

# India and the UK sign an MoU to increase educational opportunities for Indian students; an MoU on Certificates of Competency of Seafarers of India and the UK; and a Framework Agreement to increase opportunities for Indian Nurses

## India-UK Trade Talks on Track; Negotiations to be Completed by 31st August: Commerce Secretary

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The India-UK trade talks are on track. Speaking to media after signing two MoUs and a framework agreement with UK, Commerce Secretary B. V. R. Subrahmanyam said that the India-UK FTA negotiations would be concluded by 31<sup>st</sup> August and after internal approvals on both sides, the agreement would be ready to be signed as per convenience of the both leaders. “Irrespective of party in power in UK, the logic of FTA with India is irreversible,” he added.

Earlier, Shri B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, Commerce Secretary, Government of India and Mr. James Bowler, Permanent Secretary, Department of International Trade, United Kingdom; India and the UK signed two MoUs on mutual recognition of educational qualifications including maritime education and a Framework Agreement on health care work force. These agreements will facilitate closer alignment on education between India and UK, enhance short-term bilateral mobility and ensure mutual recognition of qualifications.

These agreements are part of the commitments made by both parties under the Enhanced Trade Partnership' (ETP) launched by the Prime Ministers of both countries on 4<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to unleash the trade potential of the partnership by doubling trade by 2030 and reducing market barriers to trade in key sectors. Following the launch of ETP, both sides had also launched negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2022. The 5th round of negotiations, which is hosted by India, is currently underway in Delhi. The meeting also took stock of the progress made towards the signing of FTA.

The MoU on Education was signed by Shri K. Sanjay Murthy, Secretary, Department of Higher Education on behalf of Government of India. This MoU provides for mutual recognition of educational qualifications and duration of study undertaken by students within duly approved and recognized higher education institutions in the two countries. On a reciprocal basis, Indian Senior Secondary School/Pre-University Certificates will be considered suitable for entry into UK higher education institutions. Similarly, the Bachelor degree, Master's degree and Doctoral degree of India and the UK will also be considered equivalent to each other. Apart from encouraging student mobility, the mutual recognition of qualifications would also promote excellence in higher education through cooperation, academic and research exchanges.

The MOU on maritime education qualification was signed by Shri Amitabh Kumar, Director General of Shipping on behalf of Government of India. This MoU will pave the way for the two governments to mutually recognize the certificates of maritime education and training, competency and endorsements of seafarers issued by each other. The MoU will prove beneficial for employment of seafarers of both the

countries and would make them eligible for employment on ships of either party. India being a seafarer supplying nation with large pool of trained seafarers, it is expected to be significantly benefitted by the MoU.

From Indian side, the Framework Agreement on Healthcare Workforce was signed by Ms. V. Hekali Zhimomi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The Agreement include cooperation on Nursing & Allied Health Professionals (AHPs), training of healthcare professionals and measures to bridge the skill gap. The agreement will facilitate the recruitment and training of nurses and AHPs from India by UK in a streamlined manner. Given the shortage of nurses in the UK, the agreement will benefit both the sides.

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