



Europe India Chamber of Commerce

Newsletter

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EICC-EPC Open Policy Dialogue on “EU - India Relations and the Emerging World Order: Strengthening Ties for Common Interest”, October - Monday 9 – 2023, Brussels

Europe India Chamber of Commerce is delighted to state that the preparation for its Think Tank Policy Dialogue which is being jointly organised in collaboration with the European Policy Centre, is in full swing. The theme of the High-Level Debate is “**EU - India Relations and the Emerging World Order: Strengthening Ties for Common Interest**”. The Dialogue will take place on Monday, October 9th from 14.00 to 16.30 (CEST) at the EPC, Rue du Trône 14-16, 1000 Brussels.

For a long time, the rise of India has not attracted due attention within the EU and in the larger Europe. There is not much presence or debate about India's role in the world, especially in post-Brexit Brussels. Although it is India's century, Europe is yet to realise that today's India is very different from the one just five years ago. It has become the voice of the global south and is now ready to navigate global economy. What Europe needs is a proper understanding of India's global role and its stakes in India.

Several mutual interests are involved, especially considering the EU is India's 3rd largest trading partner and 2nd largest export destination. Although multiple challenges remain unaddressed, both the EU and India have shown a willingness to conclude a bilateral Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which would benefit both regions, especially given the challenges posed by the current global economic environment. While EU sees India as a partner to preserve democratic principles in global affairs, there is lack of understanding of India's global influence and its identity in the emerging world order, which shapes its response to events such as Russia's war on Ukraine.

As the global economy grapples with the looming threat of a recession in 2023, countries worldwide are feeling the effects of weakened growth. However, amidst this economic uncertainty, India stands strong, defying the odds and projecting a promising future. With its robust economy and soaring GDP, India is emerging as a global powerhouse, presenting unparalleled opportunities for entrepreneurs and foreign investments. The country is set to surpass Japan and Germany to become the world's third-largest economy in the next three / four years and will have the third-largest stock market by the end of this decade, thanks to global trends and key investments the country has made in technology and energy.

Against this backdrop, the European Policy Centre (EPC) and the Europe-India Chamber of Commerce (EICC) are partnering this High-Level dialogue focused on EU-India relations concentrated on strategic and economic ties. The Dialogue will also touch on topics such as: the rise of India as a strategic player and its importance for the EU; assess the current state and challenges of EU-India relations; and how has the EU's Agenda for Action 2025 endorsed in 2020 boosted strategic and economic relations between

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Editor: **Secretary General**

the two partners. This Think Tank Conference is being organised within a month of India hosting the G20 Summit in New Delhi on 9-10 September.

The Policy Dialogue will bring together selected business and thought leaders, policy makers, security experts, representatives of the European Commission and European Parliament, trade bodies. Representatives of the Missions of EU countries, G20 countries and selected Asian countries are also being invited. Mr. Pankaj Saran will be the lead Panellist.

Welcome remarks will be delivered by Ms Emma Woodford, Chief Operating Officer, EPC and H.E. Santosh Jha, Ambassador of India to Belgium, Luxembourg, and the EU, Dr Ravi K Mehrotra, Chairman, EICC, and Mr Christophe Kiener, EU Chief Negotiator for the FTA with India, DG Trade, European Commission will give opening remarks.

Lead panellist will be Mr Pankaj Saran, Convenor, NatStrat, India. Other Panellists are Mr Dominic Boucsein, Senior Policy Advisor for International Trade and Investment, Eurochambres; Ms Garima Mohan, Senior Fellow, Indo-Pacific Programme, The German Marshall Fund of the United States (tbc), Ms Tanvi Madan, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy, Centre for East Asia Policy Studies, Brookings Institutions. The Dialogue will be moderated by Ms Shada Islam, Senior Adviser, EPC.

Mr. Pankaj Saran who now heads the independent not-for-profit Think Tank (<https://natstrat.org/>) for research on strategic and security issues is a former Ambassador to Russia and was also India's Deputy National Security Advisor. You can learn more about Mr. Saran on the link https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pankaj_Saran

Ms Eleni Lazarou, Head of External Policies, European Parliament Research Service, Ms Lizza Bomassi, Deputy Director, Carnegie Europe, Ms Sophie Pornschlegel, Director of Studies and Development, Jacques Delors, Institute and Ms Marie Jourdain, Visiting Fellow, Atlantic Council's Europe Centre are also to speak.

Key points of discussion are: Strategic challenges and opportunities in EU-India relations: the state of the Free Trade Agreement negotiations; India's digital muscle vs. Europe's regulation; Russia's invasion of Ukraine and India as a potential peace broker; The EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy and India; India's G20 Presidency and its geopolitical impact; India's growth and the race for economic leadership in the Global South.

Participation is only by invitation and those interested to join can contact Secretary General of the Chamber on mail id: Sunil.Prasad@Telenet.be or on GSM: 0472207338

'We are very close' on FTA with India: UK trade minister

Synopsis

The Cabinet minister was specifically asked about some UK media reports suggesting that cricket fan British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak may be planning a return visit to India next month to sign the deal on the sidelines of the World Cup being hosted across the country.

India and the UK are "very close" to achieving a mutually beneficial free trade agreement (FTA) but the aspects left to agree on are the toughest ones, Britain's Business and Trade Secretary in charge of the

negotiations has told a parliamentary panel. Kemi Badenoch was answering questions posed by the cross-party House of Commons Business and Trade Committee, which scrutinises the work of the Department of Business and Trade (DBT), on Tuesday when she was asked about the timeline for signing off on the FTA - which has completed 12 rounds of negotiations.

The Cabinet minister was specifically asked about some UK media reports suggesting that cricket fan British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak may be planning a return visit to India next month to sign the deal on the sidelines of the World Cup being hosted across the country.

"We have never set a deadline. I think this is a very optimistic briefing for newspapers," responded Badenoch.

"We are very close. It is possible, but I wouldn't be setting that sort of deadline. We will finish when we finish," she said.

Referencing former British prime minister Boris Johnson setting a Diwali 2022 deadline for an agreement, Badenoch reiterated the Sunak-led government's approach of not setting any end dates.

"We had the same thing last year, where they said we're going to have a deal by Diwali. Once you set a date, you create problems on your own side. We have always been very, very specific that it's about the deal, not the day. And, we will get there when we have a deal that is mutually beneficial for India and for the UK. We've done quite a lot, so it is close," she said.

"It's the Pareto principle, that the few bits left are always the toughest bits," she added.

The Pareto principle, also known as the 80/20 principle, is named after Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto and is a phenomenon that states that roughly 80 per cent of outcomes come from 20 per cent of causes.

Badenoch reviewed progress with her Indian counterpart, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, during a visit to India last month coinciding with Round 12 of the FTA negotiations.

Sunak's visit to New Delhi for the G20 Leaders' Summit earlier this month also concluded with a commitment to an FTA, with the British Indian leader telling reporters that he "won't rush things".

Meanwhile, amid a diplomatic standoff between two of its allies -- India and Canada -- over the contentious issue of pro-Khalistan extremism, Sunak's spokesperson at Downing Street reiterated this week that trade talks with New Delhi remain on track.

"Work on the trade negotiations will continue as before... when we have concerns with countries we're negotiating trade deals with, we'll raise them directly," the spokesperson told reporters on Tuesday.

According to official DBT figures, UK-India bilateral trade was worth an estimated GBP 36 billion in 2022 -- a figure expected to be significantly boosted with an FTA.

(Economic Times, 21/9/2023)

G20 members to back EU-Mid East-India trade plan

Synopsis

The plans involve a railway and port project to enhance trade flows between Europe and India. The project aims to strengthen connectivity and counter China's Belt and Road Initiative. While the project is still in the early stages, it has the potential to be a game changer. The G20 summit has been marked by divisions over Russia's war in Ukraine and climate change.

Major G20 partners will unveil ambitious plans Saturday to bolster trade between India, the Middle East and Europe, the United States said -- a modern-day Spice Route that could more closely bind three regions that account for about a third of the global economy.

Washington, Saudi Arabia, the EU, UAE and others will sign an agreement on the sidelines of the G20 summit to explore a railway and port project to augment trade flows between Europe and India, officials said.

The agreement comes with Washington actively engaging with Riyadh, a major oil producer and security partner, as it encourages the kingdom to normalise ties with Israel.

Jon Finer, US deputy national security advisor, said the announcement came after "months of careful diplomacy, quiet, careful diplomacy, bilaterally and in multilateral settings".

Finer said the plan could include shipping and rail transportation projects to "enable the flow of commerce, energy and data from here in India across the Middle East to Europe".

This project "has enormous potential" he said. "But exactly how long it takes, I don't know".

The project is still in the early stages, with participants studying how best to link India's vast 1.4 billion population and quick-growing economy with markets to the west.

But Michael Kugelman, South Asia Institute director at The Wilson Center, said the plan could be a significant response to China's much-vaunted Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) -- which has spread Chinese influence, investments and commerce across Europe, Africa, Asia and Latin America.

"If finalised, it would be a game changer that strengthens connectivity between India and the Middle East and would aim to counter BRI," Kugelman posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

The agreement to discuss the project could be among the most tangible developments at a summit that has highlighted deep-seated divisions between key G20 members over Russia's war in Ukraine and how to pay for climate change.

The summit is nonetheless expected to agree to the accession of the African Union, giving the continent -- whose only G20 member is South Africa -- more of a voice on the global stage.

The Group of 20 was conceived in the throes of the 2008 financial crisis as a way of managing the global economy.

But finding consensus among members has been increasingly difficult in recent years.

Even before it began, the importance of the New Delhi summit was called into question when China's Xi Jinping decided to skip the meeting and send his number two, Premier Li Qiang, to India instead.

No official reason was given for Xi's absence, but the Asian giants have been at loggerheads over a border dispute and other issues, while Beijing is seeking to make US-led groupings such as the G20 more amenable to its own interests.

Russia's seat is taken by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, with diplomatic opprobrium and war crimes charges keeping the country's leader Vladimir Putin from the summit.

United Nations chief Antonio Guterres warned Friday of growing global divisions, insisting countries must assume responsibility regardless of "whether it's the president or the prime minister or the vice president" who is in New Delhi.

The backdrop to the talks could hardly be starker: the European Union's climate monitor has said this year is likely to be the hottest in human history, with Guterres declaring on Friday the "climate crisis is spiralling out of control".

G20 countries account for around 85 percent of global climate warming emissions, making action in the forum crucial to real progress.

India's Modi has painted the summit as his country's diplomatic coming of age -- evidence of New Delhi's clout and prestige on the global stage.

Modi argues developing nations need a greater say in global decision-making.

But on Ukraine, there was little sign of progress.

Moscow continues to press its allies to water down international condemnation of its invasion of Ukraine, throwing up a major roadblock to joint action.

(Economic Times, 10/9/2023)

G20 Presidency helping India deepen trade ties with member nations: Experts

Synopsis

India's presidency in the G20 is seen as an opportunity for the country to strengthen trade ties and attract investments from member nations, particularly in sectors like infrastructure. Experts believe that the G20 plays a strategic role in global economic growth and prosperity, as its members represent a significant portion of global GDP, trade, and population.

The G20 Presidency with India is helping New Delhi to strengthen trade ties with member nations and provides an opportunity to attract investments from those countries in sectors like infrastructure, experts say.

They said that the G20 (Group of 20) holds a strategic role in securing future global economic growth and prosperity, as its members represent about 85 per cent of the global GDP (Gross Domestic Product), 75 per cent of global trade and two-thirds of the world's population.

Presiding over this multilateral forum is an opportunity for India as it can showcase its strength and achievements for attracting investment and deepen its trade relation with these large economies, the experts added.

Fast-tracking negotiations for free trade agreement, ease of doing business, development of modern infrastructure, skilled manpower, large population with growing income are some of the positives which help India to enhance trade realisations with these member countries.

The G20 has 43 members and not 20 countries. These include 19 countries (Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Türkiye, UK and US) and the European Union (27-member group). Three EU countries -- France, Germany, Italy -- are counted among the 19 countries.

Trade experts suggested the government to fast-track ongoing negotiations for free trade agreement (FTA) with countries like the UK and EU as it would help India in better market access to these countries as well as facilitate investment.

However, they also asked not to use trade platforms to achieve climate aspirations as that could harm progress in both trade and climate discussions.

The largest trade block of G20, the EU, will set in motion the carbon border adjustment mechanism from October 1 this year, making exports expensive from countries like India.

"In the first eight months of 2023, the EU introduced five regulations on climate change and trade. The G20 nations should not ignore this elephant in the room and discuss before individual countries rush to the WTO (World Trade Organisation (WTO)). This may soon unravel world trade," think tank Global Trade Research Initiative (GTRI) Co-Founder Ajay Srivastava said.

Shardul S Shroff, Executive Chairman, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, said that India should find a common ground with G20 countries to emerge as a global norm setter for the digital economy and use that global stature to boost IT and IT-enabled services exports.

India should position itself as the global norm-setter for various aspects of the digital economy, such as data protection, international contracting, digital assets, and international taxation, as it would help expand India's footprint in the global services exports market, Shroff said.

Gaurav Dani, Founding Partner, INDUSLAW, said that India has the largest growing middle-income population offering a last consumer base for both goods and services and due to this global firms will continue to invest in India.

Sharing similar views, Rumki Majumdar, Economist, Deloitte India, said that many multinational firms are looking for alternate destinations for investment and diversifying supply chains, and the G20 Presidency will help India attract many such companies.

Massive improvement in infrastructure, ease of doing business, skilled labour force and growing market with large middle class consumer base are some of the key indicators that make India one of the most attractive places to invest and import quality goods, Hi-Tech Group Chairman Deep Kapuria said.

Mumbai-based exporter and Chairman of Technocraft Industries Sharad Kumar Saraf said India's trade with G20 countries will grow at an accelerated rate because of the comfort and confidence created in the members due to the multiple events organised by India in different cities.

"This helped in showcasing the country as a whole. The G20 Presidency has thrown up many opportunities in diverse sectors for India. It is now for India to grab this opportunity. India should consider converting G20 in an economic block, a shade lower than free trade, maybe, reduced custom duties among the group members," Saraf said.

Among the G20 members, India holds ninth position in terms of total trade (USD 1,662 billion) in goods and services in 2022. The EU (17,151 billion), China (USD 7,183 billion) and USA (6,933 billion) hold top three spots.

Share of G20 nations in India's merchandise export in 2022 stood at 64 per cent and import at 52.4 per cent.

India's leading export destinations among G20 nations are USA (USD 91 billion), EU (USD 87 billion), China (USD 17.5 billion), UK (USD 14.4 billion), Turkey (USD 10.7 billion) and Saudi Arabia (USD 10 billion).

The country's suppliers include China (USD 118.5 billion), EU (USD 59.1 billion), Saudi Arabia (USD 43.3 billion), USA (USD 38.4 billion), Russia (USD 34 billion), Australia (USD 19.2 billion), Korea (USD 18.9 billion), and Japan (USD 13.9 billion) during the last year.

Sector wise, India's top exports to these member countries in 2022 included electronics and machinery (USD 41.3 billion), petroleum products (USD 30 billion), cut and polished diamonds and gold jewellery (USD 25.9 billion), organic chemicals (USD 20.5 billion), medicines (USD 16.4 billion), automobiles parts (USD 11.8 billion).

The main import items included electronics (USD 46.6 billion), machinery (USD 42.5 billion), petroleum products (USD 40.6 billion), organic chemicals, APIs (USD 18.9 billion), rough diamonds and gold (USD 17.6 billion), plastics raw materials (USD 13.0 billion), and iron and steel (USD 12.8 billion).

In terms of foreign direct investments (FDI), the US is the biggest investor with USD 61.3 billion or nine per cent share in India's FDI during April 2000-June 2023, when it was aggregated at USD 645.4 billion.

It was followed by Japan with USD 40 billion or 6 per cent contribution; UK (USD 34.3 billion) or 5 per cent share; Germany (USD 14.25 billion) or 2 per cent share, and France (USD 10.62 billion) or 1.64 per cent.

(Economic Times, 3/9/2023)

Plenty of room for domestic, British Scotch whiskies to prosper in India: Scotch Whisky Association

Synopsis

The strong demographic structure and economic growth prospects in India provide opportunities for both Indian and Scotch whiskies to thrive in the country's whisky market, according to the Scotch Whisky Association (SWA). The proposed reduction in import duty as part of a free trade agreement

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between India and the UK would not only boost Scotch whisky exports but also provide consumers with more options.

The domestic demographic structure and the strong prospects for India's long-term economic growth present plenty of room for Indian and Scotch whiskies to prosper in the world's biggest whisky market, an industry association said on Wednesday.

Scotch Whisky Association (SWA) also said that the proposed reduction in import duty by India under a free trade agreement between New Delhi and London would not only help boost exports of Scotch whiskey from the UK, but consumers here will also get more choice as smaller producers enter the market.

India and the UK are negotiating a free trade agreement.

It will also benefit India-Made Foreign Liquor (IMFL) brands by reducing import costs.

The association also said that imported Scotch whisky will pose "very little" direct competition to local Indian whisky because of its small size here.

A large portion of the export of Scotch whisky to India is in bulk, and the bottled versions are only 24 per cent of exports. Most Scotch whisky sold in India is bottled locally, SWA said in a statement.

India and the UK are continuing their negotiations to iron out differences in the proposed free trade agreement (FTA).

Following the G20 Trade and Investment Ministers Meeting (TIMM) at Jaipur, the progress of the negotiations was reviewed by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and UK's Secretary of State for Trade Kemi Badenoch on August 26.

As New Delhi gears to host the 18th G20 Heads of State and Government Summit, SWA and International Spirits and Wines Association of India (ISWAI) jointly look forward to a successful India-UK Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

Over substantial reduction in India's 150 per cent tariff on import of Scotch whisky, SWA CEO Mark Kent said it will pose very little direct competition to Indian whisky.

"Demographics and the strong prospects for India's long-term economic growth mean there is plenty of room for Indian and Scotch whiskies to prosper in the world's biggest whisky market. Only 24 per cent of exports to India are bottled in Scotland. Most Scotch whisky sold in India is bottled locally, while bulk Scotch whisky is an important ingredient in Indian whisky," he said.

As the IMFL and Scotch categories have grown, so has the investment in facilities in India and the jobs and growth that delivers, both in the tourism and hospitality industries, he added.

Scotch whisky is the world's most traded spirit, with worldwide consumption of 1.3 billion bottles.

However, it is less than half the volume of Indian whisky production.

(Economic Times, 7/9/2023)

UK trade talks in “tough phase,” progress made on tricky issues

So far 12 rounds of negotiation have happened between India and the UK and the 13th round is expected from September 18.

The free trade negotiations between India and UK have reached a tough phase but good progress has been made on the prickly issues of rules of origin and bilateral investment treaty, a senior official said Friday.

“Many things are moving very fast. There has been good progress on the Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) and the Rules of Origin. Negotiations are happening... Towards the end of the deal, it is the difficult issues which are to be closed and therefore it requires more time and more deliberations,” Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal told reporters here.

The BIT is being negotiated separately and would be signed along with the FTA. Rules of Origin prescribe which exporters can take advantage of the lower duties under the FTA based on the value they add to a product in a particular country or a region.

So far 12 rounds of negotiation have happened between India and the UK and the 13th round is expected from September 18.

Barthwal said both India and UK are negotiating an ambitious agreement and are not limiting themselves to deadlines.

On the India-EU (European Union) trade pact, the ministry said that so far 5 rounds of talks have been concluded and the sixth round will take place during October 16 -20 in Brussels.

With the EU, along with the FTA bilateral investment treaty and an agreement on Geographical Indications.

“One important milestone we achieved last month was the exchange of goods offer with the EU,” another official said.

On the progress of talks on India-Australia Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), an official said that “significant” progress is there on issues like government procurement, rules of origin, sports, innovation, labour, environment, and traditional knowledge.

The official said that the 6th round of talks are expected to conclude soon and the next round will start from next month.

Further the ministry said that legal scrubbing is in the process of supply chain resilience agreement under the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF).

The process for domestic approval of this agreement is also underway. The Indian team is in Thailand for discussions on clean economy and fair economy agreements of the IPEF

(Financial Express, 16/9/2023)

Equity and emissions: Decoding the EU carbon tax for global climate justice

Global communities are also recognising the need for climate change legislations consisting of the laws and policies that govern action on climate change by setting its legal basis.

The world is staring at the imminent dangers of climate change with its impacts becoming more pronounced and widespread with each passing year. The potential harm to global economic growth and development has prompted urgent action from world economies calling for concerted climate interventions. Key climate interventions include reducing carbon footprints, embracing renewable energy, enhancing energy efficiency, conserving natural ecosystems, and adopting climate-resilient practices for a sustainable future. Global communities are also recognising the need for climate change legislations consisting of the laws and policies that govern action on climate change by setting its legal basis.

The Inflation Reduction Act by the United States is one of the most significant pieces of climate legislations in the history. It will deploy nearly \$400 billion over the coming decade to slash carbon emissions. Another such bold, and somewhat unprecedented, climate-change intervention recently introduced is the EU's carbon tax. In line with the increasing global persuasion to reduce carbon emissions, especially that from economic activities, the European Union (EU) recently introduced the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), the world's first carbon tax, to address what they are referring as 'carbon leakage'. CBAM or, in general parlance, carbon tax is a taxation tool introduced to deter imports from countries where climate policies are not on par with that of the EU.

Initially, the levy will apply to imports of certain goods from hard-to-abate industries whose production is carbon-intensive such as cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen. Once it is fully phased in, CBAM will capture more than 50 per cent of the emissions in emissions trading system (ETS)-covered sectors.

CBAM bodes ill for Indian exports

However, CBAM raises concerns for developing countries like India, heavily reliant on carbon-intensive industries for economic growth. The potential 20-35 per cent tax on imports from 2026 threatens Indian exports, risking substantial revenue losses. While India is planning to adopt a voluntary carbon trading scheme in 2023 and is building the way for a new approach by amending the Energy Conservation Act, 2001, there is a lack of clarity on the precise mechanism at this stage. India's lack of a domestic carbon pricing system compounds the challenges, impacting its export competitiveness.

CBAM is estimated to induce losses of over \$8 billion to Indian exports from 2026. Iron, steel, and aluminium industries are likely to be some of the most impacted sectors. For instance, Indian aluminium exports to the EU, which constitute 29 per cent of merchandise exports, face trouble due to CBAM as aluminium production is an extremely energy-intensive process and requires the use of coal, resulting in higher greenhouse gas emissions. EU is an attractive market for Indian aluminium exports. In FY 2023, primary aluminium accounted for 29 per cent of the total \$74.8 billion worth of merchandise exports to the EU.

Towards carbon-responsible practices

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The effort of the developed economies to design carbon accounting standards provides India with an opportunity to understand its own requirements and work towards setting up a framework that better suits its needs of energy security and Net Zero commitments. India is already taking giant strides to support and prioritise decarbonisation in various sectors – be it energy, steel, or transportation. In the energy industry, which accounts for almost half of the country’s total GHG emissions, India has been actively making efforts towards decarbonisation with reformative initiatives like the smart metering programme.

India needs to pace up the regulatory architecture to fuel carbon-responsible economic activities and align its economic growth with the UN’s SDG goals. A strong and favourable regulatory framework is necessary to support the uptake of carbon-efficient economic initiatives to enable commercial growth while contributing to global efforts towards reducing carbon footprint. Without outrightly rejecting and countering CBAM, India should adopt a diplomatic and proactive approach when dealing with global trade challenges like CBAM. It should advocate for fair trade practices and engage constructively with international initiatives while also pursuing environmentally conscious policies to strengthen its global position. This would certainly enhance India’s global standing as a country which is committed to a sustainable future and climate goals.

Enforce climate justice

Any deliberation over carbon legislations or climate policies is incomplete if we do not factor in the need to enforce climate justice to ensure that the costs of mitigating climate change are equitably distributed and do not burden the poor or developing economies. A CBAM-like carbon tax mechanism with its trade distortion potential is a double whammy for less advanced economies who may have contributed the least to global carbon emissions but are at most risk of climate change impacts. For example, India’s per capita annual emissions were about a third of the global average in the period between 1850 and 2019. In fact, entire South Asia contributed just about 4 per cent of historical cumulative net anthropogenic emissions during that period. In contrast, North America and Europe have contributed almost 10 times more to global cumulative emissions.

As the EU takes the lead in combating climate change, the trading bloc must be reminded of its \$100-billion annual commitment set under the Paris Agreement to aid the developing nations minimise their carbon emissions. The Global North should be morally obligated to ensure a level-playing field in the fight against climate change and provide the developing nations with climate finance, technology and knowledge transfer and support for capacity building to ensure that climate action is fair and all-inclusive. Balancing the EU's carbon tax requires a nuanced approach that accommodates both carbon reduction goals and climate justice. Collaborative efforts between developed and developing economies can pave the way for a fair and sustainable global response to climate change and avoid a new era of vicious protectionism and trade wars.

(Source: Business Today, September 2023)

India retains 40th rank in Global Innovation Index 2023

NITI Aayog said that the consistent improvement in the GII ranking is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant start-up ecosystem, and the amazing work done by the public and private research organizations.

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India has retained 40th rank out of 132 economies in the Global Innovation Index 2023 rankings published by the World Intellectual Property Organization, NITI Aayog said in a release on Thursday. India has been on a rising trajectory, over the past several years in the Global Innovation Index (GII), from a rank of 81 in 2015 to 40 in 2023. The 16th edition of the Index was released by the World Intellectual Property Organization, an agency of the United Nations.

“Innovation has been at the forefront of our battle against the unprecedented crisis created by the pandemic and will be pivotal in driving the country’s resilience, as enshrined in the Prime Minister’s clarion call on Atma Nirbhar Bharat,” the release said.

NITI Aayog said that the consistent improvement in the GI ranking is owing to the immense knowledge capital, the vibrant start-up ecosystem, and the amazing work done by the public and private research organizations.

“All Departments of the Government, including Scientific Departments such as the Department of Science and Technology; the Department of Biotechnology; the Department of Space; and the Department of Atomic Energy and also departments such as Ministry of Electronics and IT, Department of Telecommunications, Department of Agricultural Research & Education and the Department of Health Research have played a pivotal role in enriching the National Innovation Ecosystem. Most importantly, the Atal Innovation Mission has played a major role in expanding the Innovation ecosystem,” it said.

NITI Aayog has been working towards ensuring the optimization of the national efforts for bringing policy-led innovation in different areas such as electric vehicles, biotechnology, nanotechnology, space, alternative energy sources, etc. It has also played a role in expanding the innovation ecosystem in states and districts.

It further stated that the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has also been collaborating in India’s journey towards an innovation-driven economy. This year, the NITI Aayog, in partnership with the CII and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), is hosting, virtually, the India Launch of the GI 2023 on 29th September 2023. The launch session, it added, will be attended by many dignitaries including Suman Bery, Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog; Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog; BVR Subrahmanyam, Chief Executive Officer, NITI Aayog; Daren Tang, Director General, WIPO; Dr. Sacha Wunsch-Vincent, Co-Editor, GI & Head, Economics and Statistics Division, WIPO; Dr Nausad Forbes, Chairman, CII National Committee on Technology, Innovation & Research, and Co-Chairperson, Forbes Marshall; Professor Rishikesha Krishnan, Director, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore; and Alok Nanda, Co-Chairman, CII National Committee on Technology, Innovation & Research, and CEO, GE India Technology Centre.

(Financial Express, 29/9/2023)

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