

Ministry of External Affairs
Policy Planning and Research Division

Overview of Major Achievements during the month of October 2020

Ministry major focus in October has been Vande Bharat Mission and the repatriation of Indians stranded overseas. In October, the Vande Bharat Mission continues to repatriate stranded Indians and has so far brought around 29,000 fellow-citizens home from China, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Australia, Thailand, and Vietnam.

On 13 October 2020, the 6th Session of Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) with Norway was held. The JCM was co-chaired by Dr S. Jaishankar, EAM and Ms Ine Marie Eriksen Søreide, Foreign Minister of Norway. Both sides reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations including our cooperation in trade, investment, S&T, education, and Space. Both sides also reviewed the progress made under the initiative of Task Force on Blue Economy for Sustainable Development to synergize potentials in areas of fisheries, aquaculture, green technologies for maritime use, and green ports.

On 16 October 2020, Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law & Justice, Communication and Electronics & Information Technology chaired the 7th Session of the Ministers of Justice of the SCO Member States hosted by India (via video conference).

Diplomatic Engagements and other Interactions:

On 8 October, Prime Minister met Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, Chairman of High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan, and reaffirmed India's long-term commitment to strengthen India-Afghanistan Strategic Partnership.

On 2 October, PM delivered the inaugural address at the Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik (VAIBHAV) Summit, a global virtual summit of overseas and resident Indian researchers and academicians.

On 8 October, PM gave a Keynote Address at the Annual Invest India Conference in

Canada via video conference. Subsequently, on 26 October, PM inaugurated the 4th Edition of India Energy Forum CERA Week and virtually interacted with global oil and gas CEOs.

During October, PM held telephonic conversations with Prime Minister of Israel and Presidents of Russia and South Korea and discussed issues of mutual interest.

On 6-7 October, EAM visited Japan to attend the 2nd India-Australia-Japan-USA Ministerial Meeting. EAM held the 13th India-Japan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue with Japan Foreign Minister MotegiToshimitsu. Along the sidelines, EAM also had bilateral meetings with his counterparts from Australia and USA.

On 14 October, EAM held virtual meeting with Portugal Foreign Minister Augusto Santos Silva and reviewed bilateral ties. Both sides discussed India-EU relations and the next India–EU Summit Meeting during Portugal's Presidency in 2021.

US Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence visited India to attend the 3rd India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue hosted by India on 27 October. EAM also had a bilateral meeting with the US Secretary of State ahead of the Dialogue. During the Ministerial Dialogue, the two sides announced the signing of the following five documents:

- I. Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) between the Ministry of Defence and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) of the US.
- II. Memorandum of Understanding for Technical Cooperation in Earth Observations and Earth Sciences between the Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- III. Arrangement extending the duration of the MoU between the Government of India and the Government of United States of America concerning cooperation with the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India.

IV. Agreement for the Electronic Exchange of Customs Data between India Post and United States Postal Service.

V. Letter of Intent between the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences and the Office of Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine for cooperation in the field of Ayurveda and Cancer Research.

On 11 October, seven Indian nationals, who were abducted from Assherif in Libya on 14 September, were released and safely returned to India. The High Commission in Nairobi has also taken up the issue of 33 Indian nationals stuck in Mogadishu with the Somalian authorities and is working on their relief and return.

During October, the Ministry continued to extend COVID related assistance to our partner countries. The Indian Embassy in Nepal donated advanced ambulances and other emergency medical equipments in Nepal. India provided 270 MT of food aid to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea to help people affected by natural calamities and the COVID-19 pandemic. We also donated medicines worth USD 300,000 to Zimbabwe.