

Third India-Nordic Summit

Mains: GS II - International relations

Why in News?

Recently, The Third India–Nordic Summit, held in Oslo on 19 May 2026, marked a significant step in strengthening India’s partnership with the Nordic countries.

What are the significance of India - Nordic relations?

- **Nordic countries** - Nordic Countries are a group of countries in northern Europe consisting of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.



- **Significance of India-Nordic Relations** - India’s engagement with the Nordic countries is based on complementarity.
- Nordic countries possess advanced technological capabilities, high innovation standards, and expertise in sustainable development.
- India offers a large market, skilled human resources, manufacturing potential, and growing digital infrastructure.
- This partnership is important for India for several reasons:
 - It supports India’s transition towards a green and sustainable economy.
 - It strengthens India’s digital and technological capabilities.
 - It promotes investments, innovation, and employment generation.
 - It enhances cooperation in climate action and renewable energy.
 - It contributes to resilient global supply chains and maritime security.

- The Nordic countries have also emerged as significant economic partners.
- Bilateral trade and investment have increased substantially over the past decade.
- Sweden alone recorded bilateral trade of nearly USD 7 billion in 2024, while Norway's sovereign wealth fund has invested heavily in Indian capital markets.
- Denmark, Finland, Iceland, and Norway are also expanding investments in sectors such as renewable energy, information technology, shipping, urban development, and clean manufacturing.
- **India's Arctic Policy and Nordic Cooperation** - An important dimension of India-Nordic cooperation is the Arctic region.
- India's Arctic Policy, titled "*India and the Arctic: Building a Partnership for Sustainable Development*", focuses on six pillars:
 - Scientific research and cooperation
 - Climate and environmental protection
 - Economic and human development
 - Transportation and connectivity
 - Governance and international cooperation
 - National capacity building
- The Arctic is strategically significant for India because climate changes in the Arctic directly influence monsoon patterns, weather systems, food security, and coastal sustainability.
- Melting Arctic ice and rising sea levels pose risks to India's island territories and coastal regions.
- Cooperation with Nordic countries in Arctic research, climate monitoring, and environmental sustainability therefore assumes long-term importance for India's ecological and economic security.

What are the key outcomes of the third India-Nordic summit?

- **Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership** - The most significant outcome of the summit was the elevation of relations into a "*Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership*."
- The partnership aims to strengthen cooperation in renewable energy, green hydrogen, sustainable manufacturing, digital innovation, and climate mitigation technologies.
- **Expansion of Trade and Investment** - India and the Nordic countries acknowledged the rapid growth in bilateral trade and investment over the last decade.
- Both sides agreed to further strengthen economic cooperation through improved market access, investment promotion, and resilient supply chains.
- The India-European Free Trade Association (EFTA) Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) is expected to further deepen India-Nordic economic relations by reducing trade barriers, integrating value chains, and promoting sustainable economic development.
- The partnership is likely to encourage investments in sectors such as:
 - Renewable energy
 - Maritime infrastructure
 - Advanced manufacturing
 - Telecommunications
 - Digital technologies

- Health-tech and biotechnology
- **Cooperation in Climate Action** - Climate action emerged as a major area of collaboration during the summit.
- India and Nordic countries agreed to cooperate in areas such as:
 - Renewable energy
 - Carbon reduction technologies
 - Sustainable water management
 - Circular economy practices
 - Green urban infrastructure
- This cooperation is important because it simultaneously addresses environmental concerns and economic growth.
- It can support India's sustainable development goals while creating jobs and attracting investment.
- **Blue Economy and Maritime Cooperation** - The summit also emphasized cooperation in the blue economy, which focuses on the sustainable use of ocean resources for economic growth and environmental protection.
- India's collaboration with Nordic countries in maritime sectors can strengthen:
 - Sustainable fisheries
 - Maritime connectivity
 - Ocean research
 - Port infrastructure
 - Marine environmental protection
- This cooperation is also strategically important for ensuring stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Norway, in particular, has emerged as a key partner in blue economy initiatives and Arctic cooperation.
- **Research Collaboration in STEM and Emerging Technologies** - The summit highlighted the importance of collaboration in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM).
- India and Nordic countries agreed to expand research partnerships in areas such as:
 - Artificial intelligence
 - 6G technologies
 - Cybersecurity
 - Quantum technologies
 - Health-tech
 - Sustainable innovation
- Academic and research collaboration can improve the quality of research output, encourage innovation, and strengthen technological competitiveness.
- **Talent Mobility and Education** - The Nordic countries have increasingly become destinations for Indian students, researchers, and professionals.
- Finland, Sweden, and Denmark host large Indian communities, particularly in the IT and research sectors.
- The summit emphasized expanding mobility partnerships, educational exchanges, and research opportunities. Such initiatives can:
 - Enhance skill development
 - Promote innovation ecosystems
 - Encourage start-ups and entrepreneurship

- Strengthen people-to-people ties
- Talent mobility is likely to become a major pillar of future India-Nordic cooperation.
- **Defence and Strategic Cooperation** - Another significant outcome was the emphasis on defence industrial collaboration.
- India's policy allowing 100% FDI in the defence manufacturing sector offers opportunities for Nordic investments and technology partnerships.
- Cooperation in defence production can contribute to:
 - Technology transfer
 - Indigenous defence manufacturing
 - Research and innovation
 - Employment generation
 - Export growth
 - National security preparedness
- This aligns with India's broader objective of achieving self-reliance in defence production under the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative.
- **Role of Soft Power in India-Nordic Relations** - Apart from economic and strategic cooperation, India has effectively used soft power diplomacy to deepen relations with Nordic countries.
- Yoga, Indian festivals, classical music, dance, cinema, Ayurveda, and cultural exchanges have enhanced India's image across the Nordic region.
- Events such as International Day of Yoga celebrations, Namaste Stockholm festival, and cultural exchange programmes have strengthened people-to-people ties.
- The Indian diaspora in Nordic countries also plays a significant role in promoting cultural engagement and strengthening bilateral relations.

What are the challenges and the future action plan?

- **Challenges:**
 - Geographical distance and logistics constraints
 - Limited awareness among businesses
 - Need for faster technology transfer mechanisms
 - Regulatory and market access barriers
- **Future action plans:**
 - Expand institutional cooperation frameworks
 - Promote innovation-driven joint ventures
 - Strengthen academic and research networks
 - Enhance maritime and Arctic collaboration
 - Facilitate easier mobility for students and professionals

What lies ahead?

- The Third India-Nordic Summit marks an important milestone in India's evolving engagement with the Nordic region.
- The transformation of bilateral ties into a Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership reflects the growing convergence of interests in sustainability, innovation, climate action, digital transformation, and resilient economic growth.
- Nordic technological expertise combined with India's scale, talent, and market

potential creates strong opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation.

- The partnership is likely to emerge as an important model of inclusive, technology-driven, and sustainable global collaboration in the coming decades.
- As global challenges such as climate change, energy transition, technological disruption, and geopolitical uncertainty intensify, a stronger India-Nordic partnership can contribute significantly to sustainable development, strategic stability, and economic resilience at both regional and global levels.

Reference

[The Hindu| 3rd India - Nordic Summit](#)

