

India reaching out to non-G20 nations as major energy producers remain evasive

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India is actively reaching out to nations outside the G20 grouping, seeking their participation in the proposed Global Biofuels Alliance (GBA), multiple officials told *Business Standard*, even as major energy producers like Russia, China and Saudi Arabia remain unconvinced about joining the multilateral initiative.

India's diplomatic missions are reaching out to a host of nations to ensure a full house when the Alliance is inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the G-20 Leaders Summit on September 9-10, they said.

On July 22, India held a global meet on the issue, on the sidelines of the G-20 energy ministers meeting in Goa.

After deliberations, it announced that 19 countries have expressed their interest in being the initiating members of the Alliance, without naming them.

However, at least 7 of the nations whose energy ministers attended the summit and unanimously supported

the formation of the Alliance, were not G-20 members. These countries include Bangladesh, Kenya, Mauritius, Paraguay, Seychelles, the UAE and Uganda. "More countries are now being invited to join the GBA and many have responded positively. We have also heard specific inputs from the least developed nations. All these will be taken into account when the Alliance is launched and its policy goals are framed," an official said.

Apart from nations in the immediate neighbourhood, and its long list of allies in Africa, India is expecting support from Latin American nations, marshalled by the United States (US), which has given its support to the GBA.

New Delhi is also counting on the support of the Central Asian nations part of the Shanghai Cooperation Agreement bloc, which recently decided to collaborate on emerging fuel technology, energy modelling, and transition goals. But within the G20 grouping, Russia and Saudi Arabia have not come fully on board owing to their fear that the alliance will intensify the grow-

SEEKING SUPPORT

- Russia and Saudi Arabia rely on crude oil to finance their Budget
- PM to inaugurate the Alliance during the G20 Leaders Summit in September
- Along with neighbouring countries and allies in Africa, India expecting support from Latin American nations

ing clamour against fossil fuels. Both Moscow and Riyadh rely on crude oil to finance large chunks of their budgets, and have called for continuing investment into traditional hydrocarbons during the global energy transition.

Meanwhile, China has shown "little interest in the proposal", the official added. India can't do much to convince China to join the Alliance since it has competed with India on major multilateral initiatives. Beijing has also prioritised biofuels in its national carbon

reduction and fuel sufficiency plans and produces almost as much ethanol as India, according to the International Energy Agency (IEA).

However, officials from the Petroleum and Natural Gas Ministry said partners such as Russia and Saudi Arabia have been taken into confidence and been told the GBA will work in collaboration with relevant existing regional and international agencies as well as initiatives in the bioenergy, bio-economy, and energy transition fields more broadly. This includes the Clean Energy Ministerial Biofuture Platform, the Mission Innovation Bioenergy initiatives, and the Global Bioenergy Partnership (GBEP). Other officials, however, downplayed the realistic impact of the nations' not joining the alliance.

"The US holds a 55 per cent share followed by Brazil at 27 per cent and India at 3 per cent. India's share is expected to quickly rise. In terms of the global impact that such an alliance will bring, all the key participants are already ready," a NITI Aayog official said.