

India-Russia Relations

The India and Russia ties have been a longstanding relation. Since the signing of the “Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership” in October 2000, India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, defence, trade and economy, science and technology, and culture.

However, the relations have taken a steep downfall over the past few years, especially in the post-COVID scenario. One of the biggest causes for this is Russia’s close relations with China and Pakistan, which have caused many geopolitical issues in the past few years for India.

The two countries, however, need to amend their policies as they are interdependent on each other in various ways and continuing cordial ties shall be beneficial for both, India and Russia.

India and Russia Bilateral Relations

- The Indo-Russian strategic partnership has been built on six major components: politics, defence, trade, civil nuclear energy, anti-terrorism cooperation and space
- During the Cold War, India and the Soviet Union had a strong strategic, military, economic and diplomatic relationship. After the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, Russia inherited its close relationship with India which resulted in both nations sharing a Special Strategic Relation
- The Indo-Russian Inter-Governmental Commission (IRIGC) is the main body that conducts affairs at the governmental level between both countries
- The two countries are members of various International Organisations and connectivity projects. This includes:
 - BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa)
 - Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)
 - Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG)
 - United Nations Security Council (UNSC)
- India is the second-largest market for the Russian defence industry. In 2017, approximately 68% of the Indian Military's hardware import came from Russia, making Russia the chief supplier of defence equipment
- Indian Defence minister visited Russia to commemorate World War II Victory Day in 2020

Political Relations

- The Annual Summit meeting between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalised dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. As of 2020, 20 Annual Summit meetings have taken place alternatively in India and Russia

- 14 MoUs in the fields of Trade and Investments, defence cooperation, Road Transport and cooperation in oil and gas sectors were signed during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2019
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin held their first informal Summit in the city of Sochi in the Russian Federation on May 21, 2018
- **On April 12, 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order on awarding PM Narendra Modi Russia's highest state decoration - The order of St Andrew the Apostle.** The order was presented to PM for his distinguished contribution to the development of a privileged strategic partnership between Russia and India and friendly ties between the Russian and Indian peoples
- Two Inter-Governmental Commissions - one on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC), and another on Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC), meet annually

Defence and Security Relations

- India-Russia military-technical cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems
- The first-ever Tri-Services exercise –‘INDRA 2017’ took place in Vladivostok from October 19 to 29, 2017. Know more about INDRA - the joint military exercise between India and Russia, at the linked article.
- On December 13-16, bilateral Russian-Indian naval exercise Indra Navy-2018 was held in the Bay of Bengal
- Joint Tri-Services Exercise ‘INDRA 2019’ between India and Russia was carried out simultaneously in Babina, Pune, and Goa from 10th -19th December 2019
- The joint military programmes between India and Russia include:
 - BrahMos cruise missile programme
 - 5th generation fighter jet programme
 - Sukhoi Su-30MKI programme
 - Ilyushin/HAL Tactical Transport Aircraft
 - KA-226T twin-engine utility helicopters
 - some frigates

Get the List of Joint Military Exercises of the Indian Army at the linked article.

- The military hardware purchased/leased by India from Russia includes:
 - S-400 Triumph
 - Kamov Ka-226 200 to be made in India under the Make in India initiative
 - T-90S Bhishma
 - INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier programme
 - S-400 air defence system
- Russia also plays a very important role in assisting the Indian Navy with its submarine programmes:
 - Indian Navy's first submarine, ‘Foxtrot Class’ came from Russia

- India is dependent on Russia for its nuclear submarine programme
- INS Vikramaditya, the sole aircraft carrier operated by India, is also Russian in origin
- Nine of the fourteen conventional submarines operated by India are Russian

India-Russia - Trade Relations

- The two countries intend to increase bilateral investment to US\$50 billion and bilateral trade to US\$30 billion by 2025
- In 2019, total bilateral trade between the two countries from January-September, 2019 stood at USD 7.55 billion
- From 2013 to 2016 there was a major decline in the trade percentage between the two countries. However, it increased from 2017 onwards and a constant increase was noticed in 2018 and 2019 as well
- While in 2017, trade in services was USD 1095.4 million, it reduced slightly in 2018 to USD 999 million. The figure stands at USD 633.68 million for the period (January – June), 2019
- Top products of import in India from Russia include:

Mineral fuels, mineral oils and products of their distillation	Bituminous substances	Mineral waxes
Natural or cultured pearls, precious or semi-precious stones, precious metals	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts
Fertilizers		

- Top products of export from India to Russia include:

Pharmaceutical products	Electrical machinery and equipment and parts	Nuclear reactors, boilers, machinery and mechanical appliances
Organic chemicals	Vehicles other than railway or tramway rolling-stock	

Other Important Areas of Relations Between India and Russia

Nuclear Energy

Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy. It recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) is being built in India with Russian cooperation.

Space Cooperation

Both sides cooperate in the peaceful uses of outer space, including satellite launches, GLONASS navigation system, remote sensing and other societal applications of outer space.

An MoU ISRO and ROSCOSMOS on Joint Activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme was signed during the 19th Bilateral Summit.

Science and Technology

The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Programme are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral Science and Technology cooperation, while the Science Academies of the two countries promote inter-academy exchanges.

A number of new initiatives in this sphere include India-Russia Bridge to Innovation, cooperation in telemedicine, creation of a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), GIAN, and the Russia India Network (RIN) of Universities.

Cultural Relations

- About 20 Russian Institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly teach Hindi to about 1500 Russian students
- Apart from Hindi, languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions
- Indian dance, music, yoga and Ayurveda are among few other interests that people of Russia enjoy
- A “Festival of India in Russia” was held in Russia between September 2018 to March 2019 in 22 cities with 34 performances by 10 groups, showcasing the best of Indian music, dance, food and spiritual traditions
- On October 2, an exhibition dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and about his friendship with the Russian writer Leo Tolstoy was opened at the State Duma of the Russian Federation