



India-Belarus Relation

For Prelims: Location of Belarus

For Mains: India-Belarus relation, Effect of Policies & Politics of Countries on India's Interests

Why in News?

Recently, the **11th Session of the India-Belarus Inter-Governmental Commission** on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation was held.



What are the Highlights of the Session?

- The Intergovernmental Commission **reviewed the results of bilateral cooperation** that took place after the tenth session of the Commission in 2020.

- While expressing satisfaction at the progress made in regard to some projects, **the Commission also directed concerned Ministries and Departments to focus on key sectors** in the trade & investment spheres to finalise concrete outcomes.
- **India and Belarus reiterated their strong desire to further broaden their cooperation** with emphasis on key sectors such as pharmaceuticals, financial services, science and technology, heavy industries, culture, tourism, and education.
- The two ministers **directed their respective business communities to engage with each other** in these sectors to further mutually beneficial cooperation.
- The **two sides agreed to promote cooperation among various states in India** and regions in Belarus, especially in focus areas.

How Has Been India-Belarus Relations?

- **Diplomatic Relations:**
 - India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial.
 - India was one of the **first countries to recognize Belarus as an independent country in 1991** after the break-up of the Soviet Union.
- **Supports at Multilateral Fora:**
 - The cooperation between the two countries is **visible at many multilateral fora such as the UN Security Council (UNSC) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).**
 - Belarus was **one of the countries whose support helped in consolidating India's candidature** for the non-permanent seat at the UNSC in July 2020.
 - India has also **reciprocated Belarus's support at various international fora**, such as Belarus's membership in the **Non Aligned Movement (NAM)** and other international and multilateral groups like **IPU (Inter-Parliamentary Union).**
- **Comprehensive Partnership:**
 - The two countries **enjoy a comprehensive partnership and have established mechanisms for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues** through Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), and Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation.
 - The two countries have signed a number of Agreements/MoUs on various subjects, including trade and economic cooperation, culture, education, media and sports, tourism, science & technology, agriculture, textiles, Avoidance of **Double Taxation**, Promotion and Protection of Investments, and defence and technical cooperation.
- **Trade and Commerce:**
 - In the economic sector, **the annual bilateral trade turnover in 2019 stands at USD 569.6 million.**
 - India's special gesture in 2015 that granted **Belarus the Market Economy Status** and a USD 100 million Line of Credit has also helped in the growth in the economic sector.
 - Market Economy status is a status conferred on the country exporting the goods accepted as the benchmark. Prior to this status, the country was considered as a Non-Market Economy (NME).
 - India's encouragement to the Belarusian businessmen to invest in **'Make in India'** projects are bearing fruits.
- **Indian Diaspora:**
 - The **Indian Community in Belarus consists of around 112 Indian nationals** and 906 Indian students pursuing studies in medicine in State medical universities in Belarus.
 - **Indian art and culture, dance, yoga, ayurveda, films, etc.** remain popular among Belarusian nationals.
 - Many young Belarusians also take keen interest in learning Hindi and dance forms of India.

Way Forward

- Belarus **needs several footholds in Asia diversified by geographical subregions.**
 - **India could become one of such pillars in South Asia**, but Belarusian initiatives should definitely fall into the "matrix" of India's national interests and sacred meanings.
- There are **also certain hidden reserves for cooperation** in the field of cybersecurity.
 - Belarus may become an **"entry point" for Indian pharmaceutical companies** to the

Eurasian market.

- The **potential of military and technical cooperation**, including shared developments, has not been fully disclosed.
 - Cinema (Bollywood) could stimulate the interest of the Indian business community and tourists.
- An **additional increase in the export of tourism and medical services could be ensured by recreational centres** being established in Belarus based on Indian traditional medicine models (Ayurveda + Yoga).

Source: PIB

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