



India-UK Virtual Summit

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Why in News

Recently, the Prime Ministers of **India and the United Kingdom (UK)** held a bilateral virtual summit.

India thanked the UK for the prompt medical assistance provided by it in the wake of the **severe second wave of Covid-19** in India.



- **Adopted ‘Roadmap 2030’:**
 - It will **elevate bilateral ties to a “Comprehensive Strategic Partnership”**.
 - It will provide a **framework for UK-India relations** across health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defence.
 - This will expand the UK-India health partnership to **enhance global health security and pandemic resilience**.
 - This includes **firming up international supply chains to ensure critical medicines, vaccines and other medical products** reach those who need them most.
 - Agreed to **expand the existing UK-India vaccines partnership**.
- **Launched Enhanced Trade Partnership:**
 - It **envisages facilitating market access in specific sectors**. It will **see Britain open up its fisheries sector** to more Indian players, facilitate more **opportunities for nurses, recognise Indian seafarers’ certificates** and enter into a joint dialogue on a **social security agreement**.
 - In return, **India lifted restrictions to enable British fruit producers** to export their produce to the country and improved access for medical devices.
 - They will also work towards reciprocal **opening up of legal services**.
 - Announced their intent to negotiate a comprehensive **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)**, including consideration of an interim trade agreement to deliver early gains.
 - Set an ambitious **target of more than doubling bilateral trade by 2030**.
- **Announcement of a new India-UK ‘Global Innovation Partnership’:**
 - The **UK is India's second largest partner** in research and innovation collaborations.
 - The new partnership **aims to** support the transfer of inclusive Indian innovations to select developing countries, starting with Africa.

- **Security & Defence:**
 - **Cooperation on Maritime Domain Awareness:**
This includes new agreements on maritime information sharing, an **invitation to the UK to join India's Information Fusion Centre in Gurgaon** and an ambitious exercise programme which includes joint trilateral exercises.
 - **UK's Carrier Strike Group:**
The **UK's Carrier Strike Group** will visit India later this year to boost **ties with Indian navies and air forces**, undertaking joint training exercises to enable future cooperation on operations in the Western Indian Ocean (**UK's Indo-Pacific Tilt**).
 - **Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2:**
To support India's indigenous development of the **Light Combat Aircraft Mark 2**.
 - **Potential Collaborations:**
Discussed the potential for further **industrial collaboration in areas such as maritime propulsion, space and cyber**, marking the start of a promising **new era of UK-India research**, capability and industrial collaboration on **Indian combat air** and beyond.
- **Migration:**
 - Enhance their migration relationship, to **make it easier for British and Indian nationals to live and work in each other's countries**.
 - Welcomed the signing of the India-UK **Migration and Mobility Partnership (MMP)** that is **aimed at reducing illegal immigration into the UK**.
The issue of illegal immigration had been a sticking point between both sides for years. However it is understood that **MMP will help genuine immigrants and students and will reduce immigration-related crimes**.
- **Climate Change:**
Agreed to work together to ensure an ambitious outcome at **Conference of the Parties (COP) 26** and expand the UK-India partnership on tackling **climate change**, including by accelerating the **development of clean energy and transport and new technology, protecting nature and biodiversity and helping developing countries adapt to the impact of climate change**.

Bilateral Military Exercises

- Air Force Exercise '**Indradhanush**'.
- Navy Exercise Konkan.
- Army Exercise '**Ajeya Warrior**'

Way Forward

- India will elevate to a 21st century superpower. It will soon be 'one of the biggest influences on the world'. It is looking for new partners in the global race. This **represents a great opportunity for the UK. The UK has much to offer India in education, research, civil society and the creative sector.**
- Further, India's skilled labour, technological assistance and the vibrant market will open a lot of avenues for Britain which has recently parted ways with the European Union.

Source: IE