

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY
(DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE)

LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 3646
ANSWERED ON 17/12/2024

NEW BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

3646. SHRI E T MOHAMMED BASHEER:

Will the Minister of **COMMERCE & INDUSTRY** (वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री) be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the Government has proposed for any new bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in trade, defence, and technology with neighbouring and allied countries, if so, the details thereof;
- (b) the extent to which India benefited from recent multilateral initiatives in areas like climate change, counter-terrorism, and public health; and
- (c) the details of steps taken by the Government to strengthen cooperation with BRICS and ASEAN nations?

ANSWER

वाणिज्य और उद्योग मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री (श्री जितिन प्रसाद)

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
(SHRI JITIN PRASADA)

(a) India is currently negotiating Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with the United Kingdom, the European Union, Oman, Australia (comprehensive agreement building on India-Australia Economic Co-operation and Trade Agreement), Peru and Sri Lanka. Moreover, India has also initiated review of its existing FTAs, namely India-South Korea Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITIGA). Further, the Government has proposed new bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in Science & Technology (S&T) with neighbouring and allied countries. Finalization on an MoU with Nepal in the area of S&T is underway. The Government also has bilateral agreements to enhance cooperation in different areas of S&T with a few allied countries.

(b) India's recent multilateral initiatives in areas like climate change, counter-terrorism, and public health are as under:

Climate change

- During India's G20 Presidency, the Green Development Pact for a Sustainable Future was adopted by G20 countries in the New Delhi Leader's Declaration, reflecting a commitment to sustainable development. Additionally, on July 4 2024, India signed an environmental protection agreement with Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states in Astana, Kazakhstan aiming to enhance climate change cooperation.

- India has been actively leading global efforts in industry decarbonization through the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) launched in 2019 in collaboration with Sweden. LeadIT, with 41 members (18 countries and 23 companies), facilitates dialogue, technology transfer and financial support to accelerate the transition of heavy industries towards low-carbon solutions. At COP28 (Conference of the Parties) in Dubai, India and Sweden launched LeadIT 2.0 and the India-Sweden Industry Transition Partnership (ITP), which focuses on decarbonizing the steel and cement sectors by promoting innovation, research, and financing.

Counter-Terrorism

- India has consistently highlighted its concerns about the threat of terrorism, particularly cross-border terrorism, during interactions with global partners and has succeeded in getting references to these concerns reflected in the agreements.
- The 3rd No Money for Terror (NMFT) Ministerial Conference, held in New Delhi on 18-19 November 2022, addressed global trends in terrorism and terror financing, focusing on illicit fund flows, the use of both formal and informal channels for funding, and the misuse of emerging technologies by terrorists. India's Union Home Minister proposed establishing a permanent NMFT Secretariat to maintain global focus on countering terror financing. The Delhi Declaration (October 2022) emphasized the misuse of virtual platforms by terrorists and was praised by the UNSC. The Kazan Declaration (October 2024) condemned terrorism, rejected its politicization, and emphasized combating tech misuse and cross-border terrorism.
- These multilateral initiatives in the counter terrorism sphere have brought this agenda into focus, raised awareness of the comity of nations and helped India garner support on the issue of terrorism. It has also helped in positive narrative building for India.
- In addition, Ministry of Home Affairs has signed Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) with 46 countries and one Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Convention and 44 bilateral agreements/Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) on Security Cooperation, Narcotic Drugs and other related fields.

Public Health

- India has participated at various multilateral forums to showcase its achievements and commitments in health sector such as G20, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) and G7 meetings. These participations highlight India's focus on advancing digital health, developing TB vaccines, addressing Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) through a 'One Health' approach, traditional & complementary medicine and emphasizing the need for improved surveillance systems, sustainable practices and investments in research and technology to tackle global health challenges effectively.

(c) India actively participates in the various discussions and processes of BRICS and supports BRICS cooperation spanning from economic, political, cultural and people-to-people exchanges.

Further, Missions, line Ministries and the Indian Leadership have been participating in various bilateral meetings/Summits as well as multilateral meetings/Summits convened under the ASEAN led mechanisms. Work plans have been developed to implement the initiatives, projects and activities agreed upon by both sides keeping in view mutual interests and priorities. The ASEAN-India partnership has been elevated to the Comprehensive Strategic Partner level in 2022, which is the highest level of engagement of any dialogue partner country with ASEAN.
