

India-US Relations

[UPSC Notes]

Overview of India - US Relations

India and the United States have very strong and cordial relations on business as well as personal grounds. India-U.S. 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. Both countries can be seen participating in and discussing issues such as space technology, environment and health, nuclear energy, science, and technology education, defence and security, and so on.

Under the new motto “Chalein Saath Saath: Forward Together We Go”, both the countries are trying to enhance cooperation. The officials of both countries are often in touch with each other at political and official levels and have organized a wide-ranging dialogue on global issues that have a direct impact on their growing economies.

Areas of Cooperation in India - US Relations

India-US relations have been strategically quite strong because both countries have been visiting each other since 2009. In 2009, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited India to have a strategic dialogue in the month of July. The objective of this meeting was to strengthen the dual corporation across diverse sectors. The first round of this strategic dialogue was organized in Washington, DC, the United States in June 2010.

The next meeting was held immediately after in 2011, in New Delhi, India. The third meeting of this strategic dialogue was held in Washington, DC in June 2012.

Timeline of events of India - US Relations

Below is the timeline of the events that paved the path for a rock-solid foundation of India-US Relations.

- **1949-** Indian PM meets USA President and the trip precedes India's formal proclamation of neutrality in the developing cold-war
- **1959-** Inspired by Gandhi's non-violent struggle, Martin Luther arrives in India. Also, the first serving US President visits India.
- **1962-** Nine American universities and the US Agency for International Development (USAID) helped India to establish one of the first Indian Institutes of Technology at Kanpur.
- **1962-** Washington supports India in the Indo-China border conflict, recognizing the McMahon Line as the border, and provides air assistance and arms.
- **1963-** Norman Borlaug travels to India to begin testing high-yield wheat varieties. His collaboration with Indian scientist Dr. M.S. Swaminathan results in the "Green Revolution," and India goes from food scarcity to self-sufficiency.
- **1974-** India completes first Nuclear test- the move contributes to a period of estrangement between the USA and India

- **1978-** The USA enacts the Nuclear Nonproliferation Act, which requires countries not included in the Nonproliferation Treaty including India to allow inspections of all nuclear facilities by the International Atomic Energy Agency. India refuses, and Washington ends all nuclear assistance to Delhi.
- **1991-** India Launches Economic Reforms that help expand economic ties with the US
- **1998-** India tests Nuclear devices and badly damages its relationship with the US
- **2000-** The visit of the US President ends the estrangement of the post-1998 Indian nuclear weapons tests.
- **2001-** The US lifts all remaining sanctions that were imposed on India after its 1998 nuclear test.
- **2005-** The United States and India sign the New Framework for the US-India Defense Relationship
- **2010-** The United States and India formally convene the first US-India Strategic Dialogue
- **2011-** The United States and India sign a Memorandum of Understanding in New Delhi to promote closer cybersecurity cooperation.
- **2016-** The United States elevates India to a major defence partner, a status no other country holds
- **2018-** During a "two-plus-two" dialogue in New Delhi; COMCASA signed.
- **2020-** The Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) is the last of four foundational military agreements signed by both countries over the past two decades.
- **2022-** At the recent 2+2 Dialogue a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on space situational awareness was signed between India and US.

Political Cooperation Between India - US Relations

India and the US have been in contact at both the political and the official levels on regional, bilateral and global matters. Concerning the United States, India is the masterpiece of the Indo-Pacific strategy of Joe Biden's administration. India is one of the very few countries with whom the US has a 2+2 dialogue mechanism.

Although there is a difference of opinion between the two countries regarding the Russia-Ukraine conflict, both countries are maintaining continuous cooperation by rising above the differences.

High-level Dialogue Between India and US

The United States is India's most old and significant 2+2 partner. The first 2+2 high-level dialogue took place in 2018 during the Trump Administration. Recently, the fourth '2+2' high-level dialogue between India and the United States took place in Washington D.C. This meeting was held on the sidelines of a virtual meeting that included India's Prime Minister and the President of the United States. In this meeting, India and the US signed a bilateral arrangement of space situational awareness.

It will help to lay down more space work for both the countries. Both the countries also agreed to launch an inaugural defence intelligence dialogue. They also agreed to maintain a close look and consultation on the ongoing crisis in Ukraine due to the Russia-Ukraine War.

The major high-level key dialogues between the two include-

Dialogue/Partnership/Forum	Lead By
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India- US 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue	Heads of foreign and defence ministries of India and the U.S
India – US Economic and Financial Partnership	Finance Minister (FM) and the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury
India – US Commercial Dialogue	U.S. Secretary of Commerce
India – US Trade Policy Forum	Minister of Commerce and Industry and the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR)
India – US Homeland Security Dialogue (HSD)	Minister of Home Affairs and the Secretary, U.S. Department of Homeland Security
India – US Strategic Energy Partnership	Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas and the U.S. Secretary of Energy

India- US Relations: Defence Relations

Defense relations have played a significant role in strengthening India - US relations.

- India and the US have Joint Committee on Defence and various other groups that involve defence trade, cooperation in maritime security, personnel exchanges, joint exercises, etc.
- The US's defence cooperation and strategic convergence with India now exceed that of some formal treaty allies. The India-US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) is aimed at promoting co-development and co-production efforts.
- The US has granted the status of a 'non-NATO ally' to India. India has also been recognized as a major defence partner and has been granted Strategic Trade Authorization Tier 1 (STA-1), easing regulations for US high-tech defence and aerospace exports.
- Between 2016 and 2020, India and the US inaugurated a new "2+2" defence and foreign ministers dialogue and signed three key "foundational" military agreements: Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA).
- The two sides also signed a helicopter cross-decking agreement (HOSTAC) and an Industrial Security Annex (ISA) to the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA) agreement which allows the US government to share classified data with Indian defence firms.

India- US Relations: Counter-terrorism and National Security

Counter-terrorism and national security are of primal importance for both countries as they have suffered the ill effects of terrorism during the 26/11 and the 9/11 attacks. There is cooperation between the two countries to look after these matters.

- A Homeland Security Dialogue is also established between the Union Home Ministry and the Department of Homeland Security.
- Both countries share intelligence and have also agreed to work together towards the elimination of crimes related to drugs.

- The United States is constantly supporting India in the matters of counter-terrorism by blacklisting individuals and organizations that are actively involved in activities of terrorism against India. However, the soft approach that the US has adopted towards activities of terrorism in Pakistan is preventing the formation of meaningful cooperation between the two countries.
- Diplomatic mechanisms such as the US–India Counter-Terrorism Joint Working Group and the US–India Designation Dialogues have helped build further confidence between the two.
- The withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan and the Taliban’s takeover of Kabul in mid-2021 is threatening both countries’ security interests.

India- US Relations: Cyber Security Cooperation

The bilateral relationship between India and the United Nations has cooperation on cyber issues. Both India and the United Nations consistently work upon their strategic partnership, which can be seen through – shared values, national security, principles of cyber scale, economic factors, democratic traditions, and a common vision.

- Both the countries exchange commitment to encourage the expansion of the Internet which will act as an engine for economic growth, innovation, trade, and commerce.
- In March 2021, the Indo-US Science and Technology Forum’s US India Artificial Intelligence (USIAI) Initiative was launched to focus on AI cooperation, including bilateral research and development, AI workforce development, and domain-specific AI research areas in healthcare, smart cities, materials, agriculture, energy, and manufacturing.
- In September 2021, President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Narendra Modi discussed expanded partnerships in the areas of space, cyber, health security, semiconductors, AI, 5G, 6G, future generation communications technology, and Blockchain. They also discussed the need to address vulnerabilities and threats in cyberspace, committing to mutual efforts to respond to cyber threats via dialogues, joint meetings, training and sharing best practices.
- US and India should also consider joint tabletop exercises, involving CERT-In, Defense Cyber Agency, and the National Cyber Coordination Centre (NCCC) to enhance the cyber security operations.
- The US Department of Justice and Federal Bureau of Investigation could seek further cooperation and information exchange with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on combating cybercrimes.

India- US Relations: Energy and Climate Change

The US has emerged as a key partner for India in the field of energy.

- As a priority initiative under the PACE (Partnership to Advance Clean Energy), the U.S. 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.
- The bilateral Strategic Energy Partnership launched in 2018 between the two countries is robust and witnessing increasing diversification across both conventional and renewable energy sources.
- An India-U.S. Natural Gas Task Force was also created in 2018, to build on the scope of work on cooperation in biofuels sector.
- In 2019, the Indian Oil Corporation finalised term contracts for import of crude oil of U.S. origin.

- In April 2021, at the Leaders' Summit on climate, Prime minister Narendra Modi and President Joe Biden promised to introduce an India– US partnership that is based on bilateral cooperation on important actions and with the objective of fulfilling goals of the agreement. They named this program as “India – US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 Partnership”. This program will emphasize focusing and collaborating for climate action in the vital decade. It is the main pillar of India – US Climate and Clean Energy Agenda 2030 partnership.

India- US Relations: Civil Nuclear Cooperation

In 2005, former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh entered into a joint agreement with the then President of the United States, George Bush to sign a civil nuclear deal. It was a landmark occasion for the country as for the first time, India was recognized as a nuclear state. This deal helped India and enabled full cooperation of both countries in the matter of civil nuclear energy. The bilateral civil nuclear cooperation agreement was signed in October 2008.

Since India does not have high reserves for Uranium, signing this deal made nuclear plants run with greater efficiency because of the imports it could make from various other countries like Canada, Australia, Russia, Kazakhstan, and France.

- A S. company- Westinghouse is in discussions with Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) for the implementation of a project that envisages six AP 1000 reactors at Kovvada (A.P.). Once implemented, the project would be among the largest of its kind.

India- US Relations: Science and Technology

Both India and the United States believe that innovation and discovery in the field of science and technology are a must to address key global challenges such as healthcare, energy conservation, water, food, security, and so on.

- India and the US firmly believe in research and development and are building private and public partnerships that promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the field of science and technology.
- The Indo-U.S. Science & Technology Forum (IUSSTF) which was established by India and the U.S. as an autonomous, bi-national organization in the year 2000 promotes cooperation in Science, Technology and Innovation and is playing an important role in strengthening cooperation in this field.
- The India-U.S. Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement signed in 2005, was renewed for a period of ten years in 2019.
- The India-U.S Joint Working Group on Civil Space Cooperation regularly reviews the status of cooperation and identifies new areas for furthering space cooperation.
- ISRO and NASA are also working towards intensifying cooperation.
- A Memorandum of Understanding between India and the US was signed in October 2021 on health and medicines.
- In the field of space and technology, the Synthetic Aperture Radar satellite made with the cooperation of NASA and ISRO is expected to launch in 2023.
- Various other developments including the expansion of the Joint Clean Energy Research and Development Centers, etc are taking place between both countries.

India- US Relations: Indian Diaspora and Cultural Cooperation

Indian diaspora and cultural cooperation have been a key catalyst in strengthening India - US relations for a very long time. Since the beginning of his tenure, PM Narendra Modi

has emphasized the importance of the Indian diaspora that acts as a link between India and the US. Both countries have benefited a lot as a result of this cooperation. Almost 1% of the total U.S. population consists of Indians and Indian Americans. 'India: Partner in Growth', a weekly newsletter focusing on business and strategic matters, and 'India Live', a monthly newsletter that provides information on initiatives of the Embassy and the Consulates, and on major developments in India.

India- US Relations: Trade and Economic

The bilateral relationship between India and the US has been characterized by a strong economic and trade partnership. There is no trade agreement between India and the United States.

- The US Finance Minister, Pranab Mukherjee, and US Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner launched a new US financial and economic partnership in New Delhi to strengthen the bilateral engagement on macroeconomic, financial, and investment-related issues.
- In June 2011, the US and India held their second meeting together for financial and economic partnership.
- A US trade policy forum was established in 2005 to discuss trade-related issues between India and the United States.
- In September 2010, Washington, DC, hosted the 7th and last trade policy forum meeting.
- The bilateral India-US CEO forums were reconstituted in 2009 in order to engage more actively in the private sector and discuss trade and investment in it. In September 2011, the 4th CEO forum in reconstituted form was held in Washington, DC, facilitating the dialogue between government and industry.
- In addition, an independent private sector advisory group comprised of Indian and international trading experts was formed to assist India's US trade policy forum by suggesting strategic recommendations and insights.
- US was India's largest export destination and the second-largest trading partner in 2020-21. India's exports to the US in 2020-21 were valued at \$51.62 billion and imports at \$28.88 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of about \$23 billion for the US.

India- US Relations: Educational Field

Education plays a crucial role in maintaining relations between India and the US as a great number of Indian youth go for higher education in reputed and recognized universities in the US. The US is the most favored destination by Indian students for higher education. Cultural cooperation manifests in form of India-focused educational programs at the Universities and educational institutions.

In the fourth 2+2 dialogue that took place between both countries, ministers lauded the linkage of India and the US because of education. The countries have decided to promote education and skill development through joint cooperation.

India- US Relations: Regional and International Cooperation

The partnership which exists between India and the US stands strong on the pillars of democratic principles, commitment to freedom, human rights, equal treatment of all citizens, and the rule of law. Both countries also share interests in encouraging global security, and economic prosperity through trade, connectivity, investment, and stability. U.S. has expressed support for

India's permanent membership on a reformed N. Security Council and for India's early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

The development of India is supported by the United States And efforts are made to convert the Indo- Pacific into a region of stability, peace, and prosperity. The Countries also cooperate in the fields of energy, high technology, trade, and space.

Future of India - US Relations

Under the presidency of Joe Biden, India-US relations can prove to be a defining alliance in the days to come. Both countries are in a position where they need each other as a helping hand. The successful future of the relationship between the two countries will largely depend upon how the US engages with India. Continuing strategic cooperation between both countries will be a win-win situation for India and the US.

The future of India-US lies in:

- Enhance cooperation in emerging technologies and artificial intelligence (AI) as data regulation, information sharing, and privacy protection become increasingly salient issues crucial to the preservation of national security.
- Strengthen coordination multilaterally and on international issues, including prioritising two multilateral strategic dialogues that have gained prominence in recent years: the Quad, and the West Asian Quad or I2U2.
- Pursue greater cooperation on counterterrorism, including coordinating strategies for managing a Taliban-led Afghanistan and leading multilateral efforts to apply pressure on the Pakistani military-intelligence complex to abandon support for terrorist groups such as the Taliban and Haqqani Network, and Kashmir-focused groups like Jaish-e-Mohammed and Lashkar-e-Taiba.
- Strengthen and integrate GVCs using FDI in each other's economies to strengthen bilateral trade and integrate GVCs as well as incentivize multinational corporations to participate in these initiatives.
- Seek greater coordination between line ministries working on cybersecurity, especially identifying relevant counterparts on specific issues.
- Embed security and defence issues into their emerging technology agenda, focusing for instance on identifying common principles for defence applications of artificial intelligence.