Respect every civilisation, protect heritage: SCO

NEW DELHI, Nov 22 (PTI)

THE SCO Civilisational Dialogue Forum hosted by India on Sunday came out with an outcome document -- Indraprastha Communique -- which called for the protection of cultural heritage, including from illicit trafficking, and "respecting every civilisation as an equal voice".

The three-day forum at the Purana Quila was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 20. It saw the participation of delegates from various Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) member countries, including Pakistan's Federal Minister Musadik Malik.

Asked if any formal bilateral talks were held between India and Pakistan on the sidelines, Union Culture Secretary Vivek Aggarwal said, "There were no formal bilateral talks between the two sides."



However, he said that members of the Indian side did have interactions with him over banquets, and that there were other interactions with him during the course of the forum.

Shortly before the closing session, the culture secretary said that based on discussions held during the forum and suggestions offered by the SCO member States, the forum has come out with an outcome document, which will be adopted at the closing session. Aggarwal read out the details of the communique in his remarks.

The SCO Forum document called for the protection of heritage from illicit trafficking and natural calamities.

The communique also advocated embracing technology and "constructive use of artificial intelligence" in accessing cultural heritage.

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India-Nepal Ayodhya-Janakpur train to be flagged-off today



AYODHYA, Nov 22 (ANI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and Prime Minister of Nepal Balendra Shah will flag off the train service between Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh and Janakpur in Nepal on November 23.

Prepartions are on and an on-site inspection are underway in Ayodhya ahead of the launch of a proposed train service between Ayodhya and Janakpur in Nepal, District Magistrate and Collector Shashank Tripathi said on Sunday, describing it as a "new, historic initiative" to be flagged off jointly by the Prime Ministers of India and Nepal from New Delhi, while the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and several other dignitaries will participate in the event locally. The new passenger train service between Ayodhya and Janakpur Dham adds a new dimension to long-standing partnership for India and Nepal. The connection reflects the role of Indian Railways in strengthening cross-border mobility while supporting the close cultural and social ties shared by both nations with the introduction of a new express train service between Ayodhya Dham in Uttar Pradesh, India, and Janakpur Dham in Nepal.

Connecting important destinations across Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the train will have key stoppages at Gorakhpur, Basti, Raxaul, Sitamarhi, Madhubani and Jaynagar. These stops will improve rail access for passengers across several districts, facilitating travel for religious visits, family connections and other purposes.

India cherishes special friendship with Nepal: Jaishankar

NEW DELHI, Nov 22 (IANS)

EXTERNAL Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar called on Nepal Prime Minister Balendra Shah in New Delhi on Sunday, holding discussions on various aspects of bilateral ties and further strengthening cooperation.

Balendra Shah arrived in New Delhi on Sunday for a two-day State visit at the invitation of PM Modi. Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada welcomed him at the airport. Following the meeting with Nepal PM, EAM Jaishankar said that India cherishes its special friendship with Nepal.

"Prime Minister Balendra Shah was called on by the External Affairs Minister of India, S Jaishankar at Hotel Taj Mahal in New Delhi. On the occasion, various aspects of Nepal-India relations, including co-operation in the areas of connectivity, trade, transit commerce, energy, culture, education, sports

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External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar during a meeting with Nepal's Prime Minister Balendra Shah in New Delhi. (PTI)

India-EU trade pact likely to be signed on December 16

NEW DELHI, Nov 22 (PTI)



INDIA and the 27-nation bloc European Union (EU) are likely to sign the free trade agreement (FTA) on December 16, an official said.

The two sides concluded the negotiations for the pact on January 27 this year.

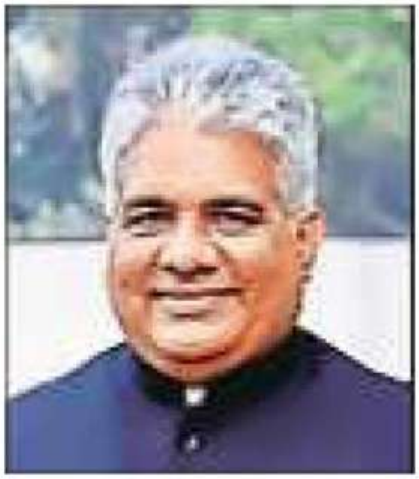
European Union's Ambassador to India, Jean-Eric Paquet, recently said the FTA will be signed during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Brussels in December, and it will come into force next year.

The European Commission has already submitted proposals to the Council of the European Union seeking authorisation for signing and conclusion of the agreement, along with the final legal text and tariff schedules.

India engaged constructively till end, says Bhupender Yadav as COP31 ends with no deal

NEW DELHI, Nov 22 (PTI)

AS THE UN climate talks in Antalya, Turkiye, failed to reach an overarching agreement on Sunday, Union Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav said India engaged constructively and tirelessly till the very end.



In a post on X, the Minister also stated that India regretted that a consensus on the final draft agreement could not be reached.

The annual conference, called COP31, ended without a final agreement due to disagreements on a stronger commitment to transition away from fossil fuels or securing new, quantified climate finance pledges.

Yadav said, "Climate ambition must go hand in hand with means of implementation. Energy transitions must be nationally determined, just and equitable, backed by finance, technology and capacity-building for developing countries."

He added that the absence of a final agreement did not pause climate action. India continues to deliver at home, with over 170 GW of solar capacity, and remains committed to consensus-based multilateralism on the road to COP32, according to the Minister.

Moreover, Yadav highlighted, "India, for like minded developing countries, raised a fundamental question at COP-31: Why are we here, and how did we arrive at this climate crisis? Historical and continuing emissions have consumed a disproportionate share of the global carbon budget."

Equity and climate justice must therefore remain at the heart of our collective response, said the Minister.

India-Canada CEPA: 6th round ends with progress on goods, services, investment

NEW DELHI, Nov 22 (IANS)



THE sixth round of negotiations for the India-Canada Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) was held here from November 11 to 20, 2026 with both sides reporting constructive and substantive progress across key negotiating tracks, an official statement said on Saturday.

According to the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, the negotiations covered key areas including trade in goods, trade in services, rules of origin, trade remedies, intellectual property and investment promotion.

The Indian delegation was led by Dr. Brij Mohan Mishra, Chief Negotiator, while the Canadian delegation was led by Ms. Mary-Catherine Speirs, Chief Negotiator.

The round witnessed constructive and substantive discussions across the negotiating tracks, with both sides making progress towards advancing the negotiations. The discussions were guided by the shared objective of concluding the negotiations within the ambitious timelines envisaged by the leaders of the two nations.

Towards the conclusion of the round, Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal held a productive meeting with Glenn Purves, Vice Minister of International Trade of Canada, and his delegation in the national capital.

"The meeting provided an opportunity to review the progress achieved during the sixth round of negotiations and take stock of the overall status of the India-Canada CEPA discussions," according to the Ministry.

Moreover, both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to concluding an ambitious, balanced and commercially meaningful agreement that delivers tangible benefits to farmers, industries, businesses and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in both countries, it added.

It was underscored that the proposed CEPA would unlock new opportunities in trade and investment, strengthen resilient and diversified supply chains and further deepen the economic partnership between India and Canada.

"The successful conclusion of the sixth round reflects the continued engagement and commitment of both sides towards advancing the negotiations and strengthening bilateral economic and commercial ties," the Government said.