India - Russia Ties

Why in news?

The Prime Minister of India is on a 2-day official visit to Russia.

What are the pillars of India-Russia Ties?

- **Historical connections** –The early diplomatic relations between India and Russia (formerly the Soviet Union) were established in ***1947***, shortly after India gained independence.
- The relationship evolved into a strategic partnership, marked by shared interests during the Cold War era.
- **Multilateral engagement -** India & Russia cooperate closely at several multilateral platforms such as the ***United Nations, G20, BRICS & SCO.***

Shangai Cooperation Organization	India's Presidency of the ***G20 & SCO in 2023*** afforded the opportunity for Officials and Ministers of both countries to meet on the sidelines of various events in India.
BRICS	Russia is the ***BRICS Chair for 2024.***
United Nations Security Council	Russia has consistently expressed support for India's candidature for a ***permanent seat at the UNSC.***
United Nations	Both the countries have a history of close cooperation in the UN.

- **Trade & Economic relations -** The trade and economic relations have been identified as a priority area for both countries.
- In FY 2023-24, bilateral trade has reached an all-time high of ***65.70 billion dollars.***
- There is a target of increasing bilateral investment to ***$50 billion and bilateral trade to $30 billion by 2025.***

Russia's major bilateral investments in India are in the oil and gas, petrochemicals, banking, railways and steel sectors, while Indian investments in Russia are mainly in the oil and gas and pharmaceuticals sectors.

- **Export and Import—**Major exports from India include pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, electrical machinery and mechanical appliances, and iron and steel.
- Major items of import from Russia include oil and petroleum products, fertilizers, mineral resources, precious stones and metals, vegetable oils, etc.
- **Bilateral investments—**India and Russia remain strong. In 2018, they surpassed the previous target of $30 billion, leading to a revised target of ***$50 billion by 2025.***

- **Defence & Security Cooperation -** India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence.
- India & Russia participate in bilateral and multilateral military exercises across the 3 services.
- **Bilateral projects-** It include the
    - Supply of S-400,
    - Licensed production of ***T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKI, supply of mig-29 and Kamov helicopters,***
    - ***INS Vikramaditya*** (formerly Admiral Gorshkov),
    - Production of Ak-203 rifles in India and brahmos missiles.
- **Science & Technology Cooperation -** India and Russia have a long history of cooperation in the field of science and technology.
- The new Roadmap for Bilateral STI Co-operation has been developed and agreed by both sides to replace the erstwhile Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) co-operation program.
- **Space Cooperation -** India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades.
- The two countries are cooperating closely under India's first human spaceflight program ***"Gaganyaan".***
- **Nuclear Energy - Kudankulam Nuclear Plant-** Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) is a flagship project between India and Russia in this sphere.
- **Education -** Indian students are enrolled in various courses in disciplines such as engineering, economics, sciences and other subjects in other universities.
- Medical students comprise the largest group among Indian students studying in Russia.
- At the school-level, the ***Atal Innovation Mission of India and SIRIUS Center collaborate*** together as part of an initiative.
- **Cultural Cooperation -** India and Russia have deep and historic cultural linkages.
- The ***Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC),*** Moscow, maintains close cooperation with leading Russian institutions.
- Prominent Russian universities and institutions, teach Indian languages.
- The International Day of Yoga (2024) was celebrated in more than 60 regions of Russia.
- **Diaspora & people-to-people ties -** The people-to-people ties remain strong with gradual increase in bilateral tourism.
- The facility of e-visas for both countries has helped accelerate this process.
- Prominent Indians have been conferred Russian state awards for their contribution to building and strengthening Russia-India political, scientific, and cultural ties.

What are the limitations of India-Russia ties?

- **Deepening India-US Ties -** The India-US relations is rapidly deepening its relationship ties with foundational agreements like
    - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMoA),
    - Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA),
    - Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).
- **Russia's Over Dependence on China -** Russia-Ukraine conflict has boosted Russia-

China cooperation has grown in all directions.

- **Connectivity Issues -** China relishes direct connectivity, advanced logistics supply, a high level of trade, and profitability with Russia.
- **Defence Issues-** Due to the Ukraine War, the delivery of military spares and big-ticket weapon systems like S-400 to India has been delayed.
- **Economic Issues -** India's trade deficit with Russia touched ***$43 billion*** in 2022-23 as it imported goods worth $49.35 billion while its exports were at $3.14 billion.

What lies ahead?

- The bilateral relationship has remained strong and stable over more than 75 years.
- In the past two years, the bilateral trade has expanded significantly, far exceeding the target of $30bn set earlier for 2025.
- India-Russia relations remain robust despite global geopolitical shifts and countries continue to explore avenues for deeper cooperation across various sectors while navigating contemporary challenges.

References

1. Indian Express | India - Russia Ties
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