

# **UK Prime Minister Visit to India**

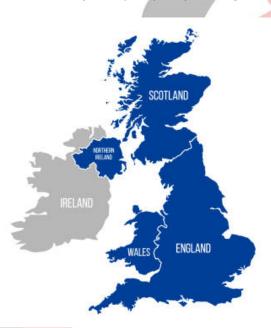
For Prelims: Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative, India-UK FTA

**For Mains:** India's relations with the UK, Indo-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in 2021, 2030 Roadmap for India-UK Relations

### Why in News?

Recently, the **UK Prime Minister (PM) visited India**. In this visit, both the countries agreed on a joint statement titled 'Towards shared security and prosperity through national resilience'.





## What are the Highlights of the Visit?

- **Respecting India-Russia Relations**: In the context of <u>Ukraine Crisis</u> and India's neutral stance, UK PM asserted that India's position on Russia is 'well known' and is not going to change.
  - India has historic relationship with Russian and everybody respects it.
- Cooperation on Indo-Pacific: The two countries had a shared interest in keeping the Indo-Pacific region free and open, particularly in the face of growing threats of Chinese coercion in South China Sea.
  - Recently, the UK and India have agreed to strengthen their cooperation in the maritime domain as the UK will join <u>India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative</u> and become a major partner on maritime security issues in Southeast Asia.
  - India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) is an open, non-treaty-based initiative
    for countries to work together for cooperative and collaborative solutions to common
    challenges in the region.

- **Tackling Extremism**: They agreed to constitute a sub-group on <u>countering extremism</u> to further enhance cooperation between India and the UK in ensuring that all possible actions are taken against groups and individuals based in or operating out of either country.
- Extraditing Economic Fugitives: India conveyed to the UK, that bringing back economic fugitives to face justice was a "high priority" for the government.
  - Britain responded that it is concerned about this and doesn't welcome people who want to use its legal system to evade the Indian laws.
- Discussion on FTA: Both leaders committed that <u>Free Trade Agreements</u> negotiations will conclude by the end of 2022.
- **Defence Cooperation:** They discussed the next generation of defence and security collaborations across five domains land, sea, air, space and cyber.

### What are the Recent Developments on India's Relations with the UK?

- Despite the challenge posed by the <u>Ukraine crisis</u>, the India-UK relationship has been on an upward trajectory, exemplified by the conclusion of a <u>Comprehensive Strategic Partnership</u> in 2021.
  - The agreement also established a <u>2030 Roadmap for India-UK relations</u>, which primarily outlines the partnership plans for the bilateral relationship.
- Additionally, In January 2022, India and the UK managed to conclude the first round of talks for an India-UK Free Trade Agreement.
  - The negotiations reflected shared ambitions to secure a comprehensive deal between the fifth (UK) and sixth (India) largest economies in the world as technical experts from both sides covered over 32 sessions encompassing 26 policy areas.

### **Way Forward**

- A post-Brexit Britain needs to make the best of its historic ties; having walked out of Europe, the country needs all the partners it can find and a rising India is naturally among the top political and economic priorities.
- Britain remains the fifth-largest economy, a permanent member of the <u>UN Security Council</u>, a global financial hub, a center of <u>technological innovation</u>, and a leading cyber power.
  - It has a significant international military presence and wide-ranging political influence.
  - India should try harder to leverage these British strengths for India's strategic benefit.

**Source: IE** 

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