



## India-Russia Bilateral Meeting

**For Prelims:** India-Russia Bilateral Meeting, Regional stability, [Terrorism](#), Russian-built nuclear plants, [Kudankulam nuclear power plant](#).

**For Mains:** India-Russia Bilateral Meeting, Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

Recently, the External Affairs minister of India has visited Russia for a Bilateral Meeting where both the countries signed agreements on [Nuclear Power](#) and in areas of medicines, pharmaceutical substances and medical devices.



### What are the Key Highlights of the India-Russia Bilateral Meeting?

- **Economic Collaboration:**
  - Emphasis on strategic collaboration in **defense, space exploration, nuclear energy,**

and technology sharing, reflecting the robustness of the longstanding partnership and **exploring avenues for deeper cooperation.**

- Both Countries **agreed on the expansion of the exports of Russian hydrocarbons** to the Indian market as well as the cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.
- The two sides **finalised the programme of cooperation in the Far East** and it was decided to hold an early meeting of EaEU-India FTA negotiations.

▪ **Agreement on Nuclear Power Plants:**

- India and Russia signed **agreements to move forward with future units of the Kudankulam nuclear power** project in Tamil Nadu.
- India is already operating two Russian-built nuclear plants while another four are under **construction in Kudankulam, Tamil Nadu.**
  - The Kudankulam nuclear power plant, **India's largest, is being built in Tamil Nadu** with the technical assistance of Russia. The construction began in March 2002. Since February 2016, the first power unit of the Kudankulam NPP has been steadily operating at its design capacity of 1,000 MW.
  - The plant is expected to start operating at full capacity in 2027, according to Russian state media.

▪ **Diplomatic Initiatives:**

- Discussion on multilateral forums and international organizations where India and Russia collaborate or hold common interests, including forums like [BRICS](#), [SCO \(Shanghai Cooperation Organization\)](#), and [UN](#) affairs.

## How has Been the Indo-Russia Relations?

▪ **Historical Background:**

- 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.
- 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.

▪ **Political Relations:**

- 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.

▪ **Bilateral Trade:**

- India's total **bilateral trade with Russia stood at ~USD 13 Billion in 2021-22** and USD 8.14 Billion in 2020-21.
- Russia is India's seventh biggest trading partner, up from 25th position in 2021.
  - The US, China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Indonesia were the six countries that recorded higher volumes of trade with India during the first five months of 2022-23.

▪ **Defence and Security Relations:**

- Both countries regularly conduct the Tri-Services exercise '[INDRA](#)'.
- The joint military programmes between India and Russia include:
  - [BrahMos cruise missile programme](#)
  - 5<sup>th</sup> generation fighter jet programme
  - Sukhoi Su-30MKI programme
- The military hardware purchased/leased by India from Russia includes:
  - [S-400 Triumf](#)
  - [Kamov Ka-226](#) 200 to be made in India under the [Make in India](#) initiative
  - [T-90S Bhisma](#)
  - [INS Vikramaditya aircraft carrier programme.](#)

▪ **Science and Technology:**

- Science & Technology has played a **key role in the bilateral India-Russia (and India-Soviet) partnership**, especially in the early days after India's independence where the erstwhile Soviet Union's assistance was crucial to the establishment of Bhilai Steel Plant, Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay and India's space program.

- During the early stages of the Indian space program, the Soviet Union's assistance played a key role in the launch of the first **Indian satellites-Aryabhata and Bhaskara** in 1984.
- Today, India & Russia work together on basic sciences, materials science, mathematics and cutting-edge areas like [India's manned spaceflight program](#) (Gaganyaan), nanotechnologies and quantum computing.

## What is the Significance of Russia for India?

### ▪ **Balancing China:**

- The Chinese aggression in the border areas of eastern Ladakh, brought India-China relations to an inflection point, but also demonstrated that Russia can contribute to defusing tensions with China.
- Russia organized a trilateral meeting among the foreign ministers of Russia, India, and **China following deadly clashes in the Galwan Valley** in the disputed territory of Ladakh.

### ▪ **Emerging New Sectors of Economic Engagement:**

- Apart from traditional areas of cooperation such as weapons, hydrocarbons, nuclear energy, and diamonds, new sectors of economic engagement are likely to emerge — **mining, agro-industrial, and high technology, including robotics, nanotech, and biotech.**
- India's footprint in the Russian Far East and in the Arctic is set to expand. Connectivity projects may get a boost too.

### ▪ **Combating Terrorism:**

- India and Russia are working to close the gap on Afghanistan and are calling for early finalization of the [Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism](#).

### ▪ **Support At Multilateral Forums:**

- Additionally, Russia supports India's candidacy for permanent membership of a reformed [United Nations Security Council](#) and of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

### ▪ **Russia's Military Exports:**

- Russia was **India's largest arms supplier in the periods between 2013-17 and 2018-22**, but its share of arms imports to India fell from 64% to 45%, according to [Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's \(SIPRI\)](#) Trends in International Arms Transfers 2022 report.

## Way Forward

- Russia will remain a key defense partner for India for decades to come.
- The two countries have been discussing how they can cooperate in using India as a production base for exporting to third countries Russian-origin equipment and services.
  - To address this, Russia has made legislative changes allowing its companies to set up joint ventures in India to address it following an Inter-Governmental Agreement signed in 2019.
  - This agreement needs to be implemented in a time bound manner.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

### Prelims

**Q. Recently, India signed a deal known as 'Action Plan for Prioritization and Implementation of Cooperation Areas in the Nuclear Field' with which of the following countries? (2019)**

- (a) Japan
- (b) Russia
- (c) The United Kingdom
- (d) The United States of America

**Ans: (b)**

### Mains

**Q.** What is the significance of Indo-US defence deals over Indo-Russian defence deals? Discuss with reference to stability in the Indo-Pacific region. **(2020)**

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