



INDIA - RUSSIA RELATIONS - GS II MAINS

Q. India-Russia relationship is not in 'terminal decline' rather it is special and steady. Discuss (15 marks, 250 words)

News: Old traditions, new ties: On the importance of the India-Russia partnership

What's in the news?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to Moscow reaffirms an old tradition of holding annual summits between India and Russia leaders.

India - Russia Relations:

Areas of Cooperation:

1. Geopolitical Cooperation:

- India and Russia have close geopolitical cooperation.
- Engagement of India and Russia in regional forums like BRICS, SCO and the G20.
- India refrained from adverse voting in the UN, and disregarded Western threats of sanctions on its energy imports from Russia.
- India and Russia champion the establishment of a multi-polar world order.
- Strong condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and all terrorist "safe havens" by both the Countries.

2. Defense Cooperation:

- Russia is a major defense equipment supplier to India.

a. Military Hardware and Technology Transfers:

- Licensed production of T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKI aircraft in India.
- Agreements for the supply of S-400 Triumf mobile surface-to-air missile systems, MiG-29K aircraft, Kamov-31 helicopters, and upgrade of MiG-29 aircraft.
- Joint development and production of military platforms like the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile.
- Establishment of Indo-Russia Rifles Private Limited (IRRPL) to produce AK-203 rifles in India under "Make in India".

b. Joint Military Exercises:

- Tri-service military exercise 'INDRA', Avia Indra joint air force exercise.

c. Institutionalized Mechanisms for Defense Collaboration:

- Establishment of India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC) at the apex level; and 2+2 Dialogue mechanism involving the Defense and Foreign Ministers in 2021.



3. Economic Cooperation:

- India and Russia share close economic relations.

a. Trade and Investment:

- The bilateral trade between India and Russia stands at around \$65 billion. India's imports of Russian crude at discount has surged after the invasion of Ukraine led to the oil sanctions by the U.S. and Europe.

b. Cooperation in the Russian Far East:

- India provides financial and personnel assistance to develop the resource-rich but sparsely populated Russian Far East region bordering China.
- A 5-year program of cooperation in the Far East for 2021-2025 is being finalized between NITI Aayog and Russia's Ministry for Development of the Far East

c. Close Business Cooperation:

- India and Russia have both institutionalized CEO's Forum.
- Indian companies invest in Russia, especially in natural resources such as coal, fertilizers, hydrocarbons, minerals, and rare earth metals

d. Banking and Financial Links:

- India and Russia have explored deepening banking and financial links such as ruble-rupee trade; and collaboration between financial institutions like SBI and VTB Bank.

4. Scientific and Research Cooperation:

- Since the cold war era, Russia has been a major scientific and research partner of India.

a. Civil nuclear energy Cooperation:

- India and Russia jointly developed Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP).
- India and Russia have jointly signed agreements on the construction of 12 nuclear power plants in India During the coming decades.

b. Space relations:

- Russia and India have signed an agreement to train Indian astronauts for India's first manned space mission (Gaganyaan).
- C-DAC and GLONASS have signed the agreement for cooperation in technologies based on satellite navigation.

c. Health:

- India approved Russian Vaccine Sputnik V under emergency use authorization.

5. Diaspora and Cultural Relations:

- India and Russia have a deep diaspora and cultural relation. The following are the areas of engagement between India and Russia.



a. Respect for languages and Culture:

- Hindi, and other languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions.
- Organizations like the Indian Cultural Centre in Moscow and the Indian Students' Association promote Indian culture and heritage in Russia.

b. Indian Diaspora:

- The Indian diaspora in Russia is estimated to be around 30,000-40,000, which consists of mostly professionals, students and businesspeople.

c. Extension of Line of Credit for Russian Far East:

- India has extended \$1 billion as a line of credit for the development of the Russian Far East.

Issues in India - Russia Relations:

1. Growing India - US Relations:

- The India-US relations is rapidly deepening especially in the defense sector, which is exemplified in the India-US nuclear deal in 2008, US emerging as the top arms supplier to India by overtaking Russia and India-US Foundational agreements such as LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA.

2. Growing China - Russia Relations:

- Moscow and Beijing have forged the closest possible ties in their history. This has generated fears that Russia will become a subordinate partner given the growing economic, demographic and technological asymmetry between them.

3. Trade Imbalances:

- Even though the bilateral trade between the two nations has increased in the face of crude oil imports, there are considerable trade imbalances between India and Russia.
- Of the total trade of \$65 billion, India's exports constitute less than \$5 billion.

4. Delay in Supply of Defense Parts:

- There have been considerable delays in the delivery of military spares and big-ticket weapon systems like the S-400 Triumf surface-to-air missile systems, to India due to the Ukraine War.

5. Russia - Ukraine Crisis:

- The continuing Russia-Ukraine war has put India into a diplomatic tightspot.
- India has been facing significant criticism for not condemning the invasion and continuing energy and economic cooperation with Moscow.

Way Forward:

1. Diversification of Economic Ties:

- Both countries should focus on diversifying and expanding their economic relations.



- This includes exploring new sectors for collaboration, increasing trade volumes, and encouraging investments.

2. Multilateral Engagement:

- Coordinate closely in multilateral forums such as BRICS and the SCO.
- Collaborate on global issues, advocate for shared values and principles, and work together to address common challenges on the international stage.

3. Innovation and Technology Cooperation:

- Foster collaboration in emerging technologies, including artificial intelligence, space exploration, cybersecurity, and renewable energy.
- Joint research and development initiatives can lead to technological advancements beneficial to both countries.

4. Yoga and Cultural Diplomacy:

- Leverage the popularity of Yoga in Russia to enhance cultural diplomacy.
- Promote cultural events, language education, and exchanges to deepen the understanding of each other's cultures.

5. Public Diplomacy:

- Engage in public diplomacy efforts to create awareness and understanding of the bilateral relationship among the citizens of both countries.
- Utilize media, social platforms, and cultural events to promote positive narratives.