



## India-Uzbekistan Virtual Summit

### Why in News

In a recent virtual summit, [India and Uzbekistan](#) have deliberated on **expanding bilateral ties aiming to expand cooperation in a range of areas**, including new and renewable energy, digital technologies, cybersecurity and sharing of information.

- The agreements also include cooperation on **connectivity projects in Afghanistan** and its **peace process, trilateral dialogue with Iran, combatting terrorism**, etc.



### Key Points

- **Trade, Economic and Investment Cooperation:**
  - Making efforts to achieve the **mutually identified target of USD 1 billion for bilateral trade**.
    - The **current bilateral trade** level of about **USD 285 million** (2018) is far below the potential.
  - Fast-track the conclusion of the ongoing **Joint Feasibility Study** that will pave the way for the commencement of negotiations on a **Preferential Trade Agreement**.
  - Early conclusion of the **Bilateral Investment Treaty** which shall facilitate investment promotion and protection for further improvement of trade and economic cooperation.
    - The sides noted the prospects for greater opportunities in the free economic zones of the two countries, including in the **Uzbek-Indian free pharmaceutical zone** in the **Andijan region** (eastern part of the Fergana Valley in far eastern Uzbekistan).
  - Uzbekistan welcomed the opportunities in India for investing/manufacturing under the **'Make in India'** programme.

#### ▪ **Development Cooperation:**

- India confirmed the **approval of a USD 448 million Line of Credit for four developmental projects** in Uzbekistan in the areas of road construction, sewerage treatment and information technology.

#### ▪ **Defence and Security:**

- Appreciated the enhanced pace of bilateral defence cooperation since the convening of the first meeting of **Joint Working Group on Defence Cooperation in February 2019**.
- Welcomed the holding of the **“Dustlik 2019”, first-ever joint military exercises in November 2019**.
- Agreed to further strengthen cooperation between the law enforcement agencies and special services of the two countries, including under the framework of the **Uzbekistan-India Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism**.

#### ▪ **Civil Nuclear Energy:**

- Welcomed the conclusion of the bilateral agreement between the **Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) India** and the **Agency for Development of Nuclear Energy, Uzbekistan**.
  - GCNEP is the **sixth research and development (R&D) unit** under the aegis of **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and helps in capacity building, in association with the interested countries and the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**.

#### ▪ **Connectivity:**

- Reiterated continued commitment for **enhancing connectivity** between India and Uzbekistan and in the larger Central Asian region to bolster trade and investment.
- India welcomed the **proposal to hold trilateral dialogue among India, Iran and Uzbekistan** to promote connectivity through the Chabahar port.
- India also **requested Uzbekistan to consider joining the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** which would add to the overall improvement of connectivity in the larger Eurasian space.

#### ▪ **Culture, Education and People-to-People Contacts:**

- India invited Uzbekistan to avail of increased scholarship opportunities provided by the **Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR)** and training and capacity building under the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme**.

#### ▪ **Terrorism:**

- Strongly **condemned terrorism** in all its forms and manifestations and reaffirmed the determination to combat this menace by destroying terrorist safe-havens, networks, infrastructure and funding channels.
- Also underlined the need for every country to ensure that its territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks against other countries and called for early finalisation of a **Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT)**.

#### ▪ **Afghanistan:**

- Called for the **settlement of the Afghan conflict** on the principle of Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process and expressed unanimity in support for a united, sovereign and democratic Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

#### ▪ **Reformed Multilateralism:**

- Reaffirmed that the **United Nations (UN)** must play a central role in maintaining global peace and security and also called for **comprehensive reform of the UN structures** including the Security Council with expansion in both categories of membership.
- Uzbekistan **reaffirmed its support to India's candidature for permanent membership of the UN Security Council** and congratulated India on its **election as a non-permanent member** of the UN Security Council for the term **2021-22**.

- India also congratulated the **Uzbek side on its successful election** to the **UN Human Rights Council** for the term **2021-23**.
  - Appreciated their close cooperation in the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization** (SCO).
    - In November 2020, India hosted the **first-ever meeting of the Council of the Heads of Government of SCO since its joining the SCO**.
  - India appreciated Uzbekistan's support in the successful holding of the **2<sup>nd</sup> India-Central Asia Dialogue** at the level of Foreign Ministers with the participation of Afghanistan.
  - **Uzbekistan is a member of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation** (OIC), which is the second largest intergovernmental organization after the UN.
    - **India is not a member** of the OIC. However, India was **invited as a guest of honour at the 46<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Minister in 2019**.
- **Covid-19 Pandemic:**
- Emphasized the need for bilateral and global cooperation to continue the **fight against the pandemic** including development and distribution of effective vaccines and other medicines.
  - **Uzbekistan thanked India for the assistance rendered to Uzbekistan in its fight against the pandemic** and India reaffirmed its continued commitment.

## Way Forward

- Agreements reached during various bilateral visits have strengthened cooperation between India and Uzbekistan in diverse sectors such as political, trade and investment, defence, security, counter-terrorism, science and technology, nuclear energy, space, information technology and have promoted cultural and academic linkages.
- Both countries thanked each other for the productive discussions held during the virtual summit and expressed confidence that the understandings and agreements will further deepen the strategic partnership between the two countries for the well-being of their peoples and mutual prosperity.

**Source: TH**

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