

Mains Topics

India- Russia Relations

Context

Recently the President of Russia Vladimir Putin visited India.

India Russia Relations sBackground



Areas of Cooperation

Political Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The India - Russia annual summit is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership b/w India - Russia relationship. • Russia supports India's bid for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council. • Both countries form a part of several multilateral forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, BRICS, and Connectivity projects such as INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor), etc. • Russia has backed India joining the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) and Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) • Russia supports India's position on the Kashmir issue.
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Economic Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Both countries agreed to institutionalize the CEO Forum and liberalize business travel to boost Bilateral Trade. ● The bilateral trade between India and Russia during 2022-23 amounted to US\$ 49.36 billion. ● Indian exports amounted to US\$ 3.14 billion while imports from Russia amounted to US\$ 46.21 billion. ● During April-May 2023-24, India's trade with Russia saw a 161.22% increment compared with the same period last year. ● India has announced \$1 billion line of credit for the development of Russia's Far East. ● India has received major bilateral investments from Russia in sectors like petrochemicals, oil and gas, banking, railways, and steel sectors. ● Indian investments in Russia are mainly in sectors including oil and gas, diamond, and pharmaceuticals.
Defense Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India is the largest buyer of Russia's military equipment. ● India purchased various military equipment from Russia such as the S-400 Triumph Missile system. ● Kamov 226 helicopters, T-90S tank to be jointly manufactured under the Make in India initiative. ● Both countries have jointly developed several Defense technologies: BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, Sukhoi Su-30 fighter aircraft, the Fifth Generation Fighter Aircraft (FGFA), and the Akula-class nuclear submarine. ● Joint military exercises between two countries include INDRA and AVI-INDRA & AviaIndra air
Space Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● C-DAC and GLONASS Agreement focused on collaboration in satellite navigation technologies. ● Year 2015 marked the 40th anniversary of India's first satellite, Aryabhata, launched using Russia's Soyuz vehicle. ● Russia signed a deal to train Indian astronauts for India's inaugural manned space mission, the Gaganyaan Project.
Energy Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Russia jointly developed the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP). ● Both signed agreements on the construction of 12 nuclear power plants in India during the coming decades ● A consortium led by Rosneft, a Russian state-owned oil giant,

	<p>acquired a 98% stake in Essar Oil, marking a pivotal step in reducing the debt of Indian corporations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a focus on enhancing investments and exports in the oil and gas sector between Russia and India, including exports to third countries. ● Russia is an important partner in peaceful uses of nuclear energy and it recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record.
Counter Terrorism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Russia praised India's role as Chair of the UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee in 2022 and the adoption of the New Delhi Declaration, which focused on countering the use of new technologies for terrorist purposes
Cultural Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiatives like "Namaste Russia" enhance people-to-people and educational connections. ● The Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre in Moscow and several Russian Centres of Science and Culture in India promote cultural relations. ● India offers scholarships to Russian nationals for higher education in various fields including humanities, science, and arts. ● 'Days of Indian Culture' events in Russia and similar celebrations in India under the cultural festivals protocol promote mutual cultural understanding. ● The State Duma of the Russian Federation honored Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, celebrating his links with Russian writer Leo Tolstoy. ● The "Year of Russia" in India (2019) and the "Year of India" in Russia (2020) featured over a thousand cultural events, exhibitions, concerts, and film screenings, enhancing bilateral cultural ties. ● In 2021, India and Russia jointly celebrated International Yoga Day, showcasing their collaborative spirit.

Challenges in Indo - Russia relationship

- **Economic Imbalance:** India's trade deficit with Russia is growing.
 - The strengthened Russian Ruble and increased oil purchases in 2022 further widen this deficit.
- **Defence Diversification:** India aims to reduce reliance on Russian defence supplies for modernization and to avoid US sanctions under **CAATSA** (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act).

- **Russia-China Proximity:** Russia's deepening ties with China, including selling advanced weapons, create security concerns for India and affect the Indo-China military balance.
- **India-US Dynamics:** India's stance on Russia's Ukraine conflict is critical, given its strategic role in the **US-led Indo-Pacific strategy** against China's rise. Aligning with Russia could impact India's position in the Indo-Pacific.
- **Russia-Pakistan-China Axis:** Sanctions against Russia have led to its increasing collaboration with China and Pakistan, especially in defence and intelligence. This axis poses strategic challenges to India's Eurasian outreach and security.
- **India and QUAD:** India's silence in the Quad (US, Australia, Japan) consensus against Russia puts its diplomatic relations in a delicate balance, needing careful navigation.
- **Energy Dependence:** Sanctions on Russia's energy sector raise concerns for India, whose oil demand is projected to reach 10 million barrels per day by 2030.
- **Trade Challenges:** Indian investments in Russian energy face risks from Western sanctions. Bilateral trade is hampered by unresolved issues like connectivity, tariff barriers, and excessive regulation.
- **Shifting India-US Relations:** The rapid growth of India-US defence cooperation since 2008, including the India-US nuclear deal and foundational agreements (LEMOA, COMCASA, BECA), has caused Russia to pivot towards China, evidenced by its arms sales to China.
- **Russia's Tilt Towards China:** The Russia-India-China forum hasn't seen major success due to India's unresolved issues with China. Russia's participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative indicates their aligned interests against the US.
- **Differing Views on Indo-Pacific:** Russia opposes the Indo-Pacific concept, seeing it as a US-led initiative to contain China and Russia, preferring the Asia Pacific framework.

Way Forward

- **Rupee-Rouble Trade Mechanism:** Amid Western sanctions, the Rupee-Rouble trade mechanism emerges as a viable solution for sustaining India-Russia bilateral trade, bypassing conventional currency restrictions.
- **Strategic Collaboration Against China-Pakistan-Russia Triangle:** To counterbalance the emerging China-Pakistan-Russia alliance, India needs to strengthen ties with Moscow.
 - This includes cooperation in projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), offering a shorter, cost-effective route parallel to China's Belt and Road Initiative.
- **Defence Modernization and Joint Production:** India and Russia can focus on the joint development and production of advanced weapons systems, aligning with India's 'Make in India' initiative. This includes joint manufacturing of spare parts and reciprocal logistics support.
- **Joint Ventures in Third Countries:** Collaborative projects in third countries, like the Rooppur nuclear plant in Bangladesh, exemplify how India and Russia can leverage their strengths in international ventures.
- **Scientific and Technological Collaboration:** India should capitalize on Russia's scientific and technological prowess to address its developmental challenges.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Prelims Topics

Reciprocal Exchange of Logistic Support (RELOS) Agreement

Context

Russia's State Duma, the lower house of parliament, ratified a RELOS pact with India.

About RELOS Agreement

- It is a **bilateral logistics pact** that allows Indian and Russian military platforms to access each other's ports, airbases, and infrastructure for refuelling, repairs, and maintenance.
- **Benefits:**
 - It **streamlines joint operations**, enabling smoother exercises, training missions, humanitarian assistance, and disaster relief with reduced procedural delays.
 - **India gains strategic access** to Russian naval ports, including those along the Northern Sea Route, expanding its operational footprint in the Arctic and polar regions.
 - **Russia receives reciprocal access** to Indian naval facilities in the Indian Ocean Region.
 - **The agreement enhances interoperability**, operational readiness, and deepens long-term defence cooperation.

Source: [Economic Times](#)

DHRUVA System

Context

The Department of Posts created DIGIPIN as an open-source digital public infrastructure, forming the backbone for smart address labels under DHRUVA.

What is DHRUVA?

- DHRUVA stands for **Digital Hub for Reference and Unique Virtual Address**.
- It is a **user-centric, standardised digital addressing framework** developed by the Department of Posts.
- It allows people to create **digital address labels** that can be shared easily with service providers, just like a UPI ID.
- Users can grant companies **time-bound access** to their actual address, after which re-authorisation is required.
- It aims to streamline deliveries, improve address accuracy, and reduce repeated form-filling.

What is the DIGIPIN System?

- It is a **10-character alphanumeric code** that represents the **precise latitude and longitude** of any address.
- DIGIPIN was developed to ensure **accurate geolocation**, especially in rural areas where textual addresses are unreliable.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Exercise Garuda

Context

The 10th edition of Exercise GARUDA SHAKTI has commenced at the Special Forces Training School, Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh.

About Exercise Garuda

- **Type:** Bilateral air exercise
- **Nations Involved:** India and France
- **First edition:** Held in **2003** at the **Gwalior** Air Force Station in India.
- **Frequency and Rotation:** The exercise is held **periodically** (usually every two to three years) and is conducted alternately between **India and France**.

Source: [PIB](#)

Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises

Context

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) informed Parliament about the progress of the PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme.

About PMFME Scheme

- **Objective:** To formalise and enhance the competitiveness of **micro food processing enterprises**, especially in the **unorganised sector**.
 - Promote value addition, branding, and market integration of micro units.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** implemented by MoFPI.
 - Supports setting up and upgradation of **micro food processing enterprises** nationwide.
 - Strong focus on **ODOP (One District One Product)** to promote balanced regional development.
- **Financial Assistance Under PMFME:**
 - **Individual/Group Micro Enterprises:** 35% credit-linked capital subsidy, up to ₹10 lakh per unit.
 - **SHG Seed Capital: ₹40,000 per SHG member** engaged in food processing
 - Up to **₹4 lakh per SHG federation**.
 - **Common Infrastructure: 35% subsidy**, up to **₹3 crore** for FPOs, SHGs, cooperatives, and government agencies.

- Infrastructure is available for other units on a hiring basis.

- **Branding & Marketing: Up to 50% grant** for branding and marketing by groups of SHGs, FPOs, cooperatives, or SPVs.
- **Capacity Building:** Entrepreneurship Development Programmes (EDP) and **product-specific skill training** tailored to the food processing sector.

ODOP

- ODOP products selected for 726 districts across 35 States/UTs, including GI-tagged products.
- Aims to promote district-specific products through branding, marketing, and value-chain interventions.

Source: [PIB](#)

Cases pending in lower courts in India

Context

Union Law Minister Arjun Ram Meghwal informed the Rajya Sabha about the current status of lower courts across India.

Current Issues in the Lower Courts in India

- **4.8 crore cases** are pending in district and subordinate courts across the country.
- Uttar Pradesh has the highest pendency with **1,13,05,841 cases**, making it the top contributor to backlog.
- A total of **90,694 cases** are under trial in lower courts as of December 1, 2025, compared to **70,239 cases in 2021**, indicating rising pendency.
- There are **1,055 vacant judicial officer posts** in Uttar Pradesh alone; other major

vacancies include **535 in Gujarat** and **384 in Madhya Pradesh**.

- Among High Courts, **Allahabad High Court** has the highest pendency (**11,66,971 cases**) and the maximum judge vacancies (**60 posts**).

Source: [The Hindu](#)

National Commission for Backward Classes

Context

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) has now recommended to the Union government to exclude 35 communities from the State's Central OBC list.

About National Commission for Backward Classes

- It is a body set up under the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993.
- **102nd Constitution Amendment Act, 2018** provides constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).
- It has the authority to examine complaints and **welfare measures** regarding socially and educationally backward classes.
- Previously NCBC was a **statutory body** under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment



FACT

- States/Union Territories can maintain their own OBC lists. Communities included in the OBC list of a particular state can be different from the Central list.
- Jat Community is listed as OBC in the OBC list maintained by the Delhi Government. However, the community is not included in the Central List of OBCs for Delhi.

Process of Inclusion of Communities in Central OBC List

- **NCBC Recommendations** → **Cabinet Approval** → **President's notification**.
- **Role of NCBC:** The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) examines requests from states for the inclusion of castes in the Central OBC list.
 - The NCBC forms a Bench to review the proposals and makes a decision on the inclusion.
 - The NCBC forwards its decision to the Union government.
- **Cabinet Approval:** Union cabinet takes a decision regarding the inclusion of communities in the Central list of OBCs.
- **Presidential Notification:** After Cabinet approval, the President notifies the change.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Indian Statistical Institute

Context

The Centre's draft Indian Statistical Institute Bill 2025, made public for feedback.

About Indian Statistical Institute

- Set up in **1931** by statistician **P.C. Mahalanobis** as a statistical laboratory at Presidency College, Kolkata.
- **Registered as a society** under the **Societies Registration Act, 1860** and **later under the West Bengal Societies Registration Act, 1961**.
- In **1959**, ISI was declared an **Institution of National Importance** through **Indian Statistical Institute Act, 1959**
 - Empowered to grant degrees and receive Central grants, but structurally continued as a **registered society**.

- **Governance:** Governed by a **33-member Council**, its highest decision-making body.
 - **Council includes:** An elected chairman, Six representatives from the Central government, External scientists, A UGC representative and Director and heads of divisions/centres (ex-officio)
 - **Director** (academic and administrative head) is appointed by the Council.

ISI Bill 2025: Key Amendment Proposals

- **Conversion into a Statutory Body**
Corporate: ISI will no longer function as a registered society.
 - Becomes a **statutory body** created by an Act of Parliament, similar to IITs and IIMs.
- **Introduction of a New Governance Model:** Creation of a **Board of Governance (BoG)** as the apex authority.
 - BoG to include: Chairperson nominated by the President (Visitor) on recommendation of Union Government, Representatives from Central ministries, Eminent persons nominated by the Centre, and Director and institute representatives
- **Role of the President of India (Visitor):** President becomes **Visitor**, with powers to order inquiries, conduct reviews and remove the Director in specific circumstances
- **Changes to Director Appointment Process:** Director to be appointed by **BoG Chairperson**.

- Selection based on recommendations of a **Search-cum-Selection Committee** constituted by the Central Government.
- Director subject to periodic reviews.

- **Academic Council Restructuring:** Academic Council headed by the Director.
 - Comprises heads of divisions/centres.
 - Makes academic recommendations **subject to approval of BoG**.
- **Powers & Functions of the Board of Governance:** Administrative control, Degree-granting authority, Appointment of faculty and staff, Framing rules and regulations to implement the Act.
- **Repeal of the 1959 ISI Act:** The new Bill will **replace the existing 1959 Act**, effectively dismantling the current governance structure.

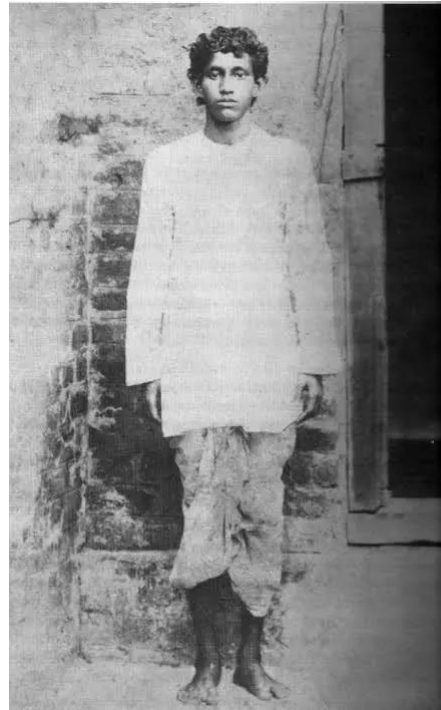
Concerns Highlighted Related to Amendment

- **Reduced Autonomy:** Faculty and students argue that the BoG gives the Centre overwhelming control, unlike the broader representation in the current Council.
- **Centralised Appointment of Director:** Director becomes effectively a **Central Government appointee**, undermining academic independence.
- **BoG Authority over Academic Council:** Academic decisions may be overridden by a body dominated by government nominees.
- **Lack of Consultation:** Stakeholders argue the Bill was drafted **without internal consultation**.

Source: [Indian Express](#)

Personality in News

Khudiram Bose



News? Khudiram Bose was paid tribute on his birth anniversary.

About Khudiram Bose (December 3, 1889 – August 11, 1908)

- **Birth:** Born in Mohobani village, Medinipur district, West Bengal.
- **Early Inspiration:** Deeply influenced by the Swadeshi Movement and nationalist thought from a young age.
- **Key Contributions:**
 - **Revolutionary Activities:** Became a member of the Anushilan Samiti, a prominent revolutionary organisation in Bengal.
 - **Muzaffarpur Conspiracy (1908):** Attempted to assassinate British magistrate Douglas Kingsford.
 - On April 30, 1908, along with Prafulla Chaki, threw a bomb at a carriage in Muzaffarpur; mistakenly killed two British women.
 - Chaki took his own life to avoid arrest.

Source: [Newsonair](https://www.newsonair.com)