



India and Vietnam Relation

For Prelims: Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, Look East Policy, Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI), ASEAN, Vietnam's Mekong Delta region, UN Security Council, East Asia Summit, Mekong Ganga Cooperation, Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM).

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

Why in News

Recently, [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.

- A LOI is a document that declares the **initial commitment of two parties** as they enter into a business deal with each other. It outlines the chief terms of the prospective deal.
- Earlier in 2020, [Defence Ministers of India and Vietnam](#) discussed collaboration in defence industry capability building, training and cooperation in [United Nations \(UN\)](#) peacekeeping operations, etc.



Key Points

- **Letter of Intent:** It recognises the **joint objectives of both the countries** to facilitate

cooperation in the **field of Posts and Telecom**.

- Promote **sharing of information and experience**, cooperate to implement projects in Human Resource Development.
- Promote **enhanced cooperation of postal designated operators** and service providers of both the countries.
- It will shape bilateral cooperation in the field of new technologies and challenges, such as the **'infodemic'**, which all countries are grappling with during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Scope of Discussion:** Vietnam appreciated the efforts of India for developing indigenous 5G network under **"AtmaNirbhar Bharat"**.
 - The Vietnamese Minister of Information and Communications suggested that **India should collaborate in the field of 5G** to produce world class India has been developing indigenously designed 5G telecom equipment.

India- Vietnam Relation

▪ 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.
- Both countries reaffirmed the strong **India-Vietnam Defence cooperation** which is a key pillar of **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (2016)**.
 - **This year completes five years of "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" between India and Vietnam, and the year 2022 will mark fifty years of diplomatic relations between the two countries**

- Indian Naval Ship INS Kiltan undertook a visit to Ho Chi Minh City to deliver flood relief materials for the people of Central Vietnam.
 - 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 signalling 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.

Source: PIB