

22– 07 – 2022

News: India – Vietnam ties, from strong to stronger

- India and Vietnam are celebrating the 50th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

India – Vietnam Relations

History of relations

- Cultural and economic links between India and Vietnam date back to 2nd century. The Indic Chă m Pa kingdom had some influence on Vietnamese music.
- In contemporary era, relations between India and Vietnam have been governed by several areas of shared political interests. India has strongly condemned U.S. action during the Vietnam War and was also one of the few non-communist countries to assist Vietnam during the Cambodian–Vietnamese War.
- In 1992, India and Vietnam established extensive economic ties, including oil exploration, agriculture and manufacturing, the relations between the two countries, especially defence ties, benefited extensively from India's Look East policy.
- Bilateral relations were upgraded to a "Strategic Partnership" during Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung's visit to India in July 2007, and

upgraded to a "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership" during Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Vietnam in September 2016.

Economic relations

- India granted "Most Favoured Nation" status to Vietnam in 1975 and both nations signed a bilateral trade agreement in 1978 and the Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) on 8 March 1997.
- The Indo-Vietnam Joint Business Council has worked to promote trade and investment since 1993. In 2003, both nations promulgated a Joint Declaration on Comprehensive Cooperation.
- India and Vietnam have also expanded cooperation in information technology, education and collaboration of the respective national space programmes. Direct air links and simplified visa regulations have been established to bolster tourism.

Trade

- India is Vietnam's 10th largest trading partner, while Vietnam is India's 15th largest trading partner and 4th largest in ASEAN after Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia.

- **Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam measured \$11.12 billion in 2020–21, declining by 22.47% from the previous fiscal** largely due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **India exported \$4.99 billion worth of goods to Vietnam, and imported \$6.12 billion from Vietnam.** India's trade deficit with Vietnam declined from \$2.22 billion in 2019–20 to \$1.12 billion in 2020–21.

Oil exploration

- ONGC Videsh, the international subsidiary of Indian government-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), began operating in Vietnam in 1988 when it was awarded an exploration licence for Block 6.1. Block 6.1 is spread over a 955 km² area in the Nam Con Son Basin of the South China Sea and has two producing fields - Lan Tay and Lan Rosneft.
- ONGC Videsh owns a 45% in Block 6.1 and its share of condensate and oil equivalent gas production from the block was 1.33 million tonnes in 2020–21. Russia's Rosneft holds a 35% stake and the remaining 20% is held by Petrovietnam.
- ONGC Videsh was awarded exploration licences for Block-127 and Block-128 in May 2006, which became effective on 16 June 2006.

Strategic cooperation

- The India-Vietnam Joint Working Group on Educational Exchange was established in 2012, and the India-Vietnam Joint Sub-Commission on Trade (Commerce Secretary-level) was set up in November 2013. The two countries also hold an annual Security Dialogue at the Defence Secretary Level and a Joint Committee on Science and Technology that meets periodically.

Cultural relations

- India and Vietnam signed a cultural agreement in 1976.
- The Swami Vivekananda Indian Cultural Centre was established in Hanoi in September 2016.

News: Henley's Passport Index

- Henley's Passport Index was released recently.

Henley Passport Index 2022

- The Henley Passport Index is the original ranking of all the world's passports according to the number of destinations their holders can access without a prior visa.

- The ranking is based on **exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association (IATA)**, which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information.
- It was launched **in 2006 and includes 199 different passports**.

Global Rankings

- **Japan ranked the first position** (which was earlier joint-held by Japan and Singapore) with **free access to 193 countries followed by Singapore and South Korea with access to 192 countries**. Germany and Spain shared the 3rd position with access to 190 countries.
- For the **fourth consecutive year, Japan has secured the top position**.
- Meanwhile, **Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Pakistan, and Yemen are among the least powerful**. This is the second consecutive term for which these countries are ranked respectively.
- **India rose to the 87th position from earlier 90th rank**, with its passport holders allowed to travel visa-free to 60 countries.
- **India shares the rank with Tajikistan and Mauritania**.

News: India Innovation Index

India Innovation Index 2022

- The third edition of India Innovation Index was released by **NITI Aayog and Institute for Competitiveness**.
- **Karnataka retained its first position for the third time** followed by Telangana and Haryana in the category of Major States.
- **Manipur topped among North Eastern** and Hilly States Category.
- **Chandigarh topped among UTs** followed by Chandigarh and Daman & Diu.
- **Bihar, Odisha and Chhattisgarh** came up with last ranks respectively.
- Indicators used were **Human Capital, Investment, Knowledge Workers, Business Environment and Safety and Legal Environment, Knowledge Output and Knowledge Diffusion**.