



## Chapter - 6: India and the World

### Introduction

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) oversees India's foreign relations.
- MEA pursued a pragmatic and outcome-oriented foreign policy in **2023**.
- Goals included advancing India's national interest, strategic autonomy, security, and territorial integrity.
- MEA aimed to promote the **rules-based international order**.
- The approach involved strengthening bilateral, regional, and multilateral partnerships.
- India sought to build influence in key global fora.
- India's international prominence was attributed to domestic reforms and public service delivery.
- 2023 marked a significant moment in foreign policy, highlighted by India hosting the **G-20 Presidency** and its **Summit** meet in **New Delhi**.

### Overview

- Amid global challenges like conflicts, climate change, and economic instability, India emerges with renewed confidence.
- India strengthens foreign relations through high-level dialogues and engagements with global players.
- **Operation Kaveri in Sudan** showcases India's operational prowess, evacuating **4,000 people** from a conflict zone.
- Hosting the **SCO summit in 2023** bolsters India's geopolitical engagement.
- Cultural diplomacy flourishes with UNESCO World Heritage status for Hoysalas and Santiniketan, and the World Hindi Conference in Fiji, attended by 50 countries.
- **Varanasi is nominated as the first-ever SCO tourism** and cultural capital during India's SCO Presidency.
- India demonstrates its role as a **first responder** in crises by initiating search, rescue, and relief operations in response to **earthquakes in Turkey and Syria**.

### G-20 Presidency

- India assumed the Presidency of the G-20 on **December 1, 2022**, marking its **first** time holding this position.
- India used its Presidency to focus global attention on its solutions to pressing global challenges, such as climate action, food security, and the popularization of millets.
- Key themes of India's Presidency included an **inclusive human-centric approach** to development, leveraging technology for societal transformation, and advocating for reformed multilateralism.
- India aimed to make the G-20 more accessible to the people of India through widespread engagement, hosting over **200 meetings** in over 60 cities across 32 different work streams.
- India sought to incorporate the views and aspirations of the Global South while shaping the G-20 agenda.
- The Summit held in **New Delhi** on **September 9-10** was attended by leaders and representatives from various countries and international organizations.

- Despite geopolitical tensions, a landmark "**New Delhi Leaders' Summit Declaration**" was reached, showcasing India's mediating prowess and reflecting collective viewpoints on global issues.
- India successfully expanded the G-20 to include the African Union and initiated economic integration efforts like the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor.
- India launched the **Global Biofuels Alliance**, a multi-nation endeavour to champion biofuels, securing participation from numerous countries and international organizations.
- The G-20 Presidency represented a significant diplomatic victory for India, highlighting its growing influence on the world stage.

## Neighbourhood First

- The Neighbourhood First policy prioritizes India's relationships with neighbouring countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.
- It has been a key aspect of India's foreign policy since 2014, emphasizing historical, cultural, linguistic, and geographical ties within the region.
- South Asia's interconnectedness presents both opportunities and challenges, influencing India's foreign policy decisions significantly.
- The **Prime Minister** has outlined engagement **principles**: Samman (respect), Samvad (dialogue), Shanti (peace), and Samridhi (prosperity).
- The policy acknowledges that effective management of bilateral relations with neighbours is crucial for domestic security, economic growth, and strategic interests.
- India hosted the **10th Meeting** of the **BIMSTEC** Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime in **New Delhi in January 2023**.

## Afghanistan

- India and Afghanistan share deep historical, cultural, and people-to-people connections, forming the basis of their developmental partnership.
- The partnership revolves around **five key pillars**: infrastructure projects, human resource development, humanitarian assistance, high-impact community development projects, and enhancing trade and investment through air and land connectivity.
- India recently **hosted** the inaugural India-Central Asia Joint Working Group (JWG) meeting in **New Delhi in March**.
- The primary agenda of the JWG meeting was to address **humanitarian** and **security** issues in Afghanistan and their broader regional implications.

## Bangladesh

- The India-Bangladesh relationship is a significant aspect of India's Neighbourhood **First policy**.
- In 2023, there were numerous high-level exchanges and visits between the leaders of India and Bangladesh.
- In March 2023, the Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh jointly inaugurated the **India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline (IBFP)** in a **virtual** mode.
- Bangladesh is one of India's major trading partners in the subcontinent, with bilateral trade reaching USD 14.22 billion in 2022-23.
- India has been aiding Bangladesh in capacity building efforts, including the successful training of the **67th and 68th batches** of civil servants from Bangladesh. This training was conducted in partnership with the National Centre for Good Governance and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

## Bhutan

- The relationship between India and Bhutan has strengthened over time, encompassing traditional and new areas of cooperation such as hydropower, fin-tech, start-ups, ICT, health, culture, agriculture, space, tertiary education, digital, and financial connectivity.
- The King of Bhutan visited **India in 2023**, indicating the close ties between the two nations.
- Hydropower cooperation is a significant aspect of the **bilateral economic** partnership, providing

- Bhutan with revenue from power sales and India with a stable energy supply.
- Progress on hydropower projects like **Punatsangchhu-I and II**, and the handover of the 720 MW Mangdechhu HEP, were reviewed during bilateral discussions.
  - In space technology cooperation, a milestone was achieved with the launch of the **ISRO Nano Satellite 2** for Bhutan (INS-2B) in **2022** and the inauguration of the ground station for the **India-Bhutan SAT in Thimphu in March 2023**.
  - The satellite, launched aboard the **PSLV-C54**, is expected to provide Bhutan with high-resolution images for land mapping, natural resource management, agriculture, and forestry.

## Maldives

- Maldives is a crucial maritime neighbour for India in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), aligning with India's vision of '**SAGAR**' (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and the '**Neighbourhood First Policy**'.
- **Bilateral cooperation** between India and Maldives encompasses various aspects such as maritime security, connectivity, people-to-people exchanges, and infrastructure development.
- India has become Maldives' **second-largest trade partner**, holding approximately 13% of the market share for Indian exports.
- In May 2023, India's Defence Minister visited Maldives, engaging with the Maldivian President, Defence Minister, and Foreign Minister. During this visit, India handed over a Fast Patrol Vessel and a Landing Craft to Maldives and initiated the construction of the MNDF Coast Guard '**Ekatha Harbour**'.
- India has been actively assisting Maldives in capacity-building efforts, including customized training programs and participation in the **ITEC** (Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation) program.

## Myanmar

- Myanmar shares a border of approximately **1,700 km** with India, making it an important neighbouring country.
- It serves as India's land link to ASEAN and is integral to India's '**Neighbourhood First**' and '**Act East**' policies.
- India and Myanmar have strong historical, civilizational, and people-to-people ties.
- There are an estimated 1.5-2.0 million people of Indian origin living and working in Myanmar.
- India has a development cooperation portfolio of around USD 2 billion in Myanmar, with most projects being grant-in-aid.
- Projects like the Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project (**KMTTP**) and India Myanmar Thailand (**IMT**) Trilateral Highway focus on regional connectivity initiatives.
- The Sittwe Port, part of KMTTP, was inaugurated in **May 2023**, aiming to enhance connectivity between India's North-Eastern States and Myanmar, boosting bilateral trade.
- India provided humanitarian assistance under '**Operation Karuna**' after Cyclone **Mocha in May 2023**, delivering medical supplies and relief materials via 4 Indian Navy Ships, including food, tents, generators, medicines, hygiene items, etc.

## Nepal

- India and Nepal have a longstanding relationship based on historical, cultural, and people-to-people ties, including an open border.
- Both countries prioritize strong bilateral ties in accordance with the Neighbourhood **First policy**, focusing on connectivity in various sectors such as physical, economic, energy, digital, and cultural.
- Efforts have been made towards infrastructure development and capacity building in Nepal with Indian support.
- High-level visits and virtual meetings between leaders from both countries have strengthened engagement.
- In 2023, the Prime Minister of Nepal **visited India** for official talks with the Indian Prime Minister.
- Discussions during the visit covered various aspects of the bilateral agenda, including political, economic, trade, energy, security, and developmental cooperation.

- The leaders acknowledged the strong cooperation between the two countries during the **COVID-19 pandemic**.
- Several agreements were welcomed, including the revised Treaty of Transit and the Agreement for **Long-Term Power Trade**.
- Both countries supported the construction of Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) and initiated various connectivity projects.
- These initiatives reflect **India's H-I-T Policy** (Highways, I-ways, and Transways) towards Nepal.

## Pakistan

- India desires normal neighbourly relations with Pakistan.
- India's consistent position is that issues between both countries should be resolved bilaterally and peacefully, **without terror and violence**.
- Pakistan is urged to create a conducive environment for peaceful relations.
- Pakistan is accused of sponsoring cross-border terrorism against India.
- The Indian Government continues to pursue various issues with Pakistan, including the exchange of prisoners and fishermen, and organizing pilgrimages **under the 1974 Bilateral Protocol**.
- Since 2014, efforts by the Indian Government have led to the repatriation of 2669 Indian fishermen and 63 Indian civilian prisoners from Pakistan.
- The **Sri Kartarpur corridor**, inaugurated in **November 2019**, has been used by Indian pilgrims to visit Gurudwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in **Narowal, Pakistan**.

## Sri Lanka

- India-Sri Lanka relations in 2023 progressed under New Delhi's '**Neighbourhood First**' and **SAGAR policies**.
- High-level exchanges continued, highlighted by the Sri Lankan President's visit to India in July 2023.
- **MoUs were signed** on renewable energy, economic development in Trincomalee, cooperation in Animal Husbandry and Dairying, and a Network to Network Agreement for **UPI acceptance in Sri Lanka**.
- Indian Prime Minister announced projects worth Rs. 75 crores for Indian origin Tamils in Sri Lanka.
  - Commencement of Passenger Ferry Services between Nagapattinam (Tamil Nadu) and Kanke Santhurai (Sri Lanka) was declared.
  - Agreement to expedite work on connecting electricity grids and petroleum pipelines between the two countries.
- Participation in the **7th Deputy NSA** level meeting of the **Colombo Security Conclave (CSC)** in **July 2023** hosted by **Maldives**.
- Discussions focused on maritime safety, countering terrorism, combating trafficking, cyber security, and humanitarian assistance.
- India continues to assist Sri Lanka economically, providing assistance totaling close to USD 4 billion, including currency swap arrangements, Line of Credit for petroleum products, credit facility for essential items, and deferment of payment of liabilities.

## Relations with Other Countries

### United States of America

- The India-US Comprehensive Strategic Global Partnership is based on shared democratic values, convergence on security and strategic issues, and a shared vision of a rules-based international order.
  - Regular **high-level dialogues** between the Indian Prime Minister and the US President play a key role in guiding and enriching the relationship.
  - Interactions between the Prime Minister and the US President occur through **both virtual and in-person** meetings to review the bilateral relationship.
- Cooperation is maintained through various mechanisms including the India-US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, G20, QUAD, and other bilateral, plurilateral, and multilateral channels.
- Indian Prime Minister's **first state visit** to the US occurred in June 2023 at the invitation of



President Biden, resulting in several announced outcomes and initiatives in sectors such as Critical Technologies, defense, commerce, renewable energy, and people-to-people ties.

- Economic and commercial ties are significant, with the US being **India's largest trade partner in 2022** and **investments** growing in both directions.
- People-to-people ties are strong, with a vibrant Indian diaspora of **4.4 million** in the US and the US being a favored destination for Indian students and professionals.

### Russia

- Russia and India share a longstanding partnership across various sectors, forming a '**Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.**'
- Cooperation encompasses political, security, defense, trade, economy, science & technology, culture, and people-to-people ties.
- On April 18, the External Affairs Minister (EAM) co-chaired the **24th session** of the India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific & Cultural Cooperation.
  - This session occurred during the visit of the Russian Deputy Prime Minister to India.
  - Additionally, EAM chaired the SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) Council of Foreign Ministers in **Goa on May 5.**
  - During this event, EAM had a meeting with his Russian counterpart on the sidelines.
- On **June 30**, the Prime Minister of India held a telephone conversation with the President of Russia to assess and review the bilateral relationship.

### Europe and the European Union

- The European Union (EU) and India's Strategic Partnership saw advancements through political engagements and progress in trade and technology.
- The Prime Minister's visits to **Greece and France** further solidified the partnership.
- India-Greece relations were elevated to a '**Strategic Partnership**' during the PM's visit to **Greece.**
- On **14 May 2023**, the External Affairs Minister (EAM) attended the second EU Indo-Pacific Ministerial Forum in **Sweden.**
- EAM participated in the **first session of the India Trilateral Forum** with Europe and the US, alongside the Swedish Foreign Minister.
- In **Brussels on 16 May, EAM**, along with the Commerce and Industry Minister and Railways and Communications Minister, attended the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC), focusing on critical technology exchange.
- **Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni** visited India on 2-3 March 2023, elevating India-Italy ties to a 'Strategic Partnership.'
- Chancellor of Germany, Mr. Olaf Scholz, visited India on 25-26 February 2023, emphasizing economic and technological cooperation.
- Diplomatic conversations occurred with Ukraine's First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in April.
- Vice President represented India at King Charles III's coronation in the UK on **6 May.**
- The Prime Minister had telephonic discussions with counterparts from the UK and Denmark in April.
- The Prime Minister met the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission during the **G20 Summit in New Delhi.**

### Japan

- India and Japan maintain a '**Special Strategic and Global Partnership**' rooted in historical spiritual and cultural ties.
- Japanese Prime Minister **visited India in March** for the Japan-India summit.
- Indian Prime Minister **visited** Hiroshima, Japan, for the G-7 Summit in **May.**
- Both leaders participated in the **Quad Leaders' summit**, announcing initiatives on infrastructure, clean energy, cable connectivity, and Quad investors' network.
- The partnership encompasses various sectors like trade, investment, technology, culture, and people-to-people ties.
- Defense and security cooperation are crucial, marked by agreements, joint declarations, high-level exchanges, and a shared **vision for a free and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.**

## **Australia**

- India and Australia are **Comprehensive Strategic Partners**, witnessing rapid expansion in bilateral relations through high-level contacts and ministerial visits.
- Areas of cooperation include trade, investments, defense, security, renewable energy, migration, mobility, rare earths, and critical minerals.
- Key strategic dialogues like the India-Australia **Annual Summit**, 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue, Foreign Ministers' Framework Dialogue, and Foreign Ministers' Cyber Framework Dialogue have strengthened relations.
- Trade and economic relations improved with the operationalization of the **India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA) in 2022**.
- **Bilateral defence** collaboration has diversified with extensive exercises, visits, and interactions.
- Both nations advocate for a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- At the first India-Australia **Annual Summit in March 2023**, commitments were made to enhance bilateral relations.
- Prime Minister visits in May 2023 led to agreements to elevate the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the next decade.

## **Pacific Region**

- India's engagement in the Pacific region is crucial for its Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific vision.
- Relations with **Pacific Island Countries (PICs)** have been strengthened through high-level meetings and Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC).
  - FIPIC-III Summit co-hosted with Papua New Guinea in May 2023 introduced a **12-step action plan** covering cyber security, health, space, climate change, sustainable development, capacity building, and infrastructure development.
- Development cooperation is a key aspect of India's engagement with PICs, including capacity building, ICCR Scholarships, and loan assistance under **South-South Cooperation**.
  - PICs, vulnerable to climate change and natural disasters, receive significant Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) from India.
- Initiatives like International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CORI), and Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS) address both India's and the Pacific region's development needs.

## **QUAD**

- The Prime Minister participated in the **fifth** (third in-person) Quad Leaders' Summit in **Hiroshima, Japan in May 2023**.
- The Quad Leaders included counterparts from Australia, Japan, and the US.
- A Vision Statement was released during the summit, outlining a principled approach for **a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific**.
- The Vision Statement emphasized principles such as sovereignty, territorial integrity, and peaceful resolution of disputes.
- Initiatives were launched during the summit to promote various agendas, including climate action, infrastructure development, critical and emerging technologies, secure cyberspace, health security, maritime domain data sharing, space cooperation, and counter-terrorism efforts in the Indo-Pacific region.

## **Association of South East Asian Nations**

- India's relationship with ASEAN is a cornerstone of its foreign policy and Act East Policy.
  - India advocates for ASEAN centrality in the Indo-Pacific architecture.
  - Comprehensive engagement between India and ASEAN spans various sectors including foreign affairs, commerce, tourism, agriculture, environment, renewable energy, and telecommunication.
- Seven ministerial engagements occur regularly between India and ASEAN.
- In **September 2023**, Prime Minister of India participated in the 20th ASEAN-India Summit in **Jakarta**.
- Direct flight connections have been established between **India and Indonesia as well as**

## **Vietnam.**

- India and Singapore collaborated to integrate India's UPI with Singapore's PayNow in February 2023.
- The **India-ASEAN** comprehensive strategic partnership aims to enhance cooperation in maritime affairs, cybersecurity, digital economy, and emerging areas.
- The first Maritime Exercise between India and ASEAN in the South China Sea took place in May 2023.
- In May 2023, the King of Cambodia visited India, marking the **70th anniversary** of diplomatic relations between the two countries established in 1952.

## **West Asia**

- India's relations with Gulf countries deepened during **FY 2022-23** through high-level visits, increased trade and investment, and strengthening ties in various sectors including energy, security, defense, culture, education, health, and food security.
  - Gulf countries remained among India's top trading partners, with robust investment flows.
- Prime Minister visited the UAE in **July 2023** to enhance ties and reinforce commitments to deepen the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, promoting regional stability and prosperity.
- In September 2023, India and Saudi Arabia held the **first Leaders'** Meeting of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council, focusing on enhancing bilateral relations across multiple domains and discussing regional and international issues.
- Saudi Arabia facilitated **India's Operation Kaveri through Jeddah**, demonstrating its importance in bilateral cooperation.
- During the G20 summit, the proposal for the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was made, aiming to boost economic development by enhancing connectivity and economic integration between Asia, the Persian Gulf, and Europe.
- India's relations with Iran continued to grow in 2023, with both sides emphasizing bilateral cooperation in regional connectivity and reviewing progress at the Shahid Beheshti terminal, Chabahar port.

## **Africa**

- India and Africa share significant convergence, and India is committed to fostering cooperation with the African continent.
  - India played a crucial role in securing the African Union's permanent membership in the G20 during the Delhi summit.
- India has supported various development projects in Africa, including initiatives related to drinking water, irrigation, solar electrification, power plants, railways, agriculture, and healthcare.
  - These projects have significantly contributed to the socio-economic development of African nations.
  - India has extended over 200 lines of credit to support various developmental initiatives in Africa.
- Bilateral trade between India and Africa reached approximately \$98 billion during the 2022-23 period and continues to grow.
- India remains actively engaged with African nations to promote regional security, stability, and enhance defense capabilities

## **East & South Africa**

- India maintained multifaceted relations with all **15 countries** in East and Southern Africa throughout the year.
- India supported Zambia with a Line of Credit of USD 68 million for constructing 650 prefabricated Rural Health Posts, of which 563 are operational.
- **High-level meetings** between Botswana and the External Affairs Minister (EAM) took place in 2022 in Kevadia, Gujarat, to review bilateral relations and strengthen cooperation in various areas including health, trade, investment, defense, economic cooperation, training, and capacity building.
- India's naval ship INS Tabar visited **Mombasa Port, Kenya**, which was the only African country

where an Indian Naval Ship was deployed to hoist the Indian National Flag on Independence Day 2022, commemorating AKAM (Azaadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav).

## Central & West Africa

- Central & West Africa encompasses **25 countries in the west**, northwest, central, and southwest regions of Africa.
  - It is home to Africa's largest population and features rapidly growing economies, abundant energy, resources, and mineral reserves.
  - India relies on this region for approximately **18%** of its crude oil supply.
- Indian Missions operate in 20 out of the 25 countries within Central and West Africa.
- Development and progress characterize India's relations with these countries during 2022-2023.
- Various high-level delegations and bilateral meetings occurred during this period, including **DEFEXPO-2022** and the **India-Africa Defence Dialogue (IADD)**.
- India has extended over USD 5.3 billion in credit to the region, with USD 2 billion already utilized and USD 2.45 billion under implementation.

## West Asia and North Africa

- **West Asia and North Africa (WANA)** remains crucial for energy security, food security, and global peace.
  - India maintained relations with WANA countries through institutional dialogues and high-level visits.
- In 2023, India focused on enhancing ties with the UAE and Egypt.
- Strategic engagements aimed at boosting trade relations and diplomatic ties were conducted.
- Collaboration with the UAE started with the 12U2 Business Forum in Abu Dhabi in February.
- Meetings between respective Foreign Ministers were held during the BRICS summit in June.
- India-Egypt partnership was strengthened through reciprocal state visits in January and June.
  - The Egyptian President was the Chief Guest at India's **74th Republic Day parade**.
  - Indian Prime Minister visited Egypt to bolster strategic and trade relations.
  - India-Egypt ties were upgraded to a Strategic Partnership level.

## South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation and BIMSTEC

- India is a founding member of the South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC), **established in 1985**.
  - SAARC is a regional organization comprising **eight Member States**.
- India's participation in SAARC aligns with its '**Neighbourhood First**' and '**Act East**' policies.
- India actively supports various initiatives within SAARC to foster closer cooperation across different domains.
  - The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) connects South Asia with Southeast Asia and addresses India's regional concerns.
  - BIMSTEC focuses on India's core foreign policy priorities of 'Neighbourhood First' and 'Act East'.
  - India currently leads the Security sector among the seven priority sectors within **BIMSTEC**.
- The Security sector encompasses **three sub-sectors**: Counter Terrorism and Trans-national Crime (CTTC), Disaster Management, and Energy.

## Indian Ocean Region

- In 2023, India strengthened its relationship with island countries in the Western Indian Ocean Region through various engagements and interactions.
- Leadership-level engagements were held with Maldives and Mauritius, while Ministerial level interactions took place with other countries, providing guidance for advancing bilateral ties.
- India continued providing developmental assistance and capacity-building support to Indian Ocean Region (IOR) countries as per their requirements.



- India remained actively engaged at the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), being a founding member, with 23 Members and 10 Dialogue Partners, aiming to promote peace, security, and prosperity in the IOR and wider Indo-Pacific.
- India is committed to strengthening IORA and coordinates priority areas such as Disaster Risk Management (DRM) and Science, Technology, and Innovation.
- The relationship between India and Mauritius is significant, grounded in shared history, culture, and values like democracy and pluralism. It has expanded to include economic cooperation and maritime security.
- India and Mauritius cooperate in executing infrastructure development projects.
- India's relations with Seychelles also strengthened in 2023 across various sectors. Seychelles is a strategic partner for India in the Indian Ocean Region, cooperating in development partnership, defence, capacity building, and diaspora engagement.

## South East Asia & Indo-Pacific

- India's engagement with South-east Asian countries and Oceania is conducted through the Act East Policy framework.
- The Policy emphasizes economic cooperation, cultural ties, and strategic relationships at bilateral, regional, and multilateral levels.
- India and the region's countries support each other's interests in multilateral forums and commit to shared security, prosperity, and growth.
- Development cooperation, human resource development, and capacity building activities are essential for enhancing bilateral relationships.
- India advocates for a free, open, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific, respecting sovereignty and promoting peaceful dispute resolution.
- India aims for increased multi-faceted engagement with regional countries through initiatives like SAGAR (Security And Growth for All in the Region).
- Collaboration intensified throughout the year via Indo-Pacific frameworks such as ASEAN, EAS, and IORA.

## East Asia

### China

- India's engagement with China is complex, focusing on maintaining peace and tranquility in border areas until a final settlement on the boundary question is reached.
- Since April-May 2020, China has made unilateral attempts to alter the status quo along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the Western Sector, disrupting peace along the LAC and affecting bilateral relations.
- Indian Armed Forces responded appropriately to these attempts.
- Both sides agreed to resolve issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh through peaceful dialogue.
- Discussions have been ongoing to achieve complete disengagement from all friction points and restore peace and tranquility in the India-China Border Areas promptly.
- Despite efforts for dialogue, China's continued unilateral attempts to change the status quo have negatively impacted bilateral relations.

### Republic of Korea

- India and the Republic of Korea (ROK) maintained their status as Special Strategic Partners in 2023.
  - Prime Minister of India and ROK President held **two high-level meetings**, including one at the G2 Summit in New Delhi.
  - ROK Foreign Minister visited India in **April 2023**.
  - Companies from ROK are increasing their manufacturing presence in India.
- Bilateral trade between India and ROK has been steadily increasing.
- The partnership between India and ROK now spans various areas such as political, trade, investments, science and technology, education, energy, people-to-people connections, and cultural ties.

## **Eurasia**

- India maintains strong ties with Russia and other Eurasian countries.
- India **hosted** the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in **July 2023**.
- Bilateral relations with Eurasian nations are strengthened through engagements in various multilateral forums such as the UN, BRICS, SCO, G20, and CICA.

## **The Americas**

### **Canada**

- India and Canada maintain a strategic partnership marked by expanding economic relations and robust people-to-people connections.
- Canadian ministers actively engaged in G20 Ministerial **Meetings held in India**, showcasing the significance of bilateral ties.
- During the G-20 Summit in **September 2023 in New Delhi**, the Prime Minister of India had a meeting with his Canadian counterpart, highlighting the importance of high-level interactions in fostering diplomatic relations.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean**

- India intensified its diplomatic and economic engagements in the **Latin American and Caribbean (LAC) region in 2023**.
- Indian President met with Presidents of Guyana and Suriname during Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas, highlighting the historical ties with the Caribbean.
- Indian Prime Minister held a bilateral meeting with the President of Brazil during the G20 Summit.
- Indian Vice President engaged with counterparts from Guyana, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic.
- Indian External Affairs Minister (EAM) conducted bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers from Panama, El Salvador, Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, and Honduras.
- The President of India attended the **7th CELAC Summit in January** as a special guest, aiming to strengthen relationships in the region.

### **United Nations and International Organisations**

- India staunchly supports the rules-based international order and actively participates in promoting international cooperation and multilateralism.
- India plays a leading role in advocating for multilateralism and reform of the global order at the **United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)**.
- Efforts are ongoing to reform the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**, with India engaging in extensive outreach and coordination with groups like the **G-4 and L-69** to achieve meaningful reform.
- India **voices** concerns on **global issues** such as climate change, sustainable development, and counter-terrorism.
  - India utilizes its **non-permanent membership** in the UNSC to address global security challenges, particularly focusing on issues like Afghanistan, Syria, and the conflict in Ukraine.
- In **October 2022**, Prime Minister and the UN Secretary-General launched Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment), gaining significant traction with endorsements from over 100 countries and various stakeholders.
- India has a strong record of establishing international organizations like the International Solar Alliance and the Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure.
- India hosted the **first-ever meeting** of the UN Security Council in India in **2022**, in the form of a Special Meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee in **Mumbai and New Delhi**.
- India's removal from the UN Secretary-General's 2023 Report on Children and Armed Conflict (CAAC) after 12 years of being featured as a 'situation of concern' reflects intensive engagement by the Government of India with the Secretary-General's representative on CAAC.

## **Climate Change**

- India actively contributes to the global fight against climate change despite historically low contributions to global warming and current greenhouse gas emissions being one-third of the global average.
- India engages in multilateral negotiations under the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** positively and forward-looking.
- India consistently makes ambitious commitments under the framework and implements domestic actions to meet its climate change goals.
- India enhanced its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) in **August 2022** and submitted its Long-Term **Low Emission Development Strategy (LT-LEDS)** for net-zero emissions by 2070 to the UNFCCC in the same year.
- India, with partner countries, has initiated **global initiatives** like the International Solar Alliance (ISA), Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI), Infrastructure for Resilient Island States (IRIS), and Leadership Group on Industry Transition (LeadIT).
- In September 2023, the **Global Biofuel Alliance** was launched by the Prime Minister, along with leaders from Singapore, Bangladesh, Italy, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Mauritius, and UAE, to accelerate the global uptake of biofuels at the C20 Summit in New Delhi.

## Counter Terrorism

- India actively fights terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
  - It engages internationally to **counter terrorism and transnational crime**.
- India is a **founding member** of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA).
  - It supports CICA's initiatives and actively participates in its activities.
- During India's G-20 Presidency, counter-terrorism received high priority.
- Serious efforts have been made to achieve effective global counter-terrorism measures.
- In March 2023, during the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting, India successfully concluded a **separate section** on counter-terrorism in the outcome document.
- The New Delhi Leaders' **Declaration recognizes** terrorism as one of the most serious threats to international peace and security.

## Disarmament & International Security Affairs

- India actively participated in multilateral forums focusing on **disarmament, non-proliferation, and international security**.
  - Indian engagement considered its national security interests and priorities on the global security stage.
- Bilateral engagements were **held by India**, presenting its perspectives on these issues in regional forums during 2022-23.
- India's contributions emphasized its commitment to universal and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.
- India supported **global peace and security** in various domains including space, maritime, and weapons of mass destruction.
- India responded to evolving international security environments and initiatives by various countries.
- In January 2023, India assumed the **Plenary Chairmanship of the Wassenaar Arrangement for a one-year term**.
- The Wassenaar Arrangement is a multilateral export control regime for conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies.

## Cyber Diplomacy

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is increasingly utilized for **social and economic development globally**, leading to cyber issues becoming significant topics in diplomatic discussions worldwide.
  - **The Cyber Diplomacy Division of the Ministry** serves as the focal point for discussions on cyber security, data protection, cybercrime, and internet governance in India.
- Various government stakeholders, such as the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS),

Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre, Defence Research and Development Organisation, and Department of Telecommunication, collaborate with the Cyber Diplomacy Division on cyber-related matters.

- India's cybersecurity agencies are engaged in numerous regional and international bodies and frameworks, including the **Asia-Pacific CERT**.
- India actively participates in cyber dialogues, conferences, and conventions to express its perspectives, influence global cyber policies, and enhance its cyber security posture.

## Economic Diplomacy

- **Economic Diplomacy Division (ED)** is a crucial economic component within the Ministry.
- ED collaborates with various entities such as Indian Missions/Posts abroad, territorial divisions of the Ministry, Government of India ministries/departments, state governments, and foreign Missions/Posts in India.
  - The **primary objectives** of ED include facilitating foreign investment inflows and fostering bilateral trade, tourism, and education.
    - ED also handles matters related to healthcare, energy security, food security, UPI/Rupay, civil aviation, and medical value travel.
- The division aims to establish India as a reliable, dependable, and transparent player in building risk-controlled and resilient supply chains.
- Additionally, ED actively participates in investment treaty negotiations with partner nations to facilitate smoother foreign investment flow into India.
- Another significant focus of ED is promoting settlement of trade transactions in INR (Indian Rupee).

## Development Partnership

- India's development assistance has significantly increased in recent years, including projects, grants, loans, and training programs, covering numerous countries.
  - Projects are tailored to **partner countries'** needs and cover all stages from **conception to completion**.
- India's development cooperation includes grant assistance, Lines of Credit (LOC), technical consultancy, disaster relief, humanitarian aid, heritage restoration, educational scholarships, and capacity-building programs.
  - **Developmental projects** are underway in neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, and Maldives, covering various sectors including infrastructure, hydroelectricity, agriculture, education, health, and connectivity.
- Iconic projects completed with Indian grant assistance include the Afghan-India Friendship Dam, Afghan Parliament Building, ENT hospital project in Mauritius, Metro Express Project in Mauritius, Jaffna Cultural Centre in Sri Lanka, and Supreme Court building in Mauritius.
- India engages in **triangular cooperation** with partners like the US, France, and Germany for development assistance.
- **Bilateral projects** extend to regions beyond the neighbourhood, including South East Asia, Oceania, Central Asia, Africa, and Latin America, covering sectors such as energy, transportation, agriculture, and information technology.
- India's initiative to restore heritage monuments abroad involves the Ministry of Culture's expertise, with projects completed in **21 countries**, including the renowned Angkor Wat restoration.

## Diplomacy for Development

- Prime Minister's vision: **Aim to achieve a Viksit Bharat by 2047**.
- Integration of foreign relations with domestic renewal: Human-centric development as a key aspect of diplomatic strategy.
- **Strengthened global relations:** Resulted in economic benefits for India.
- **Economic advantages:** Increased foreign investments, collaborative technology ventures leading to factory setups and job creation.
- Objectives of Indian Missions abroad: Enhancing trade, acquiring technology, and promoting Indian tourism.



- **Linking diplomacy with development initiatives:**
  - Initiatives include Make in India, Skill India, Smart Cities, Digital India, and Start-up India programs.
- **Strategic synchronization:** Enhances India's global standing and boosts internal growth.
- **Future vision:** Self-reliant India thriving through international cooperation and domestic innovation.
- Increased interest from business leaders: Growing enthusiasm to invest in India's growth story.

## **Overseas Indian Affairs**

- India prioritizes development through global coalitions and emphasizes safe migration pathways for its citizens for economic and professional growth.
- Fresh negotiations for **agreements on migration and mobility partnerships, as well as labour and manpower issues**, are underway with multiple countries.
- The Indian diaspora has grown extensively worldwide, both vertically and horizontally, and engaging with them is a key focus to advance Indian interests internationally.
- Cultural diplomacy and outreach initiatives with the Indian diaspora have seen a notable rise, complementing existing engagement programs.

### **Safe and Legal Migration**

- India promotes legal migration and conducts outreach programs with state governments to educate stakeholders about the benefits of safe and legal migration.
- The Ministry released a commemorative **Postage Stamp in January 2023** during the **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** Convention to raise awareness about safe migration.
  - Indian Missions and Protector of Emigrant offices take quick action against exploitation of workers by foreign employers and illegal agents.
- **Complaints of exploitation** are addressed by Missions with local authorities and forwarded to state police for appropriate action.
- The government has established various mechanisms like the e-Migrate system, MADAD portal, Indian Community Welfare Fund, Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojana, Pravasi Bhartiya Sahayata Kendras, and helplines at Indian Missions to assist Indian migrants abroad.

### **e-Governance in Emigration (e-Migrate) Project**

- The e-Migrate project, **initiated in 2016**, aims to facilitate the emigration process for ECR (Emigration Check Required) category workers moving to notified countries for employment.
  - It acts as a platform to streamline recruitment processes, reducing malpractices in emigration.
  - The portal offers a contactless and paperless process for Foreign Employers (FES) and Registered Recruiting Agents (RAs), serving as a fully digitized **B-2-B platform**.
- It maintains an online database of emigrants accessible to various stakeholders like Missions, RAs, FES, and Insurance Agencies, ensuring transparency and authentication of credentials.
  - **Integration with the Passport Seva Project (PSP)** of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) enables validation of passport details for emigrant workers registering on the portal.
  - **Integration with the Bureau of Immigration (BOI)** portal facilitates online validation of Emigration Clearance at Immigration Check Posts and international airports across India.
- The e-Migrate portal allows **voluntary registration** for migrants holding ECNR passports moving to ECNR countries, granting access to benefits under the **Pravasi Bhartiya Bima Yojna (PBBY)**.
- The Ministry plans to expand the portal further, including increasing the number of job categories eligible for registration.

### **Consular, Passport and Visa Services**

- The Consular, Passport and Visa (CPV) Division of the Ministry of External Affairs focuses on providing citizen-centric services as part of 'Ease of Doing Business' and '**Ease of Living for Citizens**'.
  - The Ministry prioritizes enhancing the delivery of these services through digital platforms to offer assistance and benefits to Indian citizens both within India and abroad in a more

effective, timely, and transparent manner.

- In 2023, the eSEWA digital Portal was fully operational in all Indian Missions/Posts abroad, except where CPV services have not been outsourced, facilitating miscellaneous consular services online.
- Efforts are ongoing to broaden **the scope of the e-Sanad online portal**, aiming to provide seamless, cashless, efficient, and hassle-free attestation/apostille services through a digital platform by onboarding more Document Issuing Authorities (DIAs) in India.
  - In 2015, the Ministry launched the online Consular Assistance Management System (**MADAD**) to provide a digital platform for addressing and monitoring grievances, promoting quick and transparent resolution processes.
    - MADAD has proven to be effective in **registering and resolving** consular grievances, becoming a trusted tool for rendering consular services in a timely manner.
  - In 2022-23, Visa **Exemption/Waiver Agreements** were signed/operationalized with several countries for holders of diplomatic and/or official/service passports.
- Since the inception of the **PIO/OCI scheme in 2005**, over 47 lakhs OCI cards have been issued, indicating significant uptake and utilization of the scheme.

### **Passport Seva Programme**

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has prioritized passport issuance as a key citizen-centric service.
  - MEA has implemented both **quantitative and qualitative improvements** in consular and passport services.
- Indian passports, along with other travel documents like Certificate of Identity to Stateless persons, Emergency Certificates, Police Clearance Certificates, and Surrender Certificates, are issued by the Ministry.
- The Central Passport Organisation (CPO) and its network of **37 Passport Offices** handle passport issuance.
- The Passport Seva Programme (PSP), a Mission Mode Project, is executed through Public Private Partnership (PPP) with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) as the service provider.
  - As of September 2023, there are **525 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs)** functioning across India, including PSKs and POPSKS.
- Passport-related services for Indians residing abroad are provided through Indian missions/posts abroad.
- **181 Indian Missions/Posts** have been integrated into the Passport Seva Programme.