for ICCR students in India and ICCR alumni overseas and for Indian diaspora (both NRIs and POIs).

On 21 May 2020, ICCR organised the 3rd Pandit Deen Day-

al Upadhyaya International Oration by Dr. Antonio Morandi, Ayurvedic Expert from Milan, Italy on World Culture Day.

On 01 August 2020, a day-long International Webinar "Lokmanya Tilak-Swaraj to Atmanirbhar Bharat" was organised to mark the 100th Death Anniversary of Lokmanya Tilak which was inaugurated by Hon'ble Home Minister Shri Amit Shah.

From 15 August to 06 September 2020, it collaborated with Centre of Soft Power (CSP) for "Namaste 2020-Global Utsava of Indian Soft Power". It coordinated with Missions abroad for commemorating grand finale activities of closing of the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi ji. From 19-21 November, 2020 it held webinars on Indology.

Hindi

In June 2020, ICCR published the Hindi bi-monthly magazine "Gagananchal" No.5-6. On 14 September 2020, a Hindi

workshop "Text to Speech - कंठस्थ का व्यावहारिक प्रशिक्षण was organised at Azad Bhavan.

India's Soft Power and Cultural Diplomacy

To promote Yoga, Veda, and Sanskrit globally, the Council deployed Teacher of Indian Culture (TIC) to various Missions/ Posts/ICCs and India based teachers in the disciplines of Bharatanatyam, Kathak, Odissi, Kuchipudi, Hindustani/Carnatic Vocal, Tabla and Hindi language etc. to its ICCs. Additionally, the Council has also deployed Resources Persons as Teachers

of Yoga, Indian Dance where ICCR does not have a Cultural Centre.

During Covid-19 in abroad, ICCR took the initiative of presenting online/ virtual performances by streaming recorded performances at festivals abroad such as in "India Global Week" - Lon-

don”, “The Great India Festival (TGIF)’ – Ottawa”, “Sarang-2020 – The 6th Annual Festival of India in Republic of Korea” and “sponsored sitar group for India en Concierto festival – Spain”

International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2020 was celebrated across the globe mostly in a virtual mode. ICCR facilitated the celebration of the 6th International day of Yoga -2020 in 147 Countries through 114 Indian Missions and 39 posts.



APPENDICES

- ANNEXURE-I : List of Full Powers processed during 2020-21
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Annexure-I

List of Full Powers processed during 2020-21

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
1.	MOU BETWEEN INDIA AND FINLAND ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF PRODUCTION, PROCUREMENT, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF DEFENCE RELATED EQUIPMENT AND INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION	FINLAND	15.01.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
2.	INVESTMENT COOPERATION AND FACILITATION TREATY BETWEEN THE FEDERATIVE REPUBLIC OF BRAZIL AND THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA	BRAZIL	17.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
3.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND SAMOA FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO TAXES	SAMOA	20.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
4.	PROTOCOL AMENDING THE CONVENTION BETWEEN INDIA AND BRAZIL FOR AVOIDANCE OF DOUBLE TAXATION AND THE PREVENTION OF FISCAL EVASION WITH RESPECT TO TAXES ON INCOME SIGNED AT NEW DELHI ON 26 APRIL 1988	BRAZIL	21.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
5.	AGREEMENT ON SOCIAL SECURITY BETWEEN INDIA AND BRAZIL	BRAZIL	22.01.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
6.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND CHILE FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE TAXATION AND THE PREVENTION OF FISCAL EVASION AND AVOIDANCE WITH RESPECT TO TAXES ON INCOME AND ITS PROTOCOL	CHILE	10.02.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
7.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN JAPAN AND INDIA CONCERNING PROVISION OF SUPPLIES AND SERVICES BETWEEN SELF DEFENCE FORCES OF JAPAN AND INDIAN ARMED FORCES	JAPAN	02.09.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
8.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND PHILIPPINES REG COOPERATION AND MUTUAL ASSISTANCE IN CUSTOMS MATTERS	PHILLIPINES	03.11.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
9.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK AND INDIA ON HOSTING OF NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK INDIAN REGIONAL OFFICE IN INDIA	NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK	03.12.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Annexure - II

List of Treaties Ratified by India during 2020-21

Sl. No.	Title	Country/ Organization	Date of signature	Date of Ratification	Administrative Ministry
1.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND ALGERIA ON VISA EXEMPTION FRO HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS	ALGERIA	31.08.2019	19.06.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
2.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND BRAZIL ON MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	03.03.2020	MINISTRY OF HOME AFFFAIRS
3.	AGREEMENT AND ITS PROTOCOL BETWEEN CHILE AND INDIA FOR THE ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE TAXATION AND PREVENTION OF FISCAL EVASION AND AVOIDANCE WITH RESPECT TO TAXES ON INCOME	CHILE	09.03.2020	18.09.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
4.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND EQUATORIAL GUINEA ON EXEMPTION FROM VISA REQUIREMENT FOR HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL/SERVICE PASSPORTS	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	18.08.2017	12.03.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
5.	MIGRATION AND MOBILITY PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT SIGNED WITH FRANCE	FRANCE	10.03.2018	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
6.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND GRENADA ON EXEMPTION FROM VISA REQUIREMENT FOR HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS	GRENADA	06.02.2020	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
7.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND JAPAN CONCERNING RECIPROCAL PROVISION OF SUPPLIES AND SERVICES BETWEEN IAF AND SELF DEFENCE FORCES OF JAPAN	JAPAN	09.09.2020	11.11.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
8.	EXTRADITION TREATY BETWEEN INDIA AND MALAWI	MALAWI	05.11.2018	27.07.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
9.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND MARSHALL ISLANDS ON EXEMPTION FROM VISA REQUIREMENT FOR HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS	MARSHALL ISLANDS	18.02.2020	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFFAIRS
10.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN ON MARITIME TRANSPORT	OMAN	24.12.2019	10.02.2020	MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
11.	COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND PORTUGAL IN FIELD OF MARITIME TRANSPORT AND PORTS	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	10.09.2020	MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
12.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND SAMOA FOR EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH RESPECT TO TAXES	SAMOA	12.03.2020	22.05.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Sl. No.	Title	Country/ Organization	Date of signature	Date of Ratification	Administrative Ministry
13.	AGREEMENT ON DEFENCE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA	SERBIA	07.11.2019	24.12.2020	MINISTRY OF DE-FENCE
14.	AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND SIERRA LEONE ON EXEMPTION FROM VISA REQUIREMENT FOR HOLDERS OF DIPLOMATIC AND OFFICIAL PASSPORTS	SIERRA LE-ONE	03.03.2020	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTER-NAL AFFFAIRS
15.1	TENTH ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE UNIVERSAL POST-AL UNION	UPU	07.09.2018	10.01.2020	DEPARTMENT OF POSTS
16.	AMENDMENT OF ANNEXES TO THE STOCKHOLM CONVENTION ON PER-SISTENT ORGANIC POLLUTANTS	UNO		02.12.2020	MINISTRY OF ENVI-RONMENT, FOREST & CLIMATE CHANGE

Annexure III

List of Treaties, Agreements, MoUs etc. concluded during 2020-21

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
1.	Memorandum of Understanding between Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service, Ministry of External Affairs, Republic of India and Venancio Da Silva Moura Institute of International Relations, Ministry of External Relations, Republic of Angola	ANGOLA	07.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
2.	Framework on Cyber Cooperation between India and Australia	AUSTRALIA	04.06.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
3.	MoU between India and Australia on cooperation in the field of Water Resources Management	AUSTRALIA	20.05.2020	DEPARTMENT OF WA-TER RESOURCES, RIVER DEVELOPMENT AND GANGA REJUVENATION, MINISTRY OF JAL SHAKTI
4.	2 nd Addendum to the Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh	BANGLA-DESH	20.05.2020	MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
5.	Protocol on Exchange of Instruments of Ratification of the Treaty between India and Belarus on Investments signed on 24.09.2018	BELARUS	05.03.2020	MINISTRY OF COM-MERCE & INDUSTRY
6.	Extradition Treaty between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium	BELGIUM	21.03.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
7.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Benin	BENIN	08.03.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
8.	Memorandum of understanding between the Royal Gov-ernment of Bhutan and the Government of the Republic of India on cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space	BHUTAN	19.11.2020	ISRO
9.	JDI between India and Brazil on collaboration in the Animal Husbandry And Dairy Production Area	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF ANIMAL HUSBANDRY AND DAIRYING
10.	MoU between India and Brazil on Bioenergy Cooperation	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF PETRO-LEUM AND NATURAL GAS
11.	Agreement on Social Security between India and Brazil	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
12.	Agreement between India and Brazil on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
13.	Programme of Scientific and Technological Cooperation for Implementing Agreement between India and Brazil 2020-23	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
14.	Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Brazil 2020-24	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF CULTURE

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
15.	MoU between India and Brazil on Cooperation in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF MINES
16.	Investment Cooperation and Facilitation Treaty between India and Brazil	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
17.	MoU on Cooperation between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) of the Republic of India and the General Coordination of Network Incident Treatment Centre (CGCTIR) of the Federative Republic of Brazil on cooperation in the area of Cyber Security.	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND IT
18.	MoU between India and Brazil in the field of Early Childhood	BRAZIL	11.02.2020	MINISTRY OF WOMEN AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT
19.	MoU between India and Brazil on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine	BRAZIL	07.02.2020	MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
20.	MoU between India and Brazil on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy	BRAZIL	07.02.2020	MINISTRY OF AYUSH
21.	MoU between Invest India and the Brazilian Trade and Investment Promotion Agency (Apex Brazil)	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
22.	MoU for Cooperation in the field of Oil and Natural Gas between India and Brazil	BRAZIL	25.01.2020	MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
23.	Agreement for Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes between Brunei Darussalam and India	BRUNEI DARUSSALAM	30.01.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
24.	Agreement between India and Cambodia for Implementation of USD 1.5 million grant for provision of Demining Equipment for the Royal Cambodian Armed Forces (RCAF)	CAMBODIA	10.08.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
25.	MOU of Cooperation between National Centre for Polar & Ocean Research (NCPOR) under Ministry of Earth Sciences and the Canadian High Arctic Research Stations (CHARS) operated by POLAR Knowledge (POLAR) Canada	CANADA	26.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
26.	MOU between Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Financial and Consumer Affairs Authority of Saskatchewan, Canada (FCAA) for Mutual Cooperation and the Exchange of Information.	CANADA	14.10.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
27.	Agreement between Chile and India for the Elimination of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion and Avoidance with respect to taxes on Income	CHILE	09.03.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
28.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Costa Rica	COSTA RICA	01.04.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
29.	Memorandum Of Understanding In the Field Of Intellectual Property Cooperation Between Department For Promotion of Industry And Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce And Industry, Government of the Republic of India And the Danish Patent And Trademark Office, Ministry of Industry, Business And Financial Affairs., Kingdom of Denmark	DENMARK	26.09.2020	MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
30.	MoU between India and Denmark on Energy Cooperation	DENMARK	05.06.2020	MINISTRY OF POWER
31.	MoU with Divine Values School of Ecuador for establishment of academic collaboration in Yoga	ECUADOR	.01.2020	MINISTRY OF AYUSH
32.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Equatorial Guinea	EQUATORIAL GUINEA	01.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
33.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the European Atomic Energy Community for research and development cooperation in the field of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.	EU	15.07.2020	DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
34.	MoU between India and Finland on cooperation in the field of Production, Procurement Research and Development of Defence related Equipment and Industrial Cooperation	FINLAND	15.01.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
35.	MOU on Environment Cooperation between India and Finland	FINLAND	26.11.2020	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
36.	Extension of Authorisation Provisoire de Sejour (APS) and French International Internship Programme (VIE) Scheme between India and France until 17 September 2022 under which Visa to Indian students granted by France after completion of their Master level education there to further stay in France for 12 months offering them opportunity to find suitable employment in related fields and Government of India grants visa for internship to French students within one year of completing their graduation for 12 months.	FRANCE	14.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
37.	MoU between India and Israel in the area of Cyber Security.	ISRAEL	15.7.2020	MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
38.	Programme of Cooperation between Cert In, Meity and French National Cyber Security Agency, France in area of Cyber Security	JAPAN	05.10.2020	MINISTRY OF ELECTRONICS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
39.	Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Steel, India and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, Japan in the field of steel industry.	JAPAN	22.12.2020	Ministry of Steel

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
40.	Agreement between India and Grenada on exemption from Visa Requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports	GRENADA	06.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
41.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Grenada	GRENADA	30.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
42.	Plan of Cooperation between the Indian Space Research Organization and the Israel Space Agency regarding cooperating in electric propulsion for small satellite	ISRAEL	27.04.2020	ISRO
43.	Addendum to the Executive Protocol for Scientific and Technological Cooperation between Ministry of Science and Technology, India and MFA, Italy on industrial projects	ITALY	14.10.2020	MINISTRY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
44.	MoU among of IIT Kanpur and Soprintendenza Archaeological of Italy on creating network and sharing skills for restoration and protection of monuments	ITALY	26.10.2020	MINISTRY OF HRD AND MINISTRY OF CULTURE
45.	Exchange of Notes on Rules of Procedure for approval for Co- Production agreement between Ministry of Information and Broadcasting of India and Ministry of Culture of Italy	ITALY	29.10.2020	MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING
46.	MoU between Invest India and Italian Trade Agency for enhancing and strengthening the bilateral commercial partnership	ITALY	05.11.2020	MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
47.	Agreement between NIIF, India and CDP, Italy to strengthen and facilitate the cooperation and exchange of information on sourcing, screening, assessing, investing and monitoring investments in Target sectors	ITALY	06.11.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
48.	Agreement between India and Japan concerning Reciprocal Provision of Supplies and Services between IAF and Self Defence Forces of Japan	JAPAN	09.09.2020	MINISTRTY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
49.	MoU between India and Kazakhstan regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects in the Republic of Kazakhstan	KAZAKHSTAN	17.11.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
50.	Agreement on visa exemption for diplomatic and official passport holders between India and Lesotho	LESOTHO	03.12.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
51.	Agreement between India and Maldives in the field of sports and youth affairs.	MALDIVES	09.11.2020	MINISTRY OF YOUTH AFFAIRS AND SPORTS

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
52.	MoU between India and Maldives for grant assistance of \$100 million for implementation of the Greater Malé Connectivity Project.	MALDIVES	09.11.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
53.	Agreement between Airports Authority of India on Redevelopment of Hanimaadhoo International Airport in Maldives	MALDIVES	09.09.2020	AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA AND MEA
54.	Agreement between India and Marshall Islands on Exemption from Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports	MARSHALL ISLANDS	18.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
55.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Marshall Islands	MARSHALL ISLANDS	30.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
56.	Specific cooperation agreement between the Indian Space Research Organization of the Republic of India and the Mexican Space Agency of the United Mexican States on forest fire management using EO data and capacity building	MEXICO	28.10.2020	ISRO
57.	Cooperation Agreement between Supreme Court of India and Supreme Council of Judicial Power of Morocco	MOROCCO	24.07.2020	MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE
58.	MoU between Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, the Republic of India and Ministry of Electricity and Energy, the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for cooperation in the field of petroleum products	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS
59.	MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on Cooperation for Prevention of Trafficking in Persons; Rescue, Recovery, Repatriation and Re-Integration of Victims of Trafficking	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS
60.	Project Agreement between Embassy of India, Yangon and Rakhine State Government for construction of Kyawly-aung- Ohlphyu road, construction of Kyaung Taung Kyaw Paung road in Buthidaung Township under Rakhine State Development Programme	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
61.	Project Agreement between Embassy of India, Yangon and Rakhine State Government for construction of incinerator in Mrauk Oo township hospital, construction of seed storage houses and water supply systems in Gwa township under Rakhine State Development Programme	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
62.	MoU between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar for Cooperation on Combating Timber Trafficking, and Conservation of Tigers and other Wildlife	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
63.	Agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar regarding Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of Quick Impact Projects (QIP)	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
64.	MoU between the Ministry of Communications of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Transport & Communications of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on cooperation in the field of communications	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
65.	Project Agreement between Embassy of India, Yangon and Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement for construction of pre-schools Under Rakhine State Development Programme	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
66.	Project Agreement between Embassy of India, Yangon and Rakhine State Government for distribution of electricity by solar power in five townships of Rakhine State under Rakhine State Development Program	MYANMAR	27.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
67.	Project Agreement between Embassy of India, Yangon and Ministry of Education, Government of Myanmar for Provision of Library Materials and Creation of Soft Infrastructure	MYANMAR	31.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
68.	Project Agreement between Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation and Embassy of India, Yangon for upgradation of Agricultural mechanization Sub-Station to promote custom hiring services under Rakhine State Development Programme	MYANMAR	02.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
69.	Agreement between India and Niger on the Establishment of a Joint Commission	NIGER	21.01.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
70.	Protocol for Consultations between India and Niger Citizens Abroad of the Republic of Niger	NIGER	21.01.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
71.	Mou Between India And Nigeria On Cooperation In the Exploration And Uses Of Outer Space For Peaceful Purposes	NIGERIA	05.06.2020	ISRO
72.	Memorandum of understanding between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria on cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes	NIGERIA	13.08.2020	ISRO

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
73.	Letter of Intent between India and Norway for Establishing the Framework for India-Norway Integrated Ocean Management& Research Initiative	NORWAY	18.02.2020	MINSITRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
74.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Oman	OMAN	07.06.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
75.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Portuguese Republic on Diplomatic Training and Exchange of Information	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
76.	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for Cooperation in Setting Up of a Maritime Gallery at the National Maritime Heritage Complex in Lothal (Gujarat).	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF SHIPPING
77.	Co-operation Agreement on Maritime Transport and Port Development between the Governments of India and Portugal	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
78.	Joint Declaration on Migration & Mobility Partnership between the Governments of India and Portugal	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
79.	MoU for Diplomatic Exchanges and Training between Indian Foreign Service Institute and the Portuguese Diplomatic Institute	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
80.	Agreement on Audio-Visual Co-production between the Governments of India and Portugal	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
81.	MoU between Economic and Food Safety Authority of Portugal, ASAE, and the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry of India, for co-operation in the field of Industrial and Intellectual Property Rights.	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
82.	MOU between Invest India and Start-Up Portugal	PORTUGAL	14.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
83.	Agreement on Arrangements of Haj Affairs for Haj season,1441H (2020G) between Delegation of the Republic of India and the Ministry of Haj & Umrah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	Saudi Arabia	01.12.2019	MINISTRY OF MINORITY AFFAIRS
84.	Agreement between India and Samoa for the Exchange of Information with respect to Taxes	SAMOA	12.03.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
85.	Agreement between India and Sierra Leone on Exemption From Visa Requirement for Holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports	SIERRA LEONE	03.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
86.	Agreement in the field of Culture, Arts, Education, Sports and Mass Media between India and Slovenia	SLOVENIA		MINISTRY OF CULTURE

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
87.	Memorandum of Understanding between India and Solomon Islands for Establishing India-Solomon Islands Centre of Excellence in Information Technology	SOLOMON ISLANDS	17.02.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
88.	Joint Communique of 10th Session Of JMC between India and South Africa New Delhi 17 Jan 2020	SOUTH AF-RICA	17.01.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
89.	MoU on Traditional Systems of Medicine between India and Suriname	SURINAME	23.01.2020	MINISTRY OF AYUSH
90.	Protocol to amend the Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of India relating to Air Services Agreement	SWITZER-LAND	11.03.2020	MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVI-ATION
91.	MoU for Establishment of India-Syria Next-Gen Centre for Excellence in Information Technology in Damascus	SYRIA	01.10.2019	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
92.	MoU between India and U.A.E for Scientific and Technical Cooperation	UAE	23.11.2020	MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
93.	MoU between University of Texas, Austin, USA (UTA) and ISRO to establish a general framework of scientific col-laboration in area of Space Situational Awareness (SSA)	USA	21.02.2020	ISRO
94.	Arrangement Extending the Duration of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of India and the Government of the United States of America Concerning Cooperation with the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India	USA	26.10.2020	DEPARTMENT OF ATOM-IC ENERGY
95.	Technical Arrangement on Maritime Defence Information Sharing and Cooperation between India and USA	USA	26.10.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
96.	Agreement for Electronic Exchange of Customs Data of Postal Shipments	USA	24.10.2020	MINISTRY OF COMMU-NICATIONS AND
97.	MoU on “Mental Health” between Dept Of Health And Family Welfare (Min Of Health & Family Welfare, Gol) & Dept Of Health And Human Services, US Govt	USA	21.02.2020	MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE
98.	MoU between the U.S. Department of Energy and the Indian Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on cooper-ation on Strategic Petroleum Reserves	USA	17.07.2020	MINISTRY OF PETRO-LEUM AND NATURAL GAS
99.	Statement Of Intent Ministry Of Power And US State Department Cooperation India-US Clean Energy Fin Task Force	USA	23.07.2020	MINISTRY OF POWER

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
100.	MoU Between The Ministry Of Statistics And Programme Implementation And The Population Council Institute	USA	08.09.2020	MINISTRY OF STATIS-TICS AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION
101.	National Oceanic And Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Of The Government Of The United States Of America And Ministry Of Earth Sciences (MoES) Of The Government Of The Republic Of India	USA	23.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
102.	Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement between India and USA	USA	26.10.2020	MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
103.	Memorandum of Understanding Between Department For Promotion of Industry And Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government Of The Republic of India and the United States Patents and Trademark Office, Department of Commerce of the United States of America For Cooperation In the Field of Intel-lectual Property	USA	02.12.2020	MINISTRY OF COM-MERCE AND INDUSTRY
104.	Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation between the Agency for the Development of Nuclear Energy under the Ministry of Energy of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership	UZBEKISTAN	21.09.2020	DEPARTMENT OF ATOM-IC ENERGY
105.	Memorandum between the State Customs Committee of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Central Board of Indi-rect Taxes and Customs of the Republic of India on the Exchange of Pre-arrival information on Goods moved across the state Border.	UZBEKISTAN	21.09.2020	MINISTRY OF FINANCE
106.	MoU between National Maritime Foundation, New Delhi and Scientific Research Institute of Sea and Islands, Vietnam.	VIETNAM	24.08.2020	NATIONAL MARITIME FOUNDATION
107.	MOU between the Consulate General and People's Committee of Kien Giang Province for the project of Rainwater harvesting (RWH) for sustainable water supply utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
108.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and Peo-ple's Committee of Kien Giang Province province for the project of Support water containers for border areas and islands (standing plastic tanks of 1000 liters) utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
109.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and People's Committee of Ben Tre Province for the Project on construction of Thoi Dinh irrigation drainage tunnel at Thoi Dinh Hamlet, Cho Lach Town, and Dinh Binh Hamlet, Hoa Nghia Commune, Cho Lach District, Ben Tre Province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
110.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and People's Committee of Tien Giang Province province for the Project of Constructing rain water reservoirs to provide clean water for people in Tan Phu Dong district, Tien Giang utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
111.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and People's Committee of Tien Giang Province province for the Project of Installation of water pipeline system to provide clean water for inhabitants' domestic use in Dong Thanh Commune, Go Cong Tay District, Tien Giang province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
112.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and People's Committee of Hau Giang Province province for the Project of Support of supplying clean water to people in drought and saline intrusion areas in Hau Giang province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
113.	MOU between the Consulate General of India and People's Committee of Hau Giang Province province for the Project of Construction of irrigation model with advanced irrigation, saving water, applying technology 4.0 to prevent drought and saline intrusion in Chau Thanh district, Hau Giang province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	23.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
114.	MOU between the Embassy of India and People's Committee of Tuyen Quang province for the project of construction of classroom at Tien Toc Branch of Binh An Primary School, Binh An commune, Lam Binh District, Tuyen Quang Province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries	VIETNAM	25.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
115.	MOU between the Embassy of India and People's Committee of Thanh Hoa Province for the project of Construction of Traditional House with Specialized Activities at Hoang Quy Secondary School, Hoang Hoa District, Thanh Hoa Province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	25.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
116.	MOU between the Embassy of India and People's Committee of Thua Thien Hue Province for the project of Construction of Classrooms at Xuan Duong Kindergarten, Quang An Commune, Quang Dien District, Thua Thien Hue Province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries.	VIETNAM	07.09.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

S. No.	Title	Country	Date of signature	Administrative Ministry
117.	MOU between the Embassy of India and People's Committee of Nghe An Province for the project of Construction of Building Block of 6 classrooms at Ma Thanh Kindergarten, Ma Thanh Commune, Yen Thanh District, Nghe An Province utilizing the QIP fund extended by the Government of India to CLMV countries	VIETNAM	25.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
118.	Memorandum of Understanding between the Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Sushma Swaraj Institute of Foreign Service of the Ministry of External Affairs of the Republic of India	VIETNAM	25.08.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
119.	Donor Agreement between Ministry of AYUSH and WHO	WHO	11.02.2020	MINISTRY OF AYUSH
120.	Visa Waiver Agreements for holders of Diplomatic / Officials Passports with Zimbabwe	ZIMBABWE	30.10.2020	MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

*As per the information available in the L&T Division as on 01-12-2020
Agreements/MoUs relating to the Ministry of Defence and those which are politically sensitive have been excluded.

Annexure-IV

Bilateral Visits in 2020-2021

S.N.	Dates	Country
1.	6-10 October 2020	Visit of H.E. Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of the High Council of National Reconciliation of Afghanistan
2.	12-14 October 2020	Visit of H.E. Mr. Stephen E. Biegun, former United States Deputy Secretary of State
3.	26-27 October 2020	Visit (2+2) of Michael R. Pompeo, former United States Secretary of State
4.	12-13 December 2020	Visit of H.E. Mr. Stephen E. Biegun, former Deputy Secretary of State of USA
5.	14-18 December 2020	Official Visit of. Dominic Raab MP, First Secretary of State and Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
6.	14-16 January 2021	Official Visit of Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nepal

Annexure-V

Virtual Summits From April 2020 To Jan 2021

S. No.	DATE	SUBJECT
1.	4 May 2020	Video Conference Summit of NAM for COVID19
2.	14 May 2020	Video Conference with Bill Gates, Co-founder of Microsoft
3.	4 June 2020	India-Australia Leaders' Virtual Summit
4.	13 July 2020	Virtual Conference with Mr. Sundar Pichai, CEO of Alphabet
5.	15 July 2020	India-EU Virtual Summit
6.	20 July 2020	Virtual Conference with Mr. Arvind Krishna, CEO of IBM
7.	30 July 2020	Inaugural through Video Conferencing of Mauritius Supreme Court building
8.	12 Sept 2020	Virtual Conference with Mr. Bernard Looney, CEO of British Petroleum
9.	26 Sept 2020	India-Sri Lanka Virtual Summit
10.	28 Sept 2020	India-Denmark Virtual Summit
11.	06 Oct 2020	Virtual Conference with Mr. Henrik Andersen, CEO of Vestas
12.	19 Oct 2020	Virtual Conference with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
13.	05 Nov 2020	Virtual Global Investors Roundtable
14.	06 Nov 2020	India-Italy Virtual Summit
15.	09 Nov 2020	Video Conference of PM with Australian Investors
16.	10 Nov 2020	SCO Summit
17.	11 Nov 2020	Video Conference of PM with CEO of Future Fund, Australia
18.	12 Nov 2020	Virtual conference of Prime Minister with Shri Lakshmi Mittal
19.	12 Nov 2020	Video Conference of PM with Governor of Japan Bank of International Cooperation
20.	12 Nov 2020	17th ASEAN Summit
21.	14 Nov 2020	15th East Asia Summit
22.	17 Nov 2020	12th BRICS Summit
23.	19 Nov 2020	India-Luxembourg virtual Summit
24.	20 Nov 2020	Virtual Ceremony for launch of RuPay card Phase – II in Bhutan
25.	21-22 Nov 2020	G20 Nations Virtual Summit
26.	24 Nov 2020	Virtual Conference of PM with President and CEO of Canada Pension Plan Investment Board
27.	26 Nov 2020	Virtual Conference of PM with President and CEO of Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec
28.	30 Nov 2020	SCO Summit
29.	03 Dec 2020	Virtual Meeting of Prime Minister with Mr. T.B. Pedersen, CEO of PensionDanmark
30.	11 Dec 2020	India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit
31.	17 Dec 2020	India-Bangladesh Virtual Summit
32.	21 Dec 2020	India-Vietnam Virtual Summit
34.	09 Jan 2021	16th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Convention

Annexure-VI

Credential Presentation by Foreign Heads of Mission during 01 April 2020 to 31 March 2021

SL No.	Country	Name of Ambassador/High Commissioner	Date of Credential Presentation
1.	Democratic Republic of Korea	H.E. Mr. Choe Hui Chol	21.05.2020
2.	Senegal	H.E. Mr Abdoul Wahab Haidara	21.05.2020
3.	Trinidad and Tobago	H.E. Dr. Roger Gopaul	21.05.2020
4.	Mauritius	H.E. Mrs. Santi Bai Hanoomanjee	21.05.2020
5.	Australia	H.E. Mr. Barry Robert O'Farrell	21.05.2020
6.	Cote d'Ivoire	H.E.M. N'DRY Eric Camille	21.05.2020
7.	Rwanda	H.E. Ms. Jacqueline Mukangira	21.05.2020
8.	New Zealand	H.E. Mr. David Pine	08.07.2020
9.	Uzbekistan	H.E. Mr. Akhatov Dilshod Khamidovich	08.07.2020
10.	Singapore	H.E. Mr. Simon Wong Wie Kuen	10.09.2020
11.	Switzerland	H.E. Dr. Ralf Heckner	14.10.2020
12.	Malta	H.E. Mr. Reuben Gauci	14.10.2020
13.	Botswana	H.E. Mr. Gilbert Shimane Mangole	14.10.2020
14.	Hungary	H.E. Mr. Andras Laszlo Kiraly	20.11.2020
15.	Maldives	H.E. Hussain Niyaaz	20.11.2020
16.	Chad	H.E. Mr. Ahmed Soungi	20.11.2020
17.	Tajikistan	H.E. Mr. Lukmon Bobokalonzoda	20.11.2020
18.	Panama	H.E. Mrs. Yasiel Alines Burillo Rivera	Date of Arrival 23.12.2020
19.	El Salvador	H.E. Mr. Guillermo Rubio Funes	Date of Arrival 20.12.2020
20.	Tunisia	H.E. Mrs. Hayet Talbi EP Bilel	Date of Arrival 07.01.2021
21.	Argentina	H.E. Mr. Hugo Javier Gobbi	Date of Arrival 26.01.2021
22.	United Kingdom	H.E. Mr. Alexander Ellis	Date of Arrival 11.01.2021

Annexure-VII

Cadre strength at Headquarters and Missions abroad during 2020-21
(including posts budgeted by M/o Commerce, ex-cadre posts and posts encadred from MOIA & POE)

S.No.	Cadre/Post	Posts at Hqrs.	Posts at Missions	Total
1	Grade I	5	28	33
2	Grade II	6	40	46
3	Grade III	38	144	182
4	Grade IV	58	152	210
5	Junior Admn. Grade/Senior Scale	117	270	387
6	(i) Junior Scale	10	25	35
	(ii) Probationers Reserve	62		62
	(iii) Leave Reserve	15		15
	(iv) Deputation Reserve	19		19
	(v) Training Reserve	7		7
	Sub Total I	337	659	996
	IFS(B)			
7	(i) Grade I	118	125	243
	(ii) Deputation Reserve	6		6
8	(i) Integrated Grades II & III	359	247	606
	(ii) Leave Reserve	30		30
	(iii) Deputation Reserve	16		16
	(iv) Training Reserve	25		25
9	(i) Grade IV	214	551	765
	(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	47	47	94
	(ii) Leave Reserve	5		5
12	(i) Stenographer's Cadre	383	556	939
	(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	1662	1639	3301
	Grand Total(Sub total I+II)	1999	2298	4297

Details of Vacancies existing on 05.11.2020

Group	Present position of vacancies			
	Total	Ss	STs	OBCs
Group A	104	26	11	14
Group B	267	47	22	45
Group C	198	17	28	56
Total	533	85	58	101

Annexure-VIII

Number of IFS officers with proficiency in various languages
(as on 5 November 2020)

S.No.	Language	Number of officers
1	Amharic	1
2	Arabic	124
3	Bahasa Indonesia	11
4	Bahasa Malay	2
5	Burmese	9
6	Chinese	92
7	Czech	1
8	French	114
9	German	39
10	Hebrew	8
11	Italian	3
12	Japanese	29
13	Kazakh	1
14	Korean	8
15	Nepalese	1
16	Pashto	3
17	Persian	25
18	Polish	1
19	Portuguese	24
20	Russian	106
21	Sinhalese	9
22	Spanish	100
23	Swahili	1
24	Turkish	7
25	Ukrainian	1
26	Vietnamese	2
	Grand Total	722

Annexure-IX

State/UT-wise List of Regional Passport Offices (RPOs)

S.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
33	PO Tiruchirappalli	Tamil Nadu
34	PO Trivandrum	Kerala
35	PO Vijayawada	Andhra Pradesh
36	PO Visakhapatnam	Andhra Pradesh

Annexure-X

State/UT-wise List of Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs)

No.	State/UT	No. of PSKs	Location of PSKs
1.	Andhra Pradesh	4	Vijayawada, Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Bhimavaram
2.	Arunachal Pradesh	1	Itanagar
3.	Assam*	1	Guwahati
4.	Bihar	2	Patna, Darbhanga
5.	Chandigarh UT**	1	Chandigarh
6.	Chhattisgarh	1	Raipur
7.	Delhi NCT***	3	Herald House, Shalimar Place, Bhikaji Cama Place
8.	Goa	1	Panaji
9.	Gujarat	5	Ahmedabad I&II, Vadodara, Rajkot, Surat
10.	Haryana	2	Ambala, Gurgaon.
11.	Himachal Pradesh	1	Shimla
12.	Jammu & Kashmir	2	Jammu, Srinagar
13.	Jharkhand	1	Ranchi
14.	Karnataka	5	Bangalore I&II, Hubli, Mangalore, Kalaburagi
15.	Kerala	13	Thiruvananthapuram, Thiruvananthapuram (Rural), Kollam, Cochin, Ernakulam Rural, Alapuzha, Kottayam, Malappuram, Thrissur, Kozhikode I&II, Kannur I&II
16.	Madhya Pradesh	2	Bhopal, Indore
17.	Maharashtra	8	Mumbai I,II&III, Pune, Nagpur, Thane, Nashik, Solapur
18.	Manipur	1	Imphal
19.	Meghalaya	1	Shillong
20.	Mizoram	1	Aizawl
21.	Nagaland	1	Dimapur
22.	Odisha	1	Bhubaneswar
23.	Puducherry	1	Puducherry
24.	Punjab	5	Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar-I, Jalandhar-II, Hoshiarpur
25.	Rajasthan	4	Jaipur, Jodhpur, Sikar, Udaipur
26.	Sikkim	1	Gangtok
27.	Tamil Nadu	8	Chennai I,II&III, Trichy, Thanjavur, Madurai, Tirunelveli, Coimbatore
28.	Telangana	5	Hyderabad I,II&III, Nizamabad, Karimnagar
29.	Tripura	1	Agartala
30.	Uttar Pradesh	6	Lucknow, Varanasi, Kanpur, Gorakhpur, Bareilly, Ghaziabad
31.	Uttarakhand	1	Dehradun
32.	West Bengal	3	Kolkata, Berhampore, Siliguri
	Total	93	

Annexure-XI

State/UT-wise List of Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs)

Sl. No.	Location	State/UT	Passport Office
1	Port Blair	Andaman & Nicobar Island	Kolkata
2	Anantpur	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	Kadappa	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	KarbiAnglong	Assam	Guwahati
31	Karimganj	Assam	Guwahati
32	Kokrajhar	Assam	Guwahati
33	Mangaldoi	Assam	Guwahati
34	Nawgong	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	Chhapra	Bihar	Patna
47	Dalmia Nagar	Bihar	Patna
48	DalsinghSarai	Bihar	Patna
49	Forbesganj	Bihar	Patna
50	Gaya	Bihar	Patna
51	Gopalganj	Bihar	Patna
52	Hajipur	Bihar	Patna
53	Jahanabad	Bihar	Patna
54	Jamui	Bihar	Patna
55	Katihar	Bihar	Patna
56	Khagaria	Bihar	Patna
57	Kishanganj	Bihar	Patna
58	Madhubani	Bihar	Patna
59	Maner	Bihar	Patna
60	Motihari	Bihar	Patna
61	Munger	Bihar	Patna
62	Muzaffarpur	Bihar	Patna
63	Nalanda	Bihar	Patna
64	Navada	Bihar	Patna
65	Purnea	Bihar	Patna
66	Saharsa	Bihar	Patna
67	Samastipur	Bihar	Patna
68	Sasaram	Bihar	Patna
69	Sheohar	Bihar	Patna
70	Sitamarhi	Bihar	Patna
71	Siwan	Bihar	Patna
72	Bilaspur	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
73	Durg	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
74	Janjgir-Champa	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
75	Korba	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
76	Raigarh	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
77	Rajnandgaon	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
78	Surguja	Chhattisgarh	Raipur
79	Silvasa	Dadar& Nagar Haveli	Mumbai
80	Daman	Daman	Mumbai
81	JanakPuri	Delhi	Delhi
82	Mehrauli	Delhi	Delhi

83	Nehru Place	Delhi	Delhi
84	Patparganj	Delhi	Delhi
85	Yamuna Vihar	Delhi	Delhi
86	Margao	Goa	Panaji
87	Amreli	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
88	Anand	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
89	Bardoli	Gujarat	Surat
90	Bharuch	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
91	Bhavnagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
92	Bhuj	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
93	Chhota Udaipur	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
94	Dahod	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
95	Gandhinagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
96	Godhra	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
97	Jamnagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
98	Junagadh	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
99	Kheda	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
100	Mehsana	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
101	Navsari	Gujarat	Surat
102	Palanpur	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
103	Patan	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
104	Porbandar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
105	Rajpipla	Gujarat	Surat
106	Sabarkantha	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
107	Surendranagar	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
108	Valsad	Gujarat	Surat
109	Veraval	Gujarat	Ahmedabad
110	BhiwaniMahendragarh	Haryana	Chandigarh
111	Faridabad	Haryana	Delhi
112	Hisar	Haryana	Chandigarh
113	Kaithal	Haryana	Chandigarh
114	Karnal	Haryana	Chandigarh
115	Narnaul	Haryana	Delhi
116	Panipat	Haryana	Chandigarh
117	Rohtak	Haryana	Delhi
118	Sirsa	Haryana	Chandigarh
119	Sonipat	Haryana	Delhi
120	Yamunanagar	Haryana	Chandigarh
121	Hamirpur	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
122	Kangra	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
123	Kullu	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
124	Mandi	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
125	Palampur	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla
126	Una	Himachal Pradesh	Shimla

127	Kathua	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
128	Rajouri	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
129	Udhampur	Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu
130	Anantnag	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar
131	Baramulla	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar
132	Leh	Jammu & Kashmir	Srinagar
133	Bokaro	Jharkhand	Ranchi
134	Chaibasha	Jharkhand	Ranchi
135	Deoghar	Jharkhand	Ranchi
136	Dhanbad	Jharkhand	Ranchi
137	Dumka	Jharkhand	Ranchi
138	Giridih	Jharkhand	Ranchi
139	Gumla	Jharkhand	Ranchi
140	Hazaribagh	Jharkhand	Ranchi
141	Jamshedpur	Jharkhand	Ranchi
142	Jhumri Tilaiya	Jharkhand	Ranchi
143	Khunti	Jharkhand	Ranchi
144	Medininagar	Jharkhand	Ranchi
145	Sahibganj	Jharkhand	Ranchi
146	Shimaria	Jharkhand	Ranchi
147	Ankola	Karnataka	Bengaluru
148	Bagalkot	Karnataka	Bengaluru
149	Belagavi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
150	Bellary	Karnataka	Bengaluru
151	Bidar	Karnataka	Bengaluru
152	Chamrajanagar	Karnataka	Bengaluru
153	Channapatna	Karnataka	Bengaluru
154	Chikkballapur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
155	Chikkodi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
156	Chitradurga	Karnataka	Bengaluru
157	Davangere	Karnataka	Bengaluru
158	Gadag	Karnataka	Bengaluru
159	Hassan	Karnataka	Bengaluru
160	Jalahalli	Karnataka	Bengaluru
161	Koppal	Karnataka	Bengaluru
162	Maddur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
163	Mysuru	Karnataka	Bengaluru
164	Raichur	Karnataka	Bengaluru
165	Robertsonpet	Karnataka	Bengaluru
166	Shivamogga	Karnataka	Bengaluru
167	Tumakuru	Karnataka	Bengaluru
168	Udupi	Karnataka	Bengaluru
169	Vijayapur	Karnataka	Bengaluru

170	Chengannur	Kerala	Cochin
171	Kattappana	Kerala	Cochin
172	Nenmara	Kerala	Cochin
173	Palakkad	Kerala	Cochin
174	Kasargod	Kerala	Kozhikode
175	Attingal	Kerala	Trivandrum
176	Pathanamthitta	Kerala	Trivandrum
177	Kavaratti	Lakshadweep	Cochin
178	Balaghat	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
179	Betul	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
180	Chhatarpur	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
181	Chhindwara	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
182	Damoh	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
183	Dewas	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
184	Dhar	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
185	Gwalior	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
186	Hoshangabad	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
187	Jabalpur	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
188	Ratlam	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
189	Rewa	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
190	Sagar	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
191	Satna	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
192	Seoni	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
193	Tikamgarh	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
194	Ujjain	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
195	Vidisha	Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal
196	Aurangabad	Maharashtra	Mumbai
197	Bhiwandi	Maharashtra	Mumbai
198	Bhusawal	Maharashtra	Mumbai
199	Dhule	Maharashtra	Mumbai
200	Jalgaon	Maharashtra	Mumbai
201	Rajapur	Maharashtra	Mumbai
202	Santa Cruz	Maharashtra	Mumbai
203	Sion	Maharashtra	Mumbai
204	Vashi	Maharashtra	Mumbai
205	Vikroli	Maharashtra	Mumbai
206	Ahmednagar	Maharashtra	Pune
207	Baramati	Maharashtra	Pune
208	Beed	Maharashtra	Pune
209	Ichalkaranji	Maharashtra	Pune
210	Jalna	Maharashtra	Pune
211	Kolhapur	Maharashtra	Pune
212	Latur	Maharashtra	Pune
213	Madha	Maharashtra	Pune

214	Nanded	Maharashtra	Pune
215	Osmanabad	Maharashtra	Pune
216	Pandharpur	Maharashtra	Pune
217	Parbhani	Maharashtra	Pune
218	PimpriChinchwad	Maharashtra	Pune
219	Sangli	Maharashtra	Pune
220	Satara	Maharashtra	Pune
221	Shirur	Maharashtra	Pune
222	Srirampur	Maharashtra	Pune
223	Akola	Maharashtra	Nagpur
224	Amravati	Maharashtra	Nagpur
225	Bhandara	Maharashtra	Nagpur
226	Buldhana	Maharashtra	Nagpur
227	Chandrapur	Maharashtra	Nagpur
228	Gadchiroli	Maharashtra	Nagpur
229	Hingoli	Maharashtra	Nagpur
230	Katoal	Maharashtra	Nagpur
231	Wardha	Maharashtra	Nagpur
232	Yavatmal	Maharashtra	Nagpur
233	Kakching	Manipur	Guwahati
234	Tura	Meghalaya	Guwahati
235	Aska	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
236	Balasore	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
237	Bargarh	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
238	Baripada	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
239	Berhampur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
240	Bhadrak	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
241	Bhawanipatna	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
242	Bolangir	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
243	Cuttack	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
244	Dhenkanal	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
245	Jagatsinghpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
246	Jajpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
247	Kendrapara	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
248	Keonjhar	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
249	Koraput	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
250	Nabarangpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
251	Phulbani	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
252	Puri	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
253	Rourkela	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
254	Sambalpur	Odisha	Bhubaneswar
255	Karaikal	Puducherry	Tiruchirapalli
256	BasiPattana	Punjab	Chandigarh

257	Bathinda	Punjab	Chandigarh
258	Firozpur	Punjab	Amritsar
259	Malerkotla	Punjab	Chandigarh
260	Moga	Punjab	Jalandhar
261	Pathankot	Punjab	Jalandhar
262	Patiala	Punjab	Chandigarh
263	Phagwara	Punjab	Jalandhar
264	Ropar	Punjab	Chandigarh
265	Ajmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
266	Alwar	Rajasthan	Jaipur
267	Banswara	Rajasthan	Jaipur
268	Barmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
269	Bharatpur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
270	Bhilwara	Rajasthan	Jaipur
271	Bikaner	Rajasthan	Jaipur
272	Chittorgarh	Rajasthan	Jaipur
273	Churu	Rajasthan	Jaipur
274	Dausa	Rajasthan	Jaipur
275	Hanumangarh	Rajasthan	Jaipur
276	Jaisalmer	Rajasthan	Jaipur
277	Jhalawar	Rajasthan	Jaipur
278	Jhunjhunu	Rajasthan	Jaipur
279	Kankroli	Rajasthan	Jaipur
280	Karauli-Dhaultpur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
281	Kota	Rajasthan	Jaipur
282	Kotputli	Rajasthan	Jaipur
283	Nagaur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
284	Pali	Rajasthan	Jaipur
285	Pratapgarh	Rajasthan	Jaipur
286	SawaiMadhopur	Rajasthan	Jaipur
287	Sirohi	Rajasthan	Jaipur
288	Sriganganagar	Rajasthan	Jaipur
289	Arani	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
290	Chennai GPO	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
291	Chidambaram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
292	Cuddalore	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
293	Dharmapuri	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
294	Kallakurichi	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
295	Kancheepuram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
296	Krishnagiri	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
297	Ranipet	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
298	Tiruvallur	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
299	Tiruvannamalai	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
300	Vellore	Tamil Nadu	Chennai

301	Viluppuram	Tamil Nadu	Chennai
302	Coonoor	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
303	Erode	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
304	Rasipuram	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
305	Salem	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore
306	Bodineyaknur	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
307	Devakottai	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
308	Kodairoad	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
309	Nagercoil	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
310	Rajpalyam	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
311	Ramathapuram	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
312	Thoothukkudi	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
313	Virudhunagar	Tamil Nadu	Madurai
314	Karur	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
315	Perambalur	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
316	Sirkali	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
317	Thiruthuraiipoondi	Tamil Nadu	Tiruchirappalli
318	Adilabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
319	Bhongir	Telangana	Hyderabad
320	Kamareddy	Telangana	Hyderabad
321	Khammam	Telangana	Hyderabad
322	Mahabubabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
323	Mancherial	Telangana	Hyderabad
324	Medak	Telangana	Hyderabad
325	Medchal	Telangana	Hyderabad
326	Mehbubnagar	Telangana	Hyderabad
327	Nalgonda	Telangana	Hyderabad
328	Siddipet	Telangana	Hyderabad
329	Vikarabad	Telangana	Hyderabad
330	Wanaparthly	Telangana	Hyderabad
331	Warangal	Telangana	Hyderabad
332	Dhramanagar	Tripura	Kolkata
333	Amroha	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
334	Badaun	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
335	Bijnaur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
336	Moradabad	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
337	Pilibhit	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
338	Rampur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
339	Shahjahanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Bareilly
340	Achnera	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
341	Agra	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
342	Aligarh	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
343	Baghpat	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad

344	Bulandshahr	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
345	Hathras	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
346	Meerut	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
347	Muzaffarnagar	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
348	Noida	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
349	Saharanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
350	Vrindawan	Uttar Pradesh	Ghaziabad
351	Allahabad	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
352	Ambedkar Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
353	Amethi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
354	Ayodhya	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
355	Azamgarh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
356	Bahraich	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
357	Ballia	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
358	Balrampur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
359	Banda	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
360	Bhadohi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
361	Chunar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
362	Deoria	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
363	Farrukhabad	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
364	Fatehpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
365	Ghazipur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
366	Gonda	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
367	Goshi (Mau)	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
368	Hamirpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
369	Hardoi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
370	Jaunpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
371	Jhansi	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
372	Kheri	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
373	Maharajganj	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
374	Misrikh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
375	Pratapgarh	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
376	Rae Bareli	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
377	Siddharth Nagar	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
378	Sitapur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
379	Sultanpur	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
380	Unnao	Uttar Pradesh	Lucknow
381	Almora	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
382	Kathgodam	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
383	Nainital	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
384	Roorkee	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
385	Rudrapur	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
386	Srinagar	Uttarakhand	Dehradun
387	Alipurduar	West Bengal	Kolkata

388	Amta	West Bengal	Kolkata
389	Arambagh	West Bengal	Kolkata
390	Asansol	West Bengal	Kolkata
391	Ashok Nagar	West Bengal	Kolkata
392	Balurghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
393	Bangaon	West Bengal	Kolkata
394	Bankura	West Bengal	Kolkata
395	Bardhaman	West Bengal	Kolkata
396	Barrackpore	West Bengal	Kolkata
397	Basirhat	West Bengal	Kolkata
398	Beadon Street	West Bengal	Kolkata
399	Bishnupur	West Bengal	Kolkata
400	Bolpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
401	Canning Road Ferry Ghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
402	Chinsurah	West Bengal	Kolkata
403	Coochbehar	West Bengal	Kolkata
404	Darjeeling	West Bengal	Kolkata
405	Diamond Harbour	West Bengal	Kolkata
406	Dum Dum	West Bengal	Kolkata
407	Ghatal	West Bengal	Kolkata
408	Howrah	West Bengal	Kolkata
409	Jadavpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
410	Jalpaiguri	West Bengal	Kolkata
411	Jhargram	West Bengal	Kolkata
412	Jiyaganj	West Bengal	Kolkata
413	Kakdweep	West Bengal	Kolkata
414	Kanthi	West Bengal	Kolkata
415	Katwa	West Bengal	Kolkata
416	Kharagpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
417	Krishnanagar	West Bengal	Kolkata
418	Makdumpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
419	North Dinajpur	West Bengal	Kolkata
420	Purulia	West Bengal	Kolkata
421	Raghunathganj	West Bengal	Kolkata
422	Rampurhat	West Bengal	Kolkata
423	Ranaghat	West Bengal	Kolkata
424	Samsi	West Bengal	Kolkata
425	Serampore	West Bengal	Kolkata
426	Tamluk	West Bengal	Kolkata



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