

**Ministry of External Affairs
Policy Planning and Research Division**

Overview of Major Achievements during the month of July 2021

I. Achievements pertaining to citizen-centric:

1. On July 9, India and Nepal signed a Letter of Exchange to bilateral Rail Services Agreement. It would allow the private sector to carry Nepal's freight, reducing cost and improving efficiency.
2. BHIM UPI was jointly launched in Bhutan on 13 July 2021 by the Finance Minister of India and the Finance Minister of Bhutan. With the launch, Bhutan becomes the first country to adopt UPI standards for its QR deployment and the first country in the immediate neighborhood to accept mobile based payments through the BHIM app. This initiative is expected to boost Bhutan's economy, promote integration of the financial systems and augment cashless transactions between the nationals of India and Bhutan.
3. India and the United States signed the Second Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development on July 30. This extends the validity of the SGP Agreement up-to 2026.
4. A half-day online workshop on RTI related matters was conducted on July 27. This was the fourth such workshop held by the Ministry for CPIOs/Appellate Authorities. Over 400 officers and officials from India and various Missions/Posts abroad participated. MoS (ML) delivered the Keynote Address at the workshop and stressed the importance of sharing of information for transparency and accountability in Government.

II. Diplomatic Engagements and other Interactions:

1. On July 5, Prime Minister (PM) addressed the 'Co-WIN Global Conclave'. Over 140 countries participated in the Conclave. Close to 400 delegates from these countries, besides representatives from European Commission and UN Offices in India, attended the event. Several countries have expressed interest in utilizing the Co-WIN platform for their own vaccination programmes.
2. PM addressed the inauguration of the International Cooperation and Convention Centre – Rudraksh in Varanasi on July 15 2021. Ambassador of Japan to India participated in the event.
3. PM held telephonic conversations with the President of Maldives and Prime Ministers of Nepal and Vietnam during the month.

4. President-Elect of the 76th United Nations General Assembly and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives visited India from July 22-24, 2021. During the visit, he called on PM and EAM on July 23. He shared his vision for the UNGA Presidency through a virtual public address titled, "Presidency of Hope: COVID Pandemic and Need for Reformed Multilateralism" organised by ICWA. Foreign Secretary met him on July 22 and conveyed India's support to his leadership of 76th UN General Assembly.

5. US Secretary of State visited India on July 27-28. This was his first visit to India after assuming charge. During the visit, he called on PM, EAM and NSA. Discussions focused on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Indo-Pacific region, Afghanistan and cooperation in the UN.

6. EAM visited Iran, Russia, Georgia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan during July. In Iran, he called on the President-elect of Iran on July 7 and handed over a personal message from the Prime Minister. EAM also held significant discussions with his Iranian counterpart during the visit.

7. During his visit to Russia from July 7-9, EAM called on the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and other key officials of the Russian Government. EAM delivered a speech on *"India-Russia ties in a Changing World"* at the Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations, Moscow on July 8 2021.

8. During his visit to Georgia on July 9-10, EAM called on the President, Prime Minister, Vice Prime Minister, Foreign Minister and Economy Minister of Georgia. EAM handed over the Holy Relic of St. Queen Ketevan to the Government of Georgia. He also unveiled the newly installed statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Tbilisi.

9. On July 13-14, EAM visited Tajikistan to take part in the meeting of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers. He also participated in the meeting of the SCO Contact Group on Afghanistan on July 14. EAM, along with other SCO Foreign Ministers, called on the President of Tajikistan. EAM met his counterparts from Tajikistan, China, Uzbekistan and Afghanistan on the sidelines.

10. EAM visited Tashkent on July 16 to participate in the "Central and South Asia: Connectivity" Dialogue. In his intervention, EAM proposed to include Chabahar port in the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) framework for unhindered access to the sea for Central Asian countries. On the sidelines, EAM met Presidents of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan and discussed regional and global developments. He also had meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Kazakhstan; UK Minister of State for Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Affairs; US Special Representative for Afghanistan Reconciliation; and High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs.

11. EAM met the Chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation of Afghanistan

in New Delhi on July 23.

12. EAM addressed the inaugural session of the first edition of the Indo-Pacific Business Summit on July 6; delivered the keynote address at the inaugural session of the 16th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India and Africa Project Partnership on July 13; and co-chaired the 11th Mekong-Ganga Cooperation meeting on July 22nd.

13. EAM held telephonic calls with his counterparts from Cyprus, South Africa and Iran during July.

14. On July 1, MoS (VM) virtually interacted with Indian community in Romania, Moldova and Albania. He had a virtual interaction with the State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia on July 2.

15. MOS (VM) paid an official visit to Guatemala from July 4-6. During the visit, he called on the President of Guatemala and conveyed to him the greetings of the Government and the people of India for the 200th Year of Guatemala's Independence. He also met the Foreign Minister and Minister of Economy of Guatemala and reviewed the progress in the bilateral relations as well as regional and multilateral cooperation.

16. MoS (VM) delivered remarks at the Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of the Non Aligned Movement on July 14; addressed the 16th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnership on July 15; and addressed the first Ministerial meeting on Indentured Labour Route Project (ILRP) organised by the Government of Mauritius on July 16 2021.

17. On July 28, MoS (VM) launched the Pre-Departure Orientation Training (PDOT) portal for migrant workers. PDOT is one of the several initiatives and mechanisms of the Ministry to ensure a safe, orderly, legal and humane migration process within the framework of our motto '*SurakshitJaaye, PrashikshitJaaye, VishwaskeSaathJaaye*'.

18. MoS (ML) presented India's perspective on 'Culture and Creative Sectors as Drivers for Growth' in G20 Cultural Ministers' meeting on July 30, 2021.

19. MoS (RRS) inaugurated the BRICS Civil Forum 2021, organised by RIS on July 28. He noted its potential to evolve into a permanent repository and knowledge platform for all BRICS Civil Forum activities in future.

20. Foreign Secretary visited New York to participate in the High Level UN Security Council briefing on UN Support Mission in Libya held on July 15. He also delivered a statement at the UNSC "Briefing on Protection of Civilians in Armed Conflict: Preserving Humanitarian Space" on July 16. He also called on the UN Secretary General in New York.

21. Foreign Secretary visited the UK and met Permanent Under-Secretary, Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and Minister of State, Foreign, Commonwealth &

Development Affairs on July 23.

22. The India-Japan Forum was organised by Ananta Aspen Centre on July 20. Foreign Secretary delivered the opening remarks in my capacity as the Co-Chair of the Forum. India-Japan Forum provides a platform for exchange of ideas, bringing together government, industries, think tanks and media to promote India - Japan Special Strategic and Global Partnership. EAM also participated in the event.

23. Secretary (ER) held the 2nd Foreign Office Consultations with Gana during the month. He also visited Guinea Bissau on July 5-6 for the first ever bilateral visit from India. He called on the President and Deputy Prime Minister and held delegation level discussions with the Secretary of State for international cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

24. On July 06, Secretary (East) spoke at the Special Session of the 1st edition of the Indo-Pacific Business Summit. On July 22, she met Ambassadors of the Pacific Alliance: Colombia, Chile, Mexico and Peru. On July 28, Secretary (East) spoke at a webinar organised by the Australian Consulate in Kolkata and Asian Confluence, a think tank, underlining India's vision for Indo-Pacific region.

25. On July 8, Secretary (CPV&OIA) addressed the Indo-Pacific Business Summit on 'Future of Jobs: Skilled Workforce to meet Employment Opportunities in the New World Order'.

26. Kakatiya Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple in Telangana and 'Dholavira: A Harappan City' in Gujarat were recently inscribed as UNESCO's World Heritage Sites.

27. The 6th meeting of the BRICS Counter Terrorism Working Group (CTWG) was held virtually on July 28-29 under the Chairship of India. The main outcome of the Working Group meeting was the finalisation of the BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan containing specific measures to implement the BRICS Counter Terrorism Strategy.