

## Indo-Russian Relation – A Robust Friendship

**Syllabus-GS 2:** *Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests*

### Historical relationship between India-Russia

India Russia relations started during the Russian Revolution itself. **After India's independence**, it improved further:

- ❖ **Indian PM Jawaharlal Nehru** went to Russia in 1955. This is followed by the visit of the First Secretary of the Communist Party to India.
- ❖ During that, he mentioned the support of the Soviet Union for India's sovereignty over the disputed territories of Kashmir and Portuguese coastal enclaves such as Goa. Even after the abrogation of **Article 370 Russia still supports India's claim over Kashmir**.
- ❖ The USSR agreed to transfer technology to co-produce the **Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-21 jet fighter in India in 1962**. But the USSR rejected a similar move to China.
- ❖ India signed the **Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1971** during the Bangladesh liberation war.

### Post-Soviet era India-Russia relationship:

#### During this phase the important developments includes:

- ❖ Russia and India entered into a new **Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in 1993**
- ❖ In 2000, the Russian President visited India and underlined the importance of Strategic Partnership. The other important events in this visit are,
  - ✚ Both countries also signed a **"Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership"**
  - ✚ Further, India and Russia also institutionalised **annual meetings (India-Russia summit)**. Since then the annual meetings

### Challenges in Indo- Russian relationship

- ❖ First, and most imminently, the pandemic has periodically crippled the growth of both economies and the threats to public health remain despite considerable progress with vaccinations.
- ❖ **Second, Russia-U.S. ties are showing signs of fraying yet again**, this time over U.S.A has threatened that Russia will face "economy-jarring sanctions" if it seeks to occupy **Ukraine**. India has so far held firm to its mantra of 'strategic autonomy' in a multipolar world, but South Block will have to work hard to manage the tightrope act between Moscow and Washington.
- ❖ **Third, India and China** have forged an uneasy truce across their Himalayan border in the aftermath of the **Galwan valley** exchange in 2020, yet there are numerous potential flashpoints that could send ties into a spiral again, including China's historically provocative actions in the **South China Sea** and its thinly veiled insecurity about India joining the **Quad for Indo Pacific security**.

### 21st India – Russia Annual Summit:

About: "**Declaration of Strategic Partnership between India and the Russian Federation**" signed in in October 2000 in New Delhi. Under the Declaration of October 2000, a mechanism of Annual Summits between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation had started. The Summits are held annually on a rotational basis.

### Important take aways:

- ✓ Sustained the progress in the '**Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership**' between both countries despite the challenges posed by the Covid pandemic.
- ✓ The first meeting of the **2+2 Dialogue** of Foreign and Defence Ministers and the meeting of the Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical.
- ✓ The role of connectivity through the **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)** and the **proposed Chennai - Vladivostok Eastern Maritime Corridor** figured in the discussions. The two leaders looked forward to greater inter-regional cooperation between various regions of Russia, in particular with the **Russian Far-East, with the States of India.**
- ✓ Both countries share common perspectives and concerns on **Afghanistan** and appreciated the bilateral roadmap charted out at **the NSA level for consultation and cooperation on Afghanistan.**
- ✓ Both sides shared common positions on many international issues and agreed to further strengthen cooperation at multilateral fora, including at the **UN Security Council.**
- ✓ Agreements and MoUs, as well as those between commercial and other organizations of both countries, were signed in different sectors such as trade, energy, science & technology, intellectual property, outer space, geological exploration, cultural exchange, education, etc. This is a reflection of **the multifaceted nature of our bilateral partnership.**

### Importance of Russia for India:

- ❖ Even as India is diversifying its defence trade partners, Russia still dominates the **Indian defence inventory** to the tune of about **70 per cent.**
- ❖ Russia remains the only partner that is still willing to give India critical technologies, such as a **nuclear submarine.**
- ❖ The emerging **Russia-China strategic relationship** has important security consequences for **India.**
- ❖ Russia also reaffirmed its "unwavering support" to India for a **permanent seat in an expanded UN Security Council.**
- ❖ Russia expressed its support for **India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.**
- ❖ Both countries have mutual benefits in supporting struggle against **terrorism, Afghanistan, climate change;** organisations like **SCO, BRICS, G-20 and ASEAN.**

### Way forward:

- ❖ **Befriending the Best Friend:** The structural constraints posed by the great power dynamic and vastly different appreciation of the regional security environment could be reduced if matters improve between Washington and Moscow.
- ❖ **Connecting with the Russian Far-East:** Connectivity is another driver in the strategic partnership with underlying commercial advantages and overall economic development. India and Russia can work with countries like Japan and Korea to promote joint investments for exploration in the Far East, the Arctic and Siberia.
- ❖ **Cooperation in the Energy Sector:** The unknowns of climate change suggest that India should accelerate its energy transition from fossil fuel based to a renewable one.
- ❖ **Leveraging Multilateral Institutions for Improving Relations:** It's important to promote mutually beneficial trilateral cooperation between Russia, China and India that could contribute towards the reduction of mistrust and suspicion between India and China. In this context, the SCO and RIC trilateral forum must be leveraged.

### Conclusion:

Moscow has adroitly managed to remain friends with both its mega-neighbours, but it will require a robust focus on confidence-boosting cooperative initiatives if India and Russia are to *safely navigate the complex geopolitical landscape that they occupy.*

Also, India should get involved in the bitterness of America and Russia. It's time for India to play a proactive role in global geopolitics with independent foreign policy. India and Russia will have to navigate a complex geopolitical landscape while deepening their bilateral ties.