



Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and the Dominican Republic

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Why in News

The Union Cabinet has approved the **opening of 3 Indian Missions in Estonia, Paraguay and Dominican Republic in 2021.**

Key Points

- **Objective:**

To **build a conducive environment for India's growth and development** through partnerships with friendly countries.

- **Expected Benefits:**

- Opening of Indian Missions in these countries will help **expand India's diplomatic footprint, deepen political relations**, enable growth of **bilateral trade, investment** and economic engagements, facilitate stronger **people-to-people contacts**, bolster political outreach in multilateral fora and help garner support for India's foreign policy objectives.
- Indian missions in these countries will also better **assist the Indian community and protect their interests.**
- Enhancement of India's diplomatic presence will, inter-alia, provide **market access for Indian companies** and **bolster Indian exports** of goods and services.

This would have a direct impact in **augmenting domestic production and employment** in line with the goal of a self-reliant India or '**Atmanirbhar Bharat**'.

- **Relations with the 3 Countries:**

- **Estonia:**



- It is the **northernmost of the three Baltic states.**
 - Baltic states, northeastern region of Europe containing the countries of **Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania**, on the eastern shores of the Baltic Sea.
 - The Baltic region is not rich in natural resources. Though **Estonia is an important producer of oil shale**, a large share of mineral and energy resources is imported.
- It **welcomed the decision** saying it would strengthen ties in trade and cybersecurity in particular.
 - The decision had been awaited since 2013, when Estonia set up its embassy in Delhi, while India has dealt with it through its embassy in neighbouring Finland.
- India and Estonia will also **serve together in the Security Council next year.**
- There is **significant room for enhanced economic engagement** in information technology, cyber security, e-governance and block chain.

Total bilateral trade in 2018-19 was 172.53 USD million, an increase of 22.5% from 2017-18.

◦ **Paraguay:**



- It is a **landlocked country in south-central South America.**
- Rivers provide access to the Atlantic Ocean and serve as sites for the hydroelectric power plants that have made Paraguay **one of the world's largest exporters of hydropower.**
- Paraguay is a **member of MERCOSUR.**
 - The **Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR for its Spanish initials)** is a regional integration process, initially established by **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, and Uruguay**, and subsequently joined by **Venezuela and Bolivia.**
 - India has a preferential trade agreement with MERCOSUR.
- It had set up its **mission in Delhi in 2006.**
- For the fiscal year 2018-19, India's exports to Paraguay were valued at USD 161 million, while Paraguay's exports to India were valued at USD 21 million. **Soybean oil accounts for over 90% of Paraguay's exports to India.**

◦ **Dominican Republic:**



- It is a **country of the West Indies** that occupies the eastern two-thirds of Hispaniola, the second largest island of the Greater Antilles chain in the **Caribbean Sea.**
- It had set up its mission in Delhi in 2006.
- **India's exports to the Dominican Republic are small but growing.** Bilateral two way trade stands at around **USD 120 million.**
- Main items of **India's exports are** cotton textiles and readymade garments, drugs and pharmaceuticals, furniture, transport equipment, manufactures of metals, chemicals, plastic and linoleum products, tea, processed foods and marine products.

Source: TH