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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 1st 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 1st 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](#)



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