



# INDIA-SWEDEN STRATEGIC COMPASS

A BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY ISDP'S STOCKHOLM CENTER FOR SOUTH ASIAN AND INDO-PACIFIC AFFAIRS

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## SPECIAL FEATURE

### India's Historic G20 Presidency: Achievements, Challenges, and Global Implications

The G20 Summit under India's Presidency was held in New Delhi on September 9-10, 2023. India engaged in an active and effective year-long people-centric promotion not just of its (first) G20 Presidency agenda, reflecting India's growing global prestige and power, but also to revive the declining G20 multilateralism as a whole. For such purposes, the India-led summit focused on issues such as global health access, climate resilience, inclusive growth, food and energy security, and digital innovation, giving Global South concerns the front stage.

However, there were critical factors overshadowing the summit. As the Chinese President Xi Jinping skipped the G20 forum and sent Premier Li Qiang in his stead, there was room for speculation on the worsening state of India-China relations. While some in India believed that Xi's decision was rooted in Beijing's discomfort with India's economic and geopolitical rise, some Chinese experts blamed India's participation in the Quad grouping and the military confrontation in the Himalayas as significant issues that led to Xi skipping the summit. Nonetheless,

official versions from both China and India belied such negative reports and maintained that India-China bilateral ties were stable.

Another divisive factor was about addressing Russia's continuing war in Ukraine while not taking the focus away from the summit's core concerns. Russian President Vladimir Putin was expectedly absent for the second year running after Bali in 2022, and Russia was represented by Foreign Affairs Minister Sergei Lavrov. However, unlike South Africa that had to take into consideration the International Criminal Court (ICC) warrant against Putin as it prepared to host the BRICS summit in late August 2023, India which is not a member of the ICC, nor is a signatory to its "Rome Statute," was under no such obligations. Nonetheless, India had bigger responsibilities, including the onus of not radically alienating Russia, a partner for several Global South states including India, while sending across the message of peace and territorial integrity, as well as coordinating a viable, unified developmental action plan for the future that mitigated the West-East and North-South divides.

In this context, India's ability to reach a consensus on the language concerning the war in Ukraine and a joint G20 declaration was a hard-fought diplomatic win for



India. Another significant diplomatic milestone was the inclusion of the African Union (AU) as a permanent member of the G20. The AU became the second regional bloc to enter the permanent member club of top 20 world economies after the European Union (EU). The AU's admission marks a pivotal point in India's ambitions to provide the Global South with a greater voice in global politics, a move greatly welcomed especially by leaders from African nations.

The focus on debt relief for poor countries; the reform of international financial institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF); and proactively pursuing sustainable development goals, including women-led development and green development were also part of the crucial declaration outcomes. Agreements on cryptocurrency regulations and digital public infrastructure as a means of financial inclusion are also noteworthy for bridging the technological divide. The announcement of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the India-led Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA) were two significant events of the summit.

Overall, India's 2023 G20 Presidency has been rather momentous in terms of both its ambition and achievements, with 112 outcomes and presidency documents. U.S. President Joe Biden conveyed this perfectly in his assessment of India's G20 leadership when he stated: "At a moment when the global economy is suffering from the overlapping shocks of the climate crisis, fragility, and conflict, this year's Summit proved that the G20 can still drive solutions to our most pressing issues."

*Sources: PIB, September 9; Print, March 19; Council on Foreign Relations, September 5; Nikkei Asia, September 8; Firstpost, September 4; The Straits Times, September 6; TRT World 9 September; @WilliamsRuto, September 9; Reuters, September 9; The Guardian, September 9; @AUC\_MoussaFaki, September 9; Merco Press, September 9; @AfricanUnion, September 9; World Economic Forum, October 19*

### **IMEC: Time's Ripe for the Mega Connectivity Project to Energize Historic Collaborations?**

On September 9, at the sidelines of the 2023 G20 Summit in New Delhi, the EU, India, Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. announced a mega deal to establish the India-

Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). It is a cross-border multimodal "physical, digital, and financial" connectivity project among the countries in South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe that aims to improve regional integration. The project will be developed under the G7 Partnership for the Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) initiative and is arguably presented as a competitive response to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) – a project that is fast losing appeal with even Italy reportedly considering withdrawing from the BRI.

It will consist of two corridors, namely the eastern corridor connecting India with the Gulf countries, and the northern corridor connecting the Arabian Gulf with Europe. It aims to build resilient ship-to-rail transit networks for cost-effective goods and services trade between South Asia, the Middle East, and Europe. For now, the memorandum of understanding (MoU) on the project has been signed by India, Italy, France, Germany, the U.S., the UAE, the EU, and Saudi Arabia.

Besides the much talked about China factor, the project importantly aims to benefit low and middle-income countries in the regions, and as the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has stated, the corridor would act as a "major medium of economic integration between India, West Asia, and Europe." Moreover, as economic prosperity and stability have a direct correlation, not only would the success of this project have economic, developmental, and clean energy significance, but it would in turn help as a stabilizing factor for the Indo-Pacific region in general.

From India's perspective, the IMEC's success will not only help reduce its regional rival China's growing BRI footprint in the Middle East and Europe, but also expand India's constructive and inclusive Indo-Pacific agenda by strengthening another of its minilaterals in the Middle East, namely the I2U2 grouping (India, Israel, the US, and the UAE). Even as the IMEC is too nascent and the details on its funding and timeline are yet to be made publicly available, there is no doubt that the project is ambitious, timely, and has a constructive agenda.

*Sources: Al Jazeera, September 9; Indian Express, September 10; Commonsense, September 11; Outlook, September 10; AP, September 9; White House, September 9; CNBC, September 14; Outlook, September 11*

## PM Modi's Jakarta Visit: ASEAN Centrality at the Heart of India's Multipolar Asia Vision?

In a significant diplomatic stride, just before the G20 summit, on September 7, PM Modi at the invitation of the Indonesian President Joko Widodo, attended the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India Summit and the 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit in Jakarta, hosted by Indonesia as the current ASEAN Chair. Besides India, the ASEAN member states, Timor Leste (as an observer and a candidate for ASEAN membership), and the ASEAN Secretary-General also attended the 20<sup>th</sup> ASEAN-India summit.

This was the first ASEAN-India summit after the two partners elevated their relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. As engagement with ASEAN is a cornerstone for India's Act East Policy, which focuses on enhancing economic and strategic ties with Southeast Asian nations, at the summit, PM Modi presented a 12-point proposal for strengthening India-ASEAN cooperation including connectivity, digital transformation, trade and economic engagement, supply

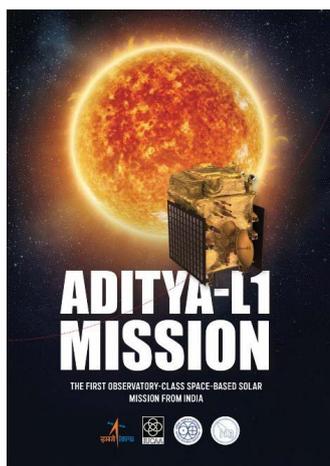
chain resilience, affordable and quality healthcare, people-to-people contacts, and deepening strategic engagement.

Notably, they adopted the ASEAN-India joint statements on maritime cooperation and food security. Thus, the 20<sup>th</sup> Summit not only provided the grounds for shaping the future direction of the India-ASEAN strategic ties but also emphasized the pivotal role of the India-ASEAN partnership in shaping the region's future in an emerging multipolar world. At the 18<sup>th</sup> East Asia Summit, PM Modi reiterated India's support to strengthening the multilateralism endorsed by mechanisms such as the East Asia Summit, and called for greater cooperation between states. Importantly, at both summits, PM Modi reaffirmed India's commitment to ASEAN centrality and highlighted the synergies between India's Indo-Pacific Ocean's Initiative (IPOI) and ASEAN's Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AOIP), as well as between the Quad's vision and the AOIP.

Sources: @narendramodi, September 7; Times of India, September 7; Indian Express, September 8; Times of India, September 7; ASEAN, September 7

## INDIA-GLOBAL

### India's First Solar Mission is Set in Motion: Aditya-1



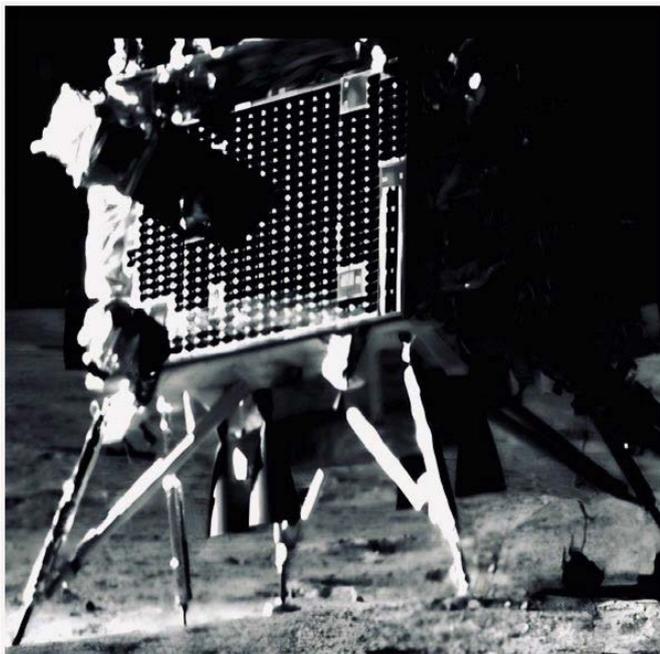
After the great success story of the Indian Chandrayaan-3 space mission to the lunar South Pole, the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) reached a new milestone on September 2, after India successfully launched its first Solar Mission, Aditya-L1 (the term Aditya refers to "the sun"). In technical terms, Aditya -L1 – a satellite

with the sole purpose of comprehensively studying the Sun – has seven indigenously developed payloads distinctly designed for the satellite, five of which were created by ISRO. Following its successful launch, Aditya-L1 has deployed its solar panels and has, since

September 3, completed two Earth-bound maneuvers, with a third maneuver scheduled for September 10.

According to the ISRO, the craft is planning on doing five maneuvers to gain the necessary velocity for its journey. In the end, Aditya-L1 will stay approx. 1.5 million km away from Earth and be placed in a halo orbit around the Lagrange point 1 (L1) aimed towards the Sun, where it will study the outer atmosphere of the Sun. The payloads will be used to observe the chromosphere, the photosphere, and the Corona of the Sun using electromagnetic, particle, and magnetic field detectors. Combined, this will provide crucial information for scientific studies, particularly of the solar dynamics in interplanetary space. Furthermore, India's first dedicated solar mission will not only promote scientific pursuits among the general populace but add heft to India's emerging status as a space superpower.

Sources: @Twitter, September 4; @ISRO, September 2; @TheEconomicTimes, September 4



### Exploration Begins: Pragyan Rover Begins Its Journey on the Lunar Surface

India made history as the first country to land near the south pole of the Moon with its Chandrayaan-3 lander on August 23, 2023, marking an essential stage in the exploration of the lunar surface. Soon after, ISRO has shared images showing the Pragyan rover roaming around the “Shiv Shakti” point (its landing site on the Moon’s south pole, referring to the Hindu deities symbolizing the resolution for the welfare of humanity and the strength to fulfil such resolutions), indicating that the exploration of the Moon’s South Pole has officially begun. Chandrayaan-3 succeeds Chandrayaan-2 that did not make the final descent, and is a testament to India’s technological capabilities via frugal means – built and launched at a budget of about US\$75 million, the mission cost a fraction of several such global missions.

Sources: @ISRO, September 5; @Chandrayaan\_3, August 3

### UK-India FTA Deal Looking Promising

At the sidelines of the G20 summit hosted by India, PM Modi met his British counterpart Rishi Sunak on September 9. The meeting has highlighted the strengthening of relations between India and the UK in the coming months. The discussions about the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) were on the main agenda, with

the two prime ministers discussing sustainable ways to deepen linkages and boost investments. There has also been steady progress in the FTA agreement between the two countries, as the negotiating teams of both the countries continue to work toward an agreement.

This trade deal between India and the UK would grant more favorable access for British companies to the growing Indian market, and could emerge as a significant political success story much needed for the Sunak government. India and the UK have also launched a financing bridge to implement and plan infrastructure projects while agreeing to conduct investment negotiations in parallel with the FTA. The joint statement issued after the 12th annual India-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue, which dealt with issues related to financial services, trade, infrastructure, investments, and green financing, that plans for Indian companies to be directly listed on the London Stock Exchange are also underway.

Sources: @TheHindu, September 9; @FinMinIndia, September 11; @Inews, September 9; @Mint, September 11; @Mint, September 12; @Asianage, September 12

## INDIA-SWEDEN

### India-Sweden Business Relations Flourish: A Pivotal October Visit amid Booming Trade Prospects

October marked a pivotal moment in India-Sweden relations, with Håkan Jevrell, State Secretary to Minister for Foreign Trade, together with Team Business Sweden India, with the latter taking on a 10-day journey across India. During his two-day trip, Jevrell took part in several bilateral meetings. He engaged in strategic dialogues with major Indian businesses in Mumbai, including Reliance Industries, JSW Group, and Hinduja Group. Jevrell also met Dammu Ravi, a high-level official in India’s Ministry of External Affairs, and engaged in discussions on initiatives such as “Make in India” and on the momentum for achieving the EU-India FTA.

Secretary Jevrell also met Meenakshi Lekhi, Minister of State for External Affairs, and discussed a wide range of topics, including artificial intelligence (AI). He also had a constructive dialogue with Amitabh Kant, who served as the Sherpa for India at G20 and is former CEO of the

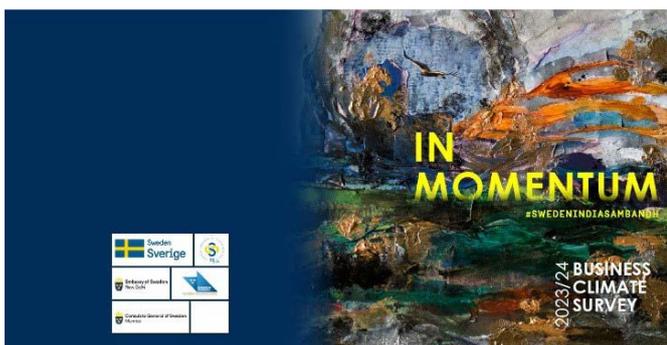


indirectly employed in sectors such as automobiles and industrial machinery. In essence, the Swedish interest in investing and trading with India has grown.

According to a recent survey published by Business Sweden, a Swedish government official organization that assists and promotes Swedish companies in local and international markets, international growth markets such as India are becoming more attractive to Swedish businesses. The results suggested a clear shift in the global market from the Swedish perspective, in which countries such as India have overtaken the U.S. and China in terms of favorable business climate. Jan Larsson, CEO of Business Sweden, points to several factors that may explain this shift in the market. First, India's population growth has been steadily increasing and its middle class is steadily growing. Second, India has launched a range of initiatives to drive its growth, including the "Make in India" project to encourage foreign companies and investors to establish themselves in the country.

Sources: @Afronbladet, August 30; @TheLocal, August 30; @BusinessSweden (Global Climate Survey), August 30; @InvestIndiaSWE, October 19; @SA, October 11; @LinkedIn, October 16; @SwedeninIndia, October 12; @LinkedIn, October 16.

Sources: @IndiainSweden, September 1; @IndustryTransition



Indian government's premier public policy think tank NITI Aayog, and Jan Thesleff, Sweden's Ambassador to India, exploring collaboration in sustainable infrastructure, digitalization, and climate change.

Considering that the October visit is Jevrell's second visit to India within six months, it is clear that Sweden has reconfigured that India, as a growing economy and digital power is one of the most important trading partners today. Based on data from Sweden Abroad, exports to India have increased by 50 per cent in 2022 compared to the previous year, with Sweden already having a long history of direct investments in India. Sweden is also believed to have more than 260 companies in India, with estimates suggesting more than 1 million people

### "Namaste Stockholm 2023": Marking 75 years of Diplomatic Relations

An Indian cultural festival took place in Stockholm on September 9, marking the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties between Sweden and India. The event in Kungsträdgården was organized by India Unlimited, an organization promoting cross-cultural relations between Sweden and India, in collaboration with the Embassy





of India in Stockholm. Ambassador Lal inaugurated the event with the guest of honor, Anna Kinberg Batra, Governor of Stockholm region. The festival comprised many events such as yoga classes, traditional music, dance, and world-famous Indian street food.

Source: @Cisio, September 7; @IndiaUnlimited

### “Time for India”: An Initiative for Promoting Mutual Growth

India remains one of the world’s fastest growing major economies and will likely become the third-largest economy by 2030. Thanks to its demography that sustains a burgeoning workforce, India presents significant opportunities for Swedish enterprises to invest, expand, and broaden their horizons. To deepen the ties, Team Sweden organized meetings and activities involving representatives from politics, business, and academia from both nations via the “Time for India” event, which includes a roadshow touring Swedish cities of Stockholm, Linköping, Malmö and Gothenburg.



On September 4, the “Time for India” event began with a seminar held at the Stockholm Chamber of Commerce. India’s emerging and dynamic business environment, investment prospects, and growth potential were discussed during the course of the event. Notably, the timing of the seminar aligned with the release of Business Sweden’s Business Climate Survey that highlighted India’s favorable business climate and a clear orientation of Swedish businesses toward India. Ambassador Lal, who was a speaker at the seminar, touched upon the “unrivaled transformations” underway in India and the scale of business opportunities. The event was organized by Team Sweden in India, which comprises the Embassy of Sweden in India, Consulate General of Sweden in Mumbai, Business Sweden Asia-Pacific, and the Swedish Chamber of Commerce India.



Sources: @Tanmaya\_Lal, September 5; @SwedenCGMumbai, September 4; @SwedensAmbIndia, September 4; @Facebook, September 10; @SIBCtweets, September 11

### Treasure in Uppsala: Celebrating World Sanskrit Day 2023

On August 31, World Sanskrit Day (“Vishva-Samskrita-Dinam”) was celebrated in Uppsala (Sweden), where a Sanskrit verse was inscribed by Professor Otto Fredrik Tullberg in 1830s on a stone slab near Vårdsätra. The carved verse was a declaration of love from Tullberg to his fiancée, Sophia Ridderbjelke, and it remained a secret throughout his lifetime. It was only in 1922/1923 when Karl Zetterstéen, a former professor in Semitic Languages at Uppsala University (most famous for his Swedish translation of the Quran), found the stone slab and successfully decoded the inscription. The text turned out to be from the Indian epic Mahabharata, written

approximately 500 BCE, translated into English as: “And as long as my spirit dwells in my body, maiden with the serene smile! I will be yours, this is the solemn truth I tell thee.” The event included informative lectures on the language, including efforts to fostering its resurgence and preservation.

Sources: @IndiainSweden, September 1; @WGH, September 6; @Indian\_Studies; Rama Bhikhabhai

## Sweden Celebrates King Carl XVI Gustaf’s 50 Years on the Throne



In September, Sweden celebrated the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of King Carl XVI Gustaf’s accession to the throne with four days of festivities culminating in a military parade. Carl Gustaf is the country’s longest reigning monarch; and following the death of Queen Elizabeth II last year, he’s the second-longest reigning European monarch alive today. Although

the Swedish monarch has a ceremonial role as the head of state without political power, many Swedes regard him as a unifying symbol during times of crisis. The Indian embassy congratulated the king’s long-standing reign on the throne, reiterating his contributions to deepening Sweden-India relations.

Sources: AP, September 14; @IndiaInSweden, September 15; @SVT, September 16



## 10<sup>th</sup> India-Sweden Innovation Day Fosters Green Prospects

The 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the India-Sweden Innovation Day, held on October 9, brought together important decision-makers including business leaders, political leaders, and experts in a bid to address the complex global challenges, particularly in the area of sustainable innovation. The theme of the event was “Accelerating Green Growth,” and it included several panel discussions that explored ways to synergize closer collaboration between India and Sweden to accelerate economic growth without compromising on sustainable, equitable green transition.

In line with the India-Sweden bonhomie during their 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of diplomatic ties, this event with inaugural speeches by Jitendra Singh, India’s Minister of State for Science and Technology and Andreas Carlson, Sweden’s Minister of Infrastructure, reaffirmed that the two partner states are committed to providing strong political support for innovation, research, and business partnerships.

Source: @News, October 20; @Event, @ETGovernment, October 9

## INDIA-NORDIC

### India-Norway Maritime, EV, and Geothermal Cooperation

On September 12, Norwegian Ambassador May-Elin Stener met Shyam Jagannathan, Director General of Shipping, India’s Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, and discussed the longstanding Norway-India



maritime cooperation, exploring ways to enhance green shipping collaborations. She also met Anand Mahindra, Chairman of Mahindra Group. The discussions focused on women participation in the workforce and green transition, including ways to promote electric vehicles infrastructure – priority areas for both India and Norway.

Notably, on September 27, the Arunachal Pradesh government signed a memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Norwegian Geotechnical Institute (NGI) to explore the feasibility of harnessing the geothermal potential of hot springs, a major step toward green and clean energy resilience and the two partners' net zero goals. NGI will investigate geological, geochemical, and geothermal opportunities at selected sites in Tawang and West Kameng.

*Sources: @NorwayAmbIndia, September 12; @NorwayAmbIndia, September 12; ET, September 27*

### **Finland's Accelerated Pitch for Promoting Relations with Ascendant India**

Finland's ministers have been actively promoting the relations with India during September and October, a large part of this emphasis is due to India's high visibility as a growing power during its G20 presidency. The Foreign Minister of Finland, Elina Valtonen, stressed the deeper India-Finland bilateral ties during the meeting with the Indian Ambassador to Finland, Raveesh Kumar. Amb. Kumar's discussion with the Minister of Economy, Wille Rydman, concerned the partnership of the countries and further cooperation in trade and investment, tourism, space, mobility, science, and technology.

During the Summer Reception of the India Business and Professionals Forum (IBPF) in Finland, the Minister of Employment, Arto Satonen, emphasized the significance of the Indian professional community in Finland, welcoming the Indian professionals' contribution to Finland's economy. Amb. Kumar also discussed the mobility of professionals and students with Finland's Minister of Interior Mari Rantanen and Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister of Finland Riikka Purra. The Minister of Education, Anna-Maja Henriksson, discussed the educational sector synergies with Amb. Kumar, prior to her visit to India during October 16-20. During the visit, Ms. Henriksson met with the Indian Ministers and education authorities to deepen the

education ties, including promoting export activities of Finnish education operators. Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Sari Essayah also visited and met with PM Modi to discuss several India-Finland projects.

*Sources: @IndEmbFinEst, September 5; @IndEmbFinEst, September 13; Embassy of India, Helsinki; @IndEmbFinEst, October 4; @FinlandinIndia, October 16; @IndEmbFinEst, October 3; @raveesh\_kumar, October 16; @ErikafHllstrm1, October 17.*

### **New Framework of Cooperation between Finland and India: The "DESI" Strategy**

A new framework of cooperation, "DESI," (the term colloquially refers to "localness" in Hindi) between Finland and India, was released on September 20 to deepen trade relations with India and to keep up with the competition. "DESI" stands for Digitalization, Education, Sustainability, and Innovation. This marks Finland's first country-specific strategy for India, and the initiative will strengthen the competitiveness of Finland in the Indian market.

Kimmo Siira, Senior Adviser on Foreign Trade at the Embassy of Finland in New Delhi, stated that even though it is natural for India to be more interested in large economies, there is a lot of potential for pursuing closer cooperation with Finland, especially in sectors Finland has special expertise in such as quantum technology, 5G and 6G technology, new green technologies, energy solutions, biofuels, and research and product development linked to sustainable development. Finland's Embassy in India will guide the DESI Initiative.

*Sources: Finnish Government, September 20; Mint, July 26*

### **India-Denmark Cooperation on Maritime Corruption**

In late September, the Maritime Anti-corruption Network (MACN), a maritime industry association (headquarters in Copenhagen, Denmark) with the vision of a corruption-free maritime industry enabling fair trade, organized an India Curtain Raiser Event in Mumbai. The event was attended by around 200 invitees, including MACN Member representatives and Denmark's Ambassador to India, Freddy Svane.

In line with the Green Strategic partnership, the new Indo-Danish Centre of Excellence (CoE) in shipping has welcomed the MACN-India initiatives, as both countries

share the vision for transforming the maritime sector in reducing the carbon footprint. The bilateral CoE focuses on digital maritime solutions, improving the movement of ships and cargo. More focus on high-tech solutions could strengthen the supply chain and logistic cost efficiencies, as well as preventing corruption.

Sources: *The Maritime Economy Publications*, September 25; @svane\_freddy, September 26

### **India-Iceland Business Forum**

India-Iceland Business Forum 2023 in Reykjavik was held on September 29, and jointly organized by the Embassy of India in Iceland, Indo-Iceland Business Association, India-Iceland Trade Council, and Business Iceland. The main topics of discussion of the experts were fisheries, carbon capture and storage, and future collaborations in strengthening and deepening trade and business relations between India and Iceland. The Forum was inaugurated by Guðni Thorlacius Jóhannesson, the President of Iceland. Indian Ambassador to Iceland, B. Shyam, hosted a reception for the visiting delegation and local Icelandic businesses connected to the Forum.

Sources: *India in Iceland*, September 30; @indembiceland, 29 September

## **INDIA-GLOBAL**

### **The First Residing Ambassador of India in Lithuania**

Lithuania welcomed the first residing Ambassador of India, Devesh Uttam, who presented credentials to the President of Lithuania, Gitanas Nausėda, on September 12. Amb. Uttam highlighted the importance of further cooperation in trade, connectivity, logistics, and emerging technologies between the countries in a meeting with Gabrielius Landsbergis, the Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs. Moreover, the conversation between Egidijus Meilūnas, the Vice Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania, and Amb. Uttam stressed the vital partnership between India and further deepening the economic and trade cooperation while connecting people through culture, science, and education.

Sources: @LTEmbassyDelhi, September 13; @MeilunasE, September 28; @IndEmbVilnius, October 17

## **INDIA-EU**

### **The EU in G20 Summit**

The EU and its member-states were active participants in the G20 Summit on September 9-10 in New Delhi – the EU, France, Germany, and Italy as full members, while the Netherlands and Spain were “special invitee” guest states. The G20 as a multilateral group of the world’s 20 largest economies of immense value to the EU for addressing global challenges, including climate change, responsible use and regulation of emerging technologies (such as AI), and sustainable growth.

The EU Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, hailed the New Delhi summit, particularly India’s diplomatic endeavors, including PM Modi’s skillful leadership, and highlighted the importance of a strong partnership with India. She emphasized that the India-EU Trade and Technology Council (TTC) and the impending FTA would unlock the tremendous potential inherent in the India-EU strategic partnership. An extraordinary outcome for the EU was the launch of the IMEC, which will help ease connectivity (including reduced costs and transit time) between India and Europe, enable green energy transition for European states, and strengthen telecommunication networks through new undersea cable connections.

Sources: @vonderleyen, September 10; Reuters, September 10; Mint, September 11

### **Enhancing India-EU Maritime Security Dialogue in the IOR**

The fifth India-EU track 1.5 maritime security workshop was held on September 21-22 at the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), New Delhi, organized by the NMF and the EU-funded ESIWA (Enhancing Security in and With Asia). The workshop brought together experts, academics, practitioners, policymakers, and stakeholders to identify effective strategies, innovative techniques, and best practices essential for India-EU maritime security approaches in the Indo-Pacific.

The main themes included the geopolitical tensions in the Indian Ocean, hybrid threats, engagement in multilateral

and minilateral constructs, submarine cable vulnerabilities, digital maritime connectivity, maritime cybersecurity training and cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and improvement of connectivity of various small island states. Operation Atalanta's Deputy Operation Commander, RAdm Giovanni Galoforo, participated in the workshop highlighting the different activities developed by the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) with India in the framework of EU-India relations.

Sources: @EUNAVFOR, September 21; National Maritime Foundation

### India-EU Clean Tech Partnership

The India-EU TTC Working Group 2 workshop, "Green & Clean Energy Technologies," was held on October 10-11, hosted by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). The workshop's objectives included identifying cutting-edge green technologies, emphasizing e-vehicles as a critical solution to achieve future targets, exchanging views on policy and regulatory frameworks, identifying collaboration opportunities and gaps, establishing institutional collaboration initiatives, and fostering co-development of technologies. This workshop highlights the importance of India-EU collaboration on a shared vision for a sustainable future and the pivotal role of research and regulation in advancing the growth of green and clean energy technologies.

Source: Outlook, October 13.

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**CONTRIBUTORS:** This newsletter was prepared by SCSA-IPA.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

India-Sweden ties have continued to prosper this year as the two states celebrated 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations with increased interactions and visits by high-level officials from both sides. The Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar's visit to Sweden earlier this year set the ball rolling for elevated discussions, including in AI, digital transformation, climate action, accelerated investments, access to business opportunities, and Indo-Pacific affairs. For Sweden, the visits by State Secretary for Foreign Trade Håkan Jevrell twice in a year highlighted the growing trajectory of India's relations with Europe in general (as exemplified by increased interactions with Nordic states, as well as PM Modi's successful visits to France and Greece earlier this year), and Sweden in particular. In this regard, India's pivotal G20 presidency has been a huge factor; that this term coincided with Sweden's six-month presidency of the EU Council was the icing on the cake. Notably, the G20 summit's theme "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam," a Sanskrit phrase meaning "the world is one family," epitomized the stress on sorely lacking international cooperation in this era of war and abiding conflicts. Therefore, in keeping with the need of the times, the agenda for this year was rightly international peace, digital transition, climate, sustainable growth, and developmental finance.

Going forward, Sweden and India collaborating on these global challenges, as well as fostering international cooperation, including with the Nordic, Baltic, and the EU member-states, for a rules-based Indo-Pacific order would provide momentum to their individual efforts in this direction.

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