



ACHIEVERS IAS ACADEMY

OLDEST FRIENDS: INDIA AND RUSSIA

GS 2 MAINS: Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests, effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests.

IN NEWS: India and Russia inked an Action Plan for expanding civil nuclear partnership comprising second site for Russian nuclear reactors in India. The two countries intent to develop a project of six nuclear power units of Russian design at a new site in India, further enhance cooperation in the third countries and bring in new perspective nuclear technologies together with joint construction of nuclear power plants.

IMPORTANCE OF RUSSIA FOR INDIA:

- Russian hardware represented 62 per cent of the country's total weapons imports during the past five years. Some of India's legacy weapons system are of Soviet and Russian origin and it needs to maintain defence ties with Moscow to increase its clout in the region.
- Russia recognises India's need to develop nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. In December 2014, Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Russia's Rosatom signed the Strategic Vision for strengthening cooperation in peaceful uses of atomic energy between India and Russia.
- At crucial times, it was this country that consistently stood by us in international forums on vital issues like Kashmir and other matters affecting our territorial integrity and sovereignty.
- It was Soviet diplomatic backing and material support, and the confidence provided by the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, which enabled us to successfully undertake the Bangladesh operations in 1971.
- There is a complementarity of interests in important fields of cooperation such as oil and gas, defence, nuclear, space, science and technology -- all areas that constitute Russia's core strength and globally competitiveness and, reciprocally, areas where India needs foreign assistance and collaboration.

STRAIN IN THE RELATIONSHIP:

- After declaring India as a strategic defence partner in 2016, the US has been pressurizing India to snap its traditional defence ties with Russia and buy weapons systems from the US mainly.
- After the Ukraine crisis in 2014, the Russia-China relationship has become stronger, with important implications for India and other rising powers.

- Russia's decision to supply Pakistan with the Mi-35 Hind attack helicopters has alarmed the Indian defense establishment.
- Russia had proposed a Russia-India-China (RIC) forum. India is hesitant about this because of the unresolved issues with China.

TIES BETWEEN THE COUNTRIES:

- Russia-India trade has not grown to great heights despite the encouragement of both states. Yet India has been supportive of Russian positions and has a careful and calibrated response to all Russian actions — in Chechnya, Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, India has supported Russia.



Source: Department of Commerce, Government of India

- Russian firms have shown a willingness to invest in India in construction, major infrastructure projects such as dedicated freight corridors and industrial clusters, smart cities, and engineering services, sharing technologies and skills.
- Indian companies are exploring major investment options in Russia, especially in natural resources such as coal, fertilizers, hydrocarbons, minerals, and rare earth metals.
- Russia is an important partner in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and it recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record.
- India and Russia are engaged in several multilateral efforts that are greatly favoured by Russia such as the BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

- Counterterrorism is another area where both countries find a convergence of interest. Both countries strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms, stressing the need for an effective global effort in dealing with the terrorist menace.

WHAT INDIA SHOULD DO?

- As we enter a new era of defence manufacturing, with private sector giants entering into agreements with Western defence majors, India must continue to engage with the Russian military to ease the pressure on a once close and trusted ally.
- India needs to deepen its scientific and technological relations with Russia since a base for this already exists.
- The Russia-India investments in the oil and gas sector and exports to third countries need to be energised. Joint manufacturing needs to be planned. A continuous engagement and follow-up plan need to be made.
- India should use the interdependency and pressure-compromise strategies to leverage its interest to isolate Pakistan. The U.S. will always have a dual approach to India and Pakistan, because it needs both. Russia, on the other hand, will not. But India has to actively ensure that and not take this strategic partnership for granted.

(Q) Analyze the outcomes of the recent India-Russia Summit in the light of the strain in relationship between the two.

PREVIOUS YEARS UPSC MAINS QUESTIONS:

- “China is using its economic relation and positive trade surplus as tools to develop potential military power status in Asia” In the light of this statement. Discuss its impact on India as her neighbour. (2017)
- Evaluate the economic and strategic dimensions of India’s Look East Policy in the context of the post Cold War international scenario. (2016)
- Terrorist activities and mutual distrust have clouded India – Pakistan relations. To what extent the use of soft power like sports and cultural exchange could help generate goodwill between the two countries. Discuss with suitable examples. (2015)
- Increasing interest of India in Africa has its pro and cons. Critically Examine. (2015)
- India has recently signed to become founding member of New Development Bank (NDB) and also the Asian Infrastructure Bank (AIIB). How will the role of the two Banks be different? Discuss the strategic significance of these two Banks for India. (2014)
- Economic ties between India and Japan while growing in the recent years are still far below their potential. Elucidate the policy constraints which are inhibiting this growth. (2013)
- In respect of India-Sri Lanka relations, discuss how domestic factors influence foreign policy. (2013)