



India Vietnam Partnership

For Prelims: Vietnam and neighboring countries

For Mains: Significance of India and Vietnam relations and the common area of interest between two countries in recent times

Why in News?

Recently, Indian Defence Minister visited Vietnam, where he signed some Defence Agreements, which will significantly enhance the scope and scale of existing defence cooperation.

- India and Vietnam are marking **50 years of the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations.**
- Earlier, [India and Vietnam](#) signed a [Letter of Intent \(LOI\)](#) to collaborate in the field of digital media, paving the way for further strengthening the partnership between the two countries.



What are the Key Highlights of the Visit?

- **India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030:**
 - Both the Defence Ministers signed the **'Joint Vision Statement on India-Vietnam Defence Partnership towards 2030'** to bolster bilateral defence cooperation.
- **Defence Line of Credit:**

- The two ministers agreed on the finalisation of the **USD 500 million Defence Line of Credit extended to Vietnam** with implementation of the projects under it adding substantially to Vietnam's defence capabilities and **furthering the government's vision of 'Make in India, Make for the World.'**
- **Mutual Logistics Support:**
 - Both inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on **Mutual Logistics Support**.
 - This is a **major step towards simplifying procedures for mutually beneficial logistic support and is the first such major agreement** which Vietnam has signed with any country.
 - India has signed several logistics agreements including all **Quad countries**, France, Singapore and South Korea beginning with the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement with the U.S. in 2016.
 - Logistics agreements are administrative arrangements facilitating access to military facilities for exchange of fuel and provisions on mutual agreement simplifying logistical support and increasing operational turnaround of the military when operating away from India.
- **Simulators and a Monetary Grant:**
 - India will gift **two simulators and a monetary grant towards setting up of Language and IT (Information Technology) Lab** at the Air Force Officers Training School for capacity building of the Vietnamese Armed Forces.

How has been the India-Vietnam Relations?

- **Background:**
 - While defence cooperation has been one of the most significant pillars of the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership** initiated by the two countries in 2016, the relationship between the two countries was established much earlier.
 - India had established the Consul General's office in Hanoi as early as 1956.
 - Vietnam established its diplomatic mission in 1972.
 - India had stood by Vietnam in opposing US intervention in that country at the cost of embittering Indo-US relations.
 - The relationship was further strengthened when India, in the early 1990s, initiated its **"Look East Policy"** with the specific objective of economic integration and political cooperation with Southeast Asia and East Asia.
- **Areas of Cooperation:**
 - **Strategic Partnership:**
 - India and Vietnam agreed to strengthen their strategic partnership "in line with **India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) and the ASEAN's Outlook on Indo-Pacific** to achieve shared security, prosperity and growth for all in the region."
 - **Economic Cooperation:**
 - Trade and economic relations for mutual benefit, which have significantly improved over the years particularly after the **ASEAN- India Free Trade Agreement** was signed.
 - India realises that Vietnam is a potential regional power in South East Asia with great political stability and substantial economic growth.
 - India is investing in development and capacity assistance for Vietnam through quick impact projects (QIP), proposals in the area of water resource management in **Vietnam's Mekong Delta region, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and digital connectivity.**
 - **Trade relations:**
 - During the **Financial Year (FY) April 2020 - March 2021**, bilateral trade between India and Vietnam reached USD 11.12 billion.
 - Indian exports to Vietnam amounting to USD 4.99 billion and Indian imports from Vietnam at USD 6.12 billion.
 - **Defence Cooperation:**
 - While Vietnam is interested in modernising its armed forces, India is interested in developing defence capabilities of its South-East Asian partners sufficiently to maintain peace in the strategic region.
 - Vietnam is interested in India's **Akash surface-to-air systems and Dhruv**

[advanced light helicopters](#) and [Brahmos missiles](#).

- Apart from this, the defence relations include capacity building, dealing with common security concerns, training of personnel, and cooperation in defence R&D.
- Indian Naval Ship INS Kiltan undertook a visit to Ho Chi Minh City in 2020 to deliver flood relief materials for the people of Central Vietnam ([Mission Sagar III](#)).
 - It also participated in the [PASSEX Exercise](#) with the Vietnam People's Navy.
- The China factor also weighs heavily in the respective strategic calculus of India and Vietnam.
 - Both countries had fought wars with China and both have border problems with that country. China aggressively continues to encroach in the territories of the two countries.
 - Hence, it is natural for both the countries to come closer with a view to restrain China from its aggressive actions.
- **Cooperation at Multiple Fora:**
 - At the [UN Security Council](#), both India and Vietnam are serving concurrently as non-permanent members in 2021.
 - India and Vietnam closely cooperate in various regional forums such as [East Asia Summit](#), Mekong Ganga Cooperation, [Asia Europe Meeting \(ASEM\)](#).
- **People-to-People Contacts:**
 - The year 2019 was celebrated as the ASEAN-India Year of Tourism. Both countries have facilitated a simplified visa regime to promote bilateral tourism.
 - The Embassy of India organised various events to celebrate Mahatma@150 in 2018-19. These include Jaipur artificial limb fitment camps, which were organised in four provinces of Vietnam, benefitting 1000 people, under the '[India for Humanity](#)' initiative of the Government of India.

Way Forward

- In 2016, the first time in 15 years, an Indian Prime Minister visited Vietnam signaling India is no longer hesitant to expand its presence in China's periphery.
- India's foreign policy envisages India to play an anchor for peace, prosperity and stability in Asia and Africa, deepening ties with Vietnam will only strengthen this narrative.
- As India and Vietnam geographically lie at the heart of the emerging Indo-Pacific construct, both would play a major role in this strategic space which is becoming a core theatre for competition for power and influence amongst the major powers.
- The strategic partnership under the broad India-Vietnam cooperation framework would be critical towards building the vision laid out under [India's 'Act East' Policy](#), which looks to expand engagement that is mutually positive and which ensures inclusive growth for all in the region.
- Strengthening ties with Vietnam will eventually lead a step towards the realisation of [SAGAR \(Security and Growth all in the region\)](#) initiative as hailed by the Indian PM.
- India and Vietnam both can mutually benefit each other in the arena of Blue Economy and ocean security.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question

Q. In the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, an initiative of six countries, which of the following is/are not a participant/ participants? (2015)

1. Bangladesh
2. Cambodia
3. China
4. Myanmar
5. Thailand

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2, 3 and 4
- (c) 1 and 3

(d) 1, 2 and 5

Ans: (c)

- The Mekong-Ganga Cooperation (MGC) is an initiative by six countries – India and five ASEAN countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam for cooperation in tourism, culture, education, as well as transport and communications. It was launched in 2000 in Vientiane, Lao PDR.
- Both the Ganga and the Mekong are civilizational rivers and the MGC initiative aims to facilitate closer contacts among the people inhabiting these two major river basins.
- The MGC is also indicative of the cultural and commercial linkages among the member countries of the MGC down the centuries. Therefore, option (c) is the correct answer.

Source: IE

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/printpdf/india-vietnam-partnership>

