

Ministry of External Affairs
Policy Planning and Research Division

Overview of Major Achievements during the month of March 2023

High-Level Diplomatic Engagements/Interactions:

Hon'ble President met with the Prime Ministers of Italy and Australia on March 2 and March 10, respectively; delegation of the Supreme Court of Kenya led by its Chief Justice on March 10 and a Parliamentary Delegation from Israel led by the Speaker of Knesset on March 31. Hon'ble President also held a telephonic call with the President of Nepal on March 17.

2. Vice President met the Minister of Foreign Trade & Investment of Cuba in New Delhi on March 14.

3. On March 2, Prime Minister addressed the Opening Session of the G20 Foreign Ministers' (G20 FMM) meeting and held bilateral talks with the Prime Minister of Italy. During the Italian Prime Minister's visit, a series of outcomes were achieved including elevating ties to Strategic Partnership; Italy joining the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative; India-Italy Start-Up Bridge & others.

4. The 8th Raisina Dialogue was held from March 2-4. Italy's Prime Minister was the Chief Guest & Keynote Speaker at the conference. Prime Minister attended the inaugural. This year's edition witnessed participation of representatives from over 100 countries, including about 35 Ministers, making it one of the largest gatherings of foreign policy experts.

5. On March 10, Prime Minister met the Australian Prime Minister at the 1st India-Australia Annual Summit in New Delhi. The leaders earlier travelled to Ahmedabad to witness the 4th and final India vs Australia Test Match.

6. On March 18, Prime Minister and the Prime Minister of Bangladesh virtually inaugurated the 132 km India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline that will transport High-Speed Diesel to Bangladesh.

7. On March 20, Prime Minister held bilateral talks with the Prime Minister of Japan who was on an official visit to India from March 20-21.

8. Prime Minister delivered remarks at the Summit for Democracy-2023 hosted by the US on March 29.

9. Prime Minister met the Secretary General of the International Telecommunications Union in New Delhi on March 24.

EAM's engagements:

10. EAM had bilateral meetings with the Armenian FM on the sidelines of the Raisina Dialogue.

11. EAM held a bilateral meeting with the Australian FM Penny Wong on the sidelines of Raisina Dialogue on March 3, 2023.

12. On March 2, EAM addressed the Opening Session of G20 FMM in New Delhi. On the sidelines of the which EAM held bilateral meetings with participating counterparts from 33 countries including meeting with the Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang, Egyptian FM Sameh Shoukry, Foreign Minister of Mexico, H.E. Marcelo Ebrard, Oman Foreign Minister HE Sayyid Badr Albusaidi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Singapore FM Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan, Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in New Delhi.

13. On 03 March, EAM met with the Japanese Foreign Minister Mr. HAYASHI Yoshimasa in New Delhi on the sidelines of the India-Australia-Japan-US (Quad) Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

14. EAM had a meeting with Bhutan Foreign Minister Tandi Dorji; Mr. Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia on 04 March; Mr. Rastislav Kacer, Foreign Minister of Slovakia where the Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Slovakia for the period 2023-26 was signed; Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovenia Ms. Tanja Fajon; Swedish FM Tobias Billström on the sidelines of the Raisina

Dialogue. EAM also hosted his Quad counterparts for the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting in New Delhi on March 3, which was followed by the Quad Foreign Ministers' panel at Raisina Dialogue 2023; participated in the panel "leadership in the age of uncertainty" at the Raisina Dialogue, apart from other interactions. EAM passed on the 'IBSA Handover Report 2023' to new IBSA chair Brazil on March 3.

15. On March 6, EAM co-chaired a virtual meeting of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural cooperation with Russia's DPM.

16. EAM called on the Australian Prime Minister on March 10.

17. EAM met the American Jewish Committee delegation during their visit to India on March 7; the US Secretary of Commerce on March 9; the President of Japan International Cooperation Agency on March 10; the Minister of Trade & Industry of Singapore on March 13; the delegation from the Foreign Affairs Committee of the French National Assembly and the former PM of France on March 14; the President of the Rockefeller Foundation on March 20; the US Secretary of Air Force on March 21; and the Israeli Knesset Speaker on March 31.

18. EAM chaired the Parliamentary Consultative Committee for External Affairs on India's G20 Presidency on March 18.

19. EAM's other engagements included his address at the inaugural session of the National Convention on India's International Relations on March 17, meeting with MEA officers undergoing their Mid-Career Training Programme on March 22, attending the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the India International Centre on March 29, his telephonic conversation with the acting Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan on March 21, and meeting with the Secretary General for Foreign Policy of Chile.

MOS(VM)'s engagements:

20. MoS (VM) met Bahrain's Minister of Transportation & Communications in New Delhi on March 13 and spoke at the inaugural session of the 2nd G20 Sherpa Meeting at Kumarakom, Kerala on March 31.

MOS (ML) engagements:

21. MoS (ML) interacted with the Political Director to the Hungarian Prime Minister on March 2; Uruguay's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Armenia's Deputy Foreign Minister and the French delegation led by the French Minister for Europe & Foreign Affairs in New Delhi on March 3; Cuba's Minister and Vice Minister of Foreign Trade & Investment on March 13; and senior UNODC inter-divisional delegation on March 27. On March 14, MoS (ML) along with MoS for Communications and Ambassador of Luxembourg released the Joint Commemorative Stamp as part of celebrations of 75 years of diplomatic relations. MoS (ML) inaugurated the International Conference on "Shared Buddhist Heritage" on March 14 and interacted with the SCO Delegation on the concluding day of the Conference on March 15. MoS (ML) addressed the National Convention on India's International Relations organised by ICCR on the "Importance of India's G20 Presidency" on March 17. On March 28, MoS (ML) organised a seminar on "Seven Decades of Constitution of India" for the Diplomats Corps as part of our Presidency of AALCO & on the occasion of the 75 years of Indian Independence.

MOS (RRS)'s engagements:

22. MoS (RRS) paid an official visit to Qatar from March 6-7 for the Fifth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDC5) held in Doha on March 7. He also joined the panel at the LDC5 High-Level Thematic Round Table on March 6 and spoke at the LDC5 Ministerial Meeting on South-South cooperation on March 7. On the sidelines of the Conference, MoS (RRS) met with Cuba's Trade and Investment Minister, Yemen's Foreign Minister, Guinea's Minister of Planning and International Cooperation and Gambia's Foreign Minister on March 6, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam, the Foreign Minister of Zimbabwe, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tanzania and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Portugal on March 7, and the Foreign Ministers of Uganda and Solomon Islands on March 8. He also interacted with the Indian Diaspora in Doha. MoS (RRS)'s other engagements included his meeting with Bangladesh's MoS for Foreign Affairs on March 3; participation at the valedictory ceremony of the 70th Professional Course for Foreign Diplomats (PCFD) at SSIFS on March 31 and the 3rd Special Course for Diplomats from Pacific Island Countries held at SSIFS on

March 3; virtual participation at the 19th BIMSTEC Ministerial Meeting on March 9; address at the 3rd Edition of International SME Convention on March 20 and at the 2nd Conference on BIMSTEC: 25 Years of Driving Force behind Neighbourhood Cooperation on March 25.

FS's engagements

23. On March 2, FS hosted the inaugural dinner and on March 3, he participated in the panel discussion on "Currencies of power and persuasion: Reflections on the future" at the Raisina Dialogue 2023. On March 31, FS met MPs representing various political parties from Nepal and had an engaging discussion on promoting the India-Nepal relationship.

Other Multilateral engagements:

24. Secretary (East) led the Indian delegation at the East Asia Summit Senior Officials' Meeting (EAS SOM) held on 08 March in Jakarta.

25. On March 2, Secretary (CPV & OIA) and the Italian Ambassador signed India-Italy Declaration of Intent on Migration & Mobility Partnership. He also led the Indian delegation to the first India-GCC Senior Officers Meeting held in Riyadh on March 20.

26. Secretary (ER) met with G7 Sherpa of Japan, Mr. Ono Keiichi on 30 March.

BRICS

27. The following meetings were held in the month of March 2023: BRICS Sous-Sherpa Meeting on Institutional Development was held virtually on 7 March ; 8th BRICS Environment Working Group Meeting was held in Cape Town, South Africa from 7-9 March; 1st BRICS Contact Group on Economic and Trade Issues (CGETI) meeting under the South Africa Chairship of 2023 was held on 14-15 March in virtual mode; 1st BRICS PartNIR Advisory Group Meeting was held virtually on 22-23 March.

G7

28. During PM Kishida visit to India on 20-21 March, he invited the PM to the G7 Summit in Hiroshima (19-22 May 2023) and the same has been accepted by the PM.

29. As sub-event of the G7 Digital & Tech Ministers' Meeting, India participated in the Stakeholders' Conference on Digital Technologies for Trust (29th March 2023) organised by the Digital Agency of Japan.

IBSA

30. 1st IBSA Sous-Sherpas Meeting 2023 was held on 29 March virtually under the chairmanship of Brazil.

India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Afghanistan

31. India hosted the first India-Central Asia Joint Working Group on Afghanistan in New Delhi on March 7. The meeting was attended by the Special Envoys/Senior Officials of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Country representatives of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (UNODC) and the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) also participated in the meeting.

Indo-Pacific (IP)

32. Under the aegis of Indo-Pacific(IP), the following meetings were held: 25th **ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting** (AISOM) was held on 07 March in Jakarta; **East Asia Summit Senior Officials' Meeting** EAS SOM was held on 08 March in Jakarta; **the 5th ASEAN-India Business Summit** took place on 6 March in Kuala Lumpur; the **16th ADMM Pus EWG Meeting on Military Medicine** was held in Bangkok, Thailand from 19-22 March.

Quad

33. Indian delegation participated in the first in-person meeting of the **Quad Maritime Security Working Group** hosted by the US in Washington DC on 29-30 March; **Quad Maritime Security Working Group** meeting was hosted by USA on 31st March.

UNES

34. The long-awaited legally binding international agreement on the conservation of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (also known as BBNJ or 'High Seas Treaty') was agreed upon at UN Head Quarters, New York on 4th March, at the conclusion of the resumed 5th Session of the Intergovernmental Conference (IGC) at New York from 20 February-04 March 2023. After technical edits, the formal adoption of the agreement is expected in June 2023.

Foreign Office Consultations

35. **Iceland** :3rd India-Iceland FOC was held in New Delhi on March 6.

36. **Albania**: India and Albania held their 3rd FOC in New Delhi on 23 March .

37. **Chile**:The 8th India-Chile Foreign Office Consultations(FOC) was held on 31st March in New Delhi.

MOUs

38. **Belarus**: During 23-24 March, the Director and representatives of the Belarus Institute of Strategic Research participated in the SCO Thinktanks Conference hosted by ICWA in New Delhi. An MoU was signed between BISR and ICWA during the visit.

39. **Romania**: India and Romania signed Agreement on Defence Cooperation on 28 March 2023 during the visit of Mrs. Simona Cojocaru, State Secretary and Chief of the Department for Defence Policy, Planning and International Relations.
