



India And Belarus

For Prelims: India-Belarus, UNSC, NSG, NAM

For Mains: Indian Belarus Relations and Way Forward

Why in News?

India congratulated Belarus for celebrating its 78 years of Independence on 3rd July 2022.



How Has Been India-Belarus Relations?

- **Diplomatic Relations:**

- India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial.
- India was **one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as an independent country in 1991** after the break-up of the Soviet Union.
- **Supports at Multilateral Fora:**
 - The cooperation between the two countries is visible at many multilateral fora such as [UN Security Council \(UNSC\)](#) and [Nuclear Suppliers Group \(NSG\)](#).
 - Belarus was one of the countries whose support helped in consolidating India's candidature for the non-permanent seat at the UNSC in July 2020.
 - India has also reciprocated Belarus's support at various international fora, such as Belarus's membership in the [Non Aligned Movement \(NAM\)](#) and other international and multilateral groups like [IPU \(Inter-Parliamentary Union\)](#).
- **Comprehensive Partnership:**
 - The two countries enjoy a comprehensive partnership and have established mechanisms for exchanging views on bilateral, regional and multilateral issues through **Foreign Office Consultations (FOC), Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), and Joint Commission on Military Technical Cooperation.**
 - The two countries have signed a number of Agreements/MoUs on various subjects, including trade and economic cooperation, culture, education, media and sports, tourism, science & technology, agriculture, textiles, Avoidance of [Double Taxation](#), Promotion and Protection of Investments, and defence and technical cooperation.
- **Trade and Commerce:**
 - In the economic sector, the annual bilateral trade turnover in 2019 stands at USD 569.6 million.
 - India's special gesture in 2015 that granted Belarus the **Market Economy Status and a USD 100 million Line of Credit** has also helped in the growth in the economic sector.
 - Market Economy status is **a status conferred on the country exporting the goods accepted as the benchmark.** Prior to this status, **country is considered as a Non-Market Economy (NME).**
 - India's encouragement to the **Belarusian businessmen to invest in 'Make in India'** projects are bearing fruits.
- **Indian Diaspora:**
 - The Indian Community in Belarus consists of around 112 Indian nationals and 906 Indian students pursuing studies in medicine in State medical universities in Belarus.
 - Indian art and culture, dance, [yoga](#), ayurveda, films, etc. remain popular among Belarusian nationals.
 - Many young Belarusians also take keen interest in learning Hindi and dance forms of India.

Way Forward

- Taking into account the gradual shift of the **global geopolitical and geo-economic** center of gravity to Asia, **cooperation with India creates additional opportunities for international trade and investment.**
- Belarus needs several footholds in Asia diversified by geographical subregions. India could become **one of such pillars in South Asia, but Belarusian initiatives should definitely fall into the "matrix" of India's national interests** and sacred meanings.
- There are also certain hidden reserves for cooperation in the field of cybersecurity. Belarus may become **an "entry point" for Indian pharmaceutical companies to the Eurasian market.**
- The potential of military and technical cooperation, including shared developments, has not been fully disclosed. Cinema (Bollywood) could **stimulate the interest of the Indian business community and tourists.**
- An additional increase in the export of tourism and medical services could be ensured by recreational centers to be established in Belarus based on Indian traditional medicine models (Ayurveda + Yoga).
- The drivers of bilateral cooperation could be the interaction of the leading "think tanks" of Belarus and India.
- To increase mutual interest, establishing new innovative growth points and encouraging breakthrough ideas and active expert diplomacy communication is of prime importance. The drivers of bilateral cooperation **could be the interaction of the leading "think tanks" of**

Belarus and India.

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