



India-US Bilateral Meet

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Why in News

Recently, the Indian Prime Minister met the **newly elected US President** for their **first bilateral meeting in the US**.

- Both leaders **discussed a wide range of priority issues**, including combating **Covid-19**, **climate change**, and economic cooperation.
- Earlier, **the US Secretary of State**, in his visit to India, mentioned that actions by **India and the US will shape the 21st century**.

Key Points

- **Highlights of the Meet:**
 - Discussions to **further cement the Indo-US strategic partnership** and discussed global issues of common interest, including threats to democracy, **Afghanistan** and the **Indo-Pacific**.
Discussed **Pakistan's role in Afghanistan** as one of the key challenges, and there was a sense that it needs more "careful monitoring".
 - Both sides **denounced any use of terrorist proxies** and emphasised the importance of denying the logistical, financial or military support to terrorist groups, which could be used to plan, or launch terror attacks.
They **called on the Taliban to adhere** to these and all of its commitments under **Resolution 2593**.
 - The US Government, companies based in the USA and the Indian diaspora were very **helpful when India was fighting a tough wave of Covid-19 infections**.
India will **resume** export of surplus Covid-19 vaccines in the fourth quarter of 2021 under the **Vaccine Maitri programme** and to meet its commitment to the **COVAX** global pool.
 - India raised several **issues involving the Indian community in the US**, including access for Indian professionals there and **H-1B visas**.

- **India-US Relations:**

- **About:**

- India-US bilateral relations have developed into a "**global strategic partnership**", based on shared democratic values and increasing convergence of interests on bilateral, regional and global issues.
 - In 2015, both the countries issued a **Delhi Declaration of Friendship** and adopted a **Joint Strategic Vision for Asia-Pacific and the Indian Ocean Region**.

- **Civil-Nuclear Deal:**

- The **bilateral civil nuclear cooperation** agreement was signed in October 2008.

- **Energy and Climate Change:**

- As a priority initiative under the **PACE (Partnership to Advance Clean Energy)**, the US Department of Energy (DOE) and the Government of India have established the **Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Center (JCERDC)** designed to promote clean energy innovations by teams of scientists from India and the United States.
 - **India-US Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership** was launched at the Leaders climate summit 2021.

o **Defence Cooperation:**

- Defence relationship has emerged as a major pillar of India-US strategic partnership with the signing of '**New Framework for India-US Defense Relations**' in 2005 which was further updated for 10 years in 2015.
- India and US inked important defence pacts in the last few years and also formalised the four nation alliance of **QUAD** (India, US, Japan and Australia).

The alliance is seen as an important counter to China in the Indo-Pacific.

- The **Malabar exercise** in November 2020 portrayed a high point in Indo-US strategic ties, it was the first time in 13 years that all four countries of QUAD came together sending a strong message to China.
- India now has access to American bases from **Djibouti in Africa** to Guam in the Pacific. It can also access advanced communication technology used in US defence.
- India and US have **four foundational defence agreements:**
 - **Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geospatial Intelligence (BECA).**
 - General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA).
 - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA).
 - **Communication Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).**
- **India-US Counter-Terrorism Cooperation Initiative** was signed in 2010 to expand collaboration on counter-terrorism, information sharing and capacity building.
- A tri-services exercise– **Tiger Triumph**- was conducted in November 2019.
- Bilateral and regional exercises include: **Yudh Abhyas (Army); Vajra Prahar (Special Forces); RIMPAC; Red Flag.**

o **Trade:**

- The **US is India's second largest trading partner** and a major destination for India's exports of goods and services.
- The **US replaced Mauritius as the second largest source of foreign direct investment into India** during 2020-21.
- The previous US government **ended India's special trade status (GSP withdrawal)** and also imposed several bans, India also retaliated with bans on 28 US products.
- Current US government has allowed **all the bans by the previous government to expire.**

o **Science & Technology:**

ISRO and NASA are working together to realize a joint microwave remote sensing satellite for Earth observation, named **NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR).**

- **Indian Diaspora:**

There is a **growing presence of Indian diaspora** in all spheres in the US. For example the current Vice-President (Kamala Harris) of the US has a strong Indian connection.

Way Forward

- The **stage has been set for transforming India's partnership with the US.** Afghanistan remains a key area of continuing concern for both India and the US and both sides are now **looking at the bigger challenges emerging in the Indo-Pacific,** driven by the rise and assertion of China.
- There is a **huge potential to boost bilateral trade between the countries** especially on account of increasing anti-China sentiment in both the nations.

Source: IE