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TOPIC: Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

In Trump's world, India and Europe need each other

Why is Ursula von der Leyen's Visit to India Important?

- European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen visited India with her entire team of commissioners.
- This visit marks an important moment in India-EU relations, showing that Europe wants to strengthen ties with India.
- She chose India as her first international destination in her second term, highlighting India's growing importance in Europe's foreign policy.
- The visit is happening at a time when global politics is shifting due to Donald Trump's return as US President.
- Europe is looking for stronger allies, and India also needs reliable partners in the uncertain global scenario.

Key Facts About the European Union (EU)

- **Formation:** The EU was formed in 1951 by six countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands) after World War II to promote economic and political cooperation.
- **Current Members:** The EU has 27 member countries. The United Kingdom was a member but left in 2020 (Brexit).
- **Largest and Smallest Members:**
 - Germany has the largest population.
 - France is the largest country by area.
 - Malta is the smallest country.
- **Open Borders (Schengen Area):** Most EU countries allow free movement across their borders except Cyprus and Ireland. Some non-EU countries (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland, and Liechtenstein) are also part of this system.



- Single Market: People, goods, services, and money can move freely across EU countries.
- Climate Goals: The EU aims to become climate-neutral by 2050 and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030.

Impact of Donald Trump's Return to Power

- Although von der Leyen's visit was planned earlier, Trump's return as US President has made the EU-India partnership more urgent.
- Trump's foreign policies are unpredictable. He has shown willingness to work closely with rivals like Russia and China, which makes US allies uncertain.
- India has maintained stable relations with the US but must prepare for changes under Trump's leadership.
- With Russian President Vladimir Putin exploring direct negotiations with Trump, India must secure its interests by expanding its partnerships.
- Strengthening relations with the EU can help India balance global uncertainties.

Changing Global Power Dynamics and Its Effect on India

- The relationship among the US, Russia, and China is constantly changing, sometimes cooperative and sometimes in rivalry.
- If Trump moves towards better relations with Russia and China, India cannot rely only on its existing ties.
- India must strengthen its global partnerships to maintain its strategic position.
- Europe, being the third-largest economy, can offer India access to advanced technology, investment, and a vast consumer market.
- Von der Leyen's visit presents an opportunity for India to renew its relationship with the EU and reduce dependence on unpredictable global powers.

India-EU Relations: A Look at the Past and Present

- 2004: India and the EU announced a strategic partnership, but it did not progress much.
- Early 2010s: Trade talks between India and the EU stalled, and Brussels (EU headquarters) seemed uninterested in deepening ties.
- The EU was more focused on strengthening its economic relationship with China, sidelining India.
- 2016: India realized the strategic importance of the EU in a changing world, and both sides revived engagement.



• Recent Developments:

- India and the EU resumed trade talks.
- They formed the Trade and Technology Council (TTC) to work together on economic and technological advancements.
- The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was announced during the 2023 G20 Summit in Delhi.
- The EU has become more interested in the Indo-Pacific region to balance China's growing influence.

Challenges Created by Trump's Foreign Policy for Europe

- Trump's policy shifts have weakened relations between the US and Europe.
- He has reduced US support for Ukraine, which has left European allies worried about their security.
- Trump's direct talks with Russia, without including European representatives, have sidelined the EU in global negotiations.
- His defense policies suggest that Europe should take primary responsibility for its own security, reducing US military support.
- These factors are forcing Europe to look for new, stronger partners like India to ensure stability.

Rising Ideological Differences Between the US and Europe

- The Trump administration has also created ideological tensions with European democracies.
- US Vice President J D Vance has criticized European policies, blaming issues like immigration and liberalism for their problems.
- The US government has also supported right-wing parties in Europe, such as Germany's Alternative for Germany (AfD), which has created friction.
- Even Germany's traditionally pro-American party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), has expressed concerns.
- These growing ideological differences may push Europe closer to India as a trusted partner.

How is India Handling Relations with the US Under Trump?

- India has managed to maintain good relations with the US even under Trump's leadership.
- Modi's recent visit to the White House showed India's strong ties with the US.



- However, challenges remain:
 - India and the US have set a target to increase bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030, but Trump's "America First" policy could create obstacles.
 - Trump's reciprocal tariffs policy may make it difficult for India to negotiate a free trade agreement (FTA).
 - India's trade deficit with China has reached \$100 billion annually, making it crucial to expand economic ties beyond China and the US.
 - Strengthening trade with Europe can help India reduce its dependence on China and secure alternative economic partnerships.

Why Strengthen India-EU Relations?

1. Countering Authoritarian Regimes

- India faces security concerns from China, while the EU is worried about Russia.
- Strengthening India-EU relations will help both sides defend democratic values and reduce threats from authoritarian governments.

2. Boosting Economic Growth

- An India-EU Free Trade Agreement (FTA) can increase trade and investment.
- The EU is the world's largest economic bloc, and India is expected to be the third-largest economy by 2030.
- Both can offer market access, technology exchange, and alternative supply chains to reduce dependence on China.

3. Advancing Technological Cooperation

- India is growing as a technology hub, and the EU has strong research and development (R&D) capabilities.
- Both sides can collaborate in AI, quantum computing, biotechnology, and space exploration.
- The EU-India Trade and Technology Council (TTC) can help align strategies on emerging technologies.
- India's manufacturing sector can benefit from Europe's expertise, while Europe can gain from India's tech startups.

4. Climate and Environmental Action

- India and the EU are both committed to green energy and sustainable development.



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- They can invest in clean energy projects, such as solar power, electric vehicles (EVs), and sustainable agriculture.
- Working together can help achieve global climate goals and reduce carbon emissions.

The Road Ahead for India and the EU

- Von der Leyen's visit is a major opportunity for India and the EU to strengthen their strategic partnership.
- Both regions must overcome past delays and actively collaborate in trade, technology, security, and environmental sustainability.
- With the US adopting a "self-first" approach, and China becoming more assertive, India and Europe need to work together to ensure a stable and balanced global order.
- A stronger India-EU relationship will benefit both sides and contribute to a more multipolar world.

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