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## India-Mongolia Relations

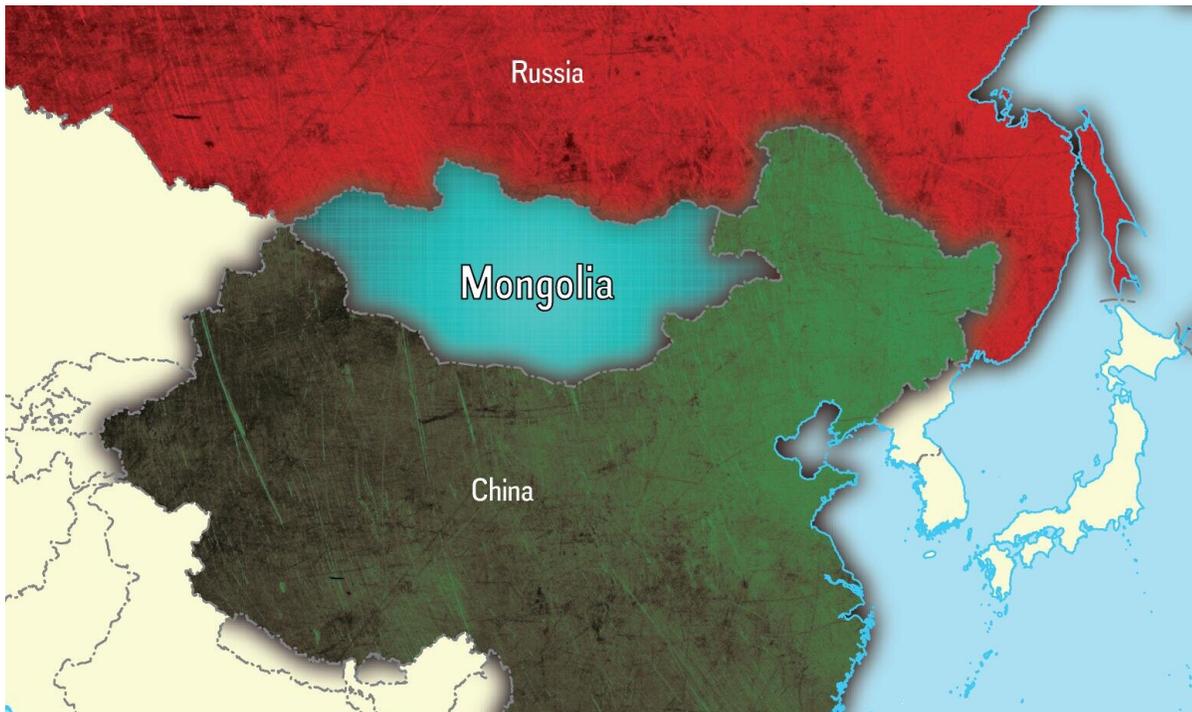
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### Why in News

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Recently, India and Mongolia have **reviewed bilateral cooperation in hydrocarbons and steel sectors.**



### Key Points

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- India reiterated its commitment to timely completion of the **Mongol Refinery Project**, the country's 1<sup>st</sup> oil refinery.
  - The greenfield Mongol Refinery Project is **being built under a Line of Credit from the Government of India**.
  - It is **expected to cut some of Mongolia's fuel import dependence**.
  - The Project came in the backdrop of **Mongolia**, which has **large uranium deposits** signing an **agreement for civil nuclear cooperation with India in 2009** and **China** unfolding its **Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)**.  
 India is opposed to the **BRI**, which seeks to invest about USD 8 trillion in infrastructure projects across Asia, Europe and Africa, as it says the initiative lures countries into debt traps and does not respect sovereignty or address environmental concerns.
- India **welcomed the keenness of Mongolian companies in supplying coking coal to Indian steel industry**. According to a recent report, India will overtake China as the **largest importer of coking coal by 2025**.  
 Further, India looks forward to substantial partnerships with Mongolian companies in the areas of minerals, coal and steel.
- India expressed its willingness to further **share its expertise in the oil and gas sector** including capacity building in accordance with the developmental priorities of Mongolia.

## India-Mongolia

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- **Historical Relations:**  
 India and Mongolia have interacted **through Buddhism** throughout history.
- **Diplomatic Relations:**
  - India, the first country outside the former Soviet bloc of nations to open diplomatic relations with Mongolia in 1955, has upgraded ties with Mongolia to a **strategic partnership**.
  - In **2015**, Mongolia witnessed the **first ever visit by the Prime Minister of India** (a part of **India's Act East policy**).

- **International Cooperation:**
  - Mongolia has publicly reiterated its **support for India's membership to the permanent seat** of the expanded **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**.
  - **India** has played an **important role** in getting **Mongolia membership** to key international forums, including the **United Nations (UN)**, despite strong opposition from China and Taiwan. India also championed the **inclusion of Mongolia in the Non-Aligned Movement**.  

In a reciprocal gesture, **Mongolia co-sponsored a 1972 UN resolution** with India and Bhutan for the **recognition of the newly liberated Bangladesh**.
  - **Other Forums of which both the countries are members: Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), World Trade Organisation (WTO)**.  

**India** is a **member** whereas **Mongolia** is an **observer state** at the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**.
- **Economic Cooperation:**

India - Mongolia **bilateral trade was USD 38.3 million in 2019**, down from USD 52.6 million in 2018.
- **Defence Cooperation:**
  - Joint defence exercises code-named **Nomadic Elephant**.
  - India is also an active participant in an annual week-long joint training exercise called the **Khaan Quest**, hosted by Mongolia.
- **Cooperation over Environmental Issues:**

Part of the **Bishkek Declaration (snow leopard)**.
- **Cultural Relations:**

The **Ministry of Culture (India)** has taken up the project of **reprinting 108 volumes of Mongolian Kanjur** under the **National Mission for Manuscripts (NMM)**.
- **Other Possible Areas of Cooperation:**
  - **Solar energy** is abundant and cooperation is solicited especially as India has emerged as the leader by way of **International Solar Alliance** and its very own ambitious alternate and renewable energy projects.
  - **Mongolia's mining sector including copper and Uranium** hold exceptional cooperation possibilities.
  - In the area of **cooperatives**, India has the capacity to share its expertise for the vastly dispersed farmers and milkmen in Mongolia.

## Way Forward

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- Mongolia's strategic position at the cross junction of Central Asia, Northeast Asia, far East, China and Russia attracts major powers towards it. India should **consider Mongolia as a green zone of economic development** that absorbs hi-tech features and production skills in a modernization process.

- To preserve and **promote the common heritage of Indo-Mongolian culture** is important. This should serve as the basis for nurturing and pursuing future common interests.

**Source: PIB**