

## **India needs multi-pronged approach to boost commercial ties**

Government of India is working to promote India's exports through its 197 Indian Missions or Posts created across more than 140 countries. In 2020-21, Government of India earmarked Rs. 17,346 crore for the Ministry of External Affairs of this Rs. 2994 crore or 17% of this fund was allocated for Indian Missions and posts abroad. Under the Ministry of External Affairs, the expenditure allocation for Indian Missions and Posts abroad is the second largest after Technical and Economic Cooperation, under which the Indian government provides training and capacity building to foreign government officials.

The current sanctioned strength of the Ministry of External Affairs is 4297, of which 2298 people or around 53% are working in missions and posts abroad. The government is in the process of opening 18 new missions in Africa, of which nine have already been opened in Rwanda, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Eswatini, Eritrea and Cameroon.

The government has launched a website on Economic Diplomacy to facilitate our Missions and Posts abroad respond effectively to the growing demands of the Indian trade and industry. The website provides valuable data and information about economic potential of Indian states, sector-wise trade and investment potential, emerging commercial opportunities in various countries etc.

The government aims to enhance the engagement of state governments in increasing trade, investment and other commercial partnership with foreign countries. The central government has started training senior officers of state governments in the modalities of international engagement. State governments and municipal bodies can play an active role in entering into Sister-State and Sister-City agreements with their counterparts in foreign countries. Some of the ongoing initiatives in this regard are: the partnership between Kozhikode Municipal body of India with its counterpart in Sines, Portugal. Similarly, India's Port Blair Island agreed to partner with the Indonesian town of Sabang to improve port connectivity and tourism. Similar partnerships have been envisaged or already implemented between Saas Fee (Switzerland) and Almora (Uttarakhand), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam) and Mumbai, Chiang Mai Province (Thailand) and Assam, Guanzhou City (China) and Chennai in recent years.

Promoting exports of agro commodities is one of the focus areas of our trade missions abroad. The government has developed country-specific export strategies for farm products and identified 15 focus countries to promote exports. These countries are: Argentina, Bangladesh, Brazil, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Singapore, UAE, Ukraine, USA, and Vietnam.

In recent years, India has opened air cargo corridor with Afghanistan, set up agro export certification facility at India-Bhutan border and launched container cargo transport through inland waterways (via. Pangaon) for Bangladesh.

Some of these diplomatic efforts have borne fruits, in terms of growing bilateral trade volume. For instance, India's exports to Afghanistan has risen 89% between 2015-16 and 2019-20 because of India's financial support for several development projects in that country. India's exports to the west central African country Cameroon has grown 28% to USD 228.45 million in 2019-20 from the previous year, after the opening of our Mission in Yaoundé in September 2019. India's two-way trade with the 33 Latin

American and Caribbean countries has grown five-fold in the last five years to USD 38 billion, largely because of the efforts of Indian industry and also the diplomatic efforts of the government.

Enhancing commercial relations is a multi-pronged approach that needs sustained efforts at all levels, viz. the government, business and civil society. India needs to enhance this diplomatic effort to promote bilateral trade, investment, joint venture and technology cooperation with foreign countries. India's state governments, public sector organizations, large corporate houses, premier research institutions and start-up enterprises can also play a major role in boosting our commercial partnership with foreign countries.

## Notifications

### PIB

India-Israel sign three-year work program on Agriculture cooperation

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1721269>

Bihar exports first consignment of GI tagged Shahi Litchi

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1721322>

FDI inflow rises 10% to a record USD 81 billion in FY21

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1721268>

India to begin hallmarking of Gold Jewellery from June 15, 2021

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1721393>

TRIFED and NITI Aayog to partner for implementing Van Dhan Yojana in 39 tribal districts

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaseDetail.aspx?PRID=1721273>