

## India-Greece Relations

### Why in news?

In a recent bilateral meeting, India and Greece have upgraded their relations to a strategic partnership and have pledged to double two way trade by 2030.

### What is the history of India-Greece bilateral relations?

- **Historical relation-** India's contacts with Greece began over 2500 years ago.
- Trading between the Mauryan Kings and Greece is evidenced by coinage and writings.
- In 326 BC, he invaded the North-Western part of the Indian subcontinent as far as the Hyphasis (Beas River).
- He fought with Raja Puru, King of Pauravaa - between the River Jhelum and Chenab, and Ambhi who ruled at Taxila, he didn't cross India and apparently went back to Babylon.
- **Literature-** Chanakya, in Chandragupta's Court records in Arthashastra about Yavan Ambassador in the Kings' court, named Megasthenes.
- **Art-** Gandhara art is believed to be a fusion of Indian and Greek influences.
- **Political relation-** Diplomatic relations were established between two countries in 1950.
- Greece opened its Embassy in Delhi in 1950 and India in Athens in 1978.
- **Internal affairs-** Greece respected India's decision on Citizenship Amendment Act, Abrogation of Article 370, Reorganization of new Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh and Judgement on Ram Janm Bhoomi-Babri Masjid.
- **Nuclear support-** Greece participated in the 6 nation Delhi Declaration of 1985 on Nuclear Disarmament.
- It supported India at the Nuclear Suppliers' Group in 2008, and 2016, MTCR, Wassenaar arrangements, Australia Group.
- **International support-** Greece recognizes India as a "world power" and supported India's candidature for
  - Permanent Seat in an expanded United Nations Security Council
  - International Court of Justice, International Maritime Organization
  - International Tribunal for Law Of Sea etc.,
- **Support against terrorism-** Greece strongly condemned the Mumbai terrorist attacks and Pulwama attack in 2019.
- Greece is also a victim of home-grown terrorism and fears international terrorism entering its borders.
- It has a large population of illegal immigrants from Pakistan, North Africa, Syria, Iraq, and Afghanistan.
- **India-EU Porto Summit-** Greece expressed its full solidarity and support for India in the European Union which was held in 2021.
- **Defence cooperation-** Greece participated in

- Passex exercise undertaken by the Navy of both the countries in 2017
- The International Fleet review at Vizag in 2016
- DefExpo 2020
- **Economic relations-** Bilateral trade stands at 1.32 billion euros.
  - **Major Imports-** Aluminium foil, Iron and steel, Mineral oil etc.,
  - **Major exports-** Aluminium, Organic chemical, fish, textile articles, edible fruits etc.,
- India-Greece Business Forum is organized in collaboration with Enterprise Greece, the apex state agency for investment in 2018.
- Participated as "Honored Country" in the 84th Thessaloniki International Fair (TIF) 2019, the largest annual commercial exposition of Greece, and also the largest in Southeast Europe and the Balkans.
- **Cultural relations-** Dimitrios Galanos, a Greek, became the 1<sup>st</sup> European Indologist (a student of Indian literature, history, philosophy, etc.) gaining world reputation.
- A "Dimitrios Galanos" Chair for Hellenic Studies has been established at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India in 2000.
- Indian Council for Cultural Relationship has been offering an annual scholarship for a Greek student to study in India.
- The Hellenic Indian society for Culture and Development was established in 2003 for the growth of the Hellenic- Indian educational, social, cultural and developmental cooperation.
- **Health diplomacy-** Greece imported emergency medicine hydroxychloroquine and Chloroquine sulphate in its fight against Covid-19.

Greece

- Greece, officially the *Hellenic Republic*, is a country in Southeast Europe, situated on the southern tip of the Balkan Peninsula.
- **Land border**- It shares land borders with Albania, North Macedonia, Bulgaria and Turkey.
- **Maritime boundary**- The Aegean Sea, the Ionian Sea, the Sea of Crete and the Mediterranean Sea.
- **Capital**- Athens
- **Cradle of Western civilization**- It is the birthplace of democracy, Western philosophy, Western literature, historiography, political science, major scientific and mathematical principles, theatre and the Olympic Game.



### What is the recent India Greece joint statement about?

*PM Modi's visit is the 1<sup>st</sup> to Greece by an Indian Prime Minister in 40 years since Indira Gandhi visited the Hellenic Republic in 1983.*

- **Military cooperation**- Both countries joined forces to enhance military cooperation between their nations to combat terrorism and to enhance cybersecurity.

- **Security dialogue-** They have decided to establish a *National Security Advisor (NSA)-level dialogue platform* to facilitate comprehensive discussions on matters of mutual concern and interest.
- **Maritime security-** As historically seafaring nations, both nations expressed their aligned vision for maintaining a free, open, and rule-based Mediterranean Sea and Indo-Pacific region.
- **Commitment to UNCLOS-** Both countries respect the *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*, and a commitment to uphold sovereignty, territorial integrity, and freedom of navigation.
- **Diverse sectors of collaboration-** Both recognised the potential for deepening cooperation across defence, shipping, science and technology, cyberspace, education, culture, tourism, and agriculture.
- **Committee on agriculture-** Establishment of a Hellenic-Indian Joint Sub-committee on Agriculture to facilitate sectoral cooperation, enhancing mutual benefits.
- **ISA and CDRI** - India welcomed Greece into the *International Solar Alliance (ISA)* and looked forward to Greece's membership of the *Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)*.

*The International Solar Alliance (ISA) was a joint effort by India and France to mobilize efforts against climate change through deployment of solar energy solutions. It is guided by its 'Towards 1000' strategy.*

*CDRI is an international climate initiative by India in 2019 to promote resilient climate-proof critical infrastructure in member countries.*

- **Economic relations-** Both countries upgraded their relations to a strategic partnership and pledged to double two-way trade by 2030.
- **Cultural Exchange-** Both countries agreed to encourage direct flights between Greece and India, thereby fostering closer people-to-people connections.
- **Natural match-** India and Greece is a *natural match* where both countries will sign the *migration and mobility partnership* agreement to facilitate skilled migration between the two countries.
- **Special honour-** *Grand Cross of the Order of Honour* was awarded to PM Modi by Greece for enhancing Greece's stature.
- **Geopolitical significance-** Both countries support diplomacy and dialogue to resolve the Ukraine crisis, and have excellent coordination on geopolitical, global and regional issues.
- **A shared vision for progress-** PM Modi quoted an Indian proverb, saying, "*When two friends sit together, one plus one is not 2 but 11.*"
- PM Modi's visit to Greece is significant in the context of establishing an ***India-Europe Commercial Corridor***, especially when India and the EU are negotiating a free trade agreement (FTA).

## **What lies ahead?**

- PM Modi extended an invitation to PM Mitsotakis to visit India, further cementing the

warm relations between the two countries.

- Both countries emphasised the significance of cultural exchanges in the recent bilateral meeting, underscoring the vibrant civilizational links between India and Greece.

## References

1. [The Hindu- India and Greece Bilateral relationship](#)
2. [Hindustan Times- India and Greece strategic partnership](#)
3. [Ministry of External Affairs- Bilateral brief with Greece](#)

