

4. India-Armenia Relations

Prelims Syllabus: International Relations

Mains Syllabus: GS-II International Relations | Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and agreements involving India



Why in News?

- India and Armenia are two ancient civilizations that have had historical links for centuries.
- Despite being geographically distant, India and Armenia have maintained diplomatic ties since the Soviet era.
- India recognized the Republic of Armenia in 1991, and since then, the bilateral relations between the two countries have grown stronger.

Historical links:

- The links between India and Armenia go back to ancient times. According to Mahabharata, Ila, son of King Vaivasvata Man is believed to have migrated to Armenia and founded the country. Similarly, Armenian legends speak of the arrival of a prince named Haik, who is believed to have come from the Indian subcontinent.
- Armenia was one of the first countries in the world to adopt Christianity as its state religion, but before that, Buddhism had a significant presence in the country.
- According to some scholars, Armenian Buddhism was influenced by Indian Buddhism. Numerous Buddhist stupas in Armenia show a significant cultural exchange between India and Armenia in ancient times.

Cultural ties:

- **India and Armenia share a rich cultural heritage.** One of the most significant cultural ties between India and Armenia is the Indian classical dance form, Bharatanatyam, which has become popular in Armenia in recent years.
- In 2017, the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) sent a group of Bharatanatyam dancers to Armenia to perform at the Yerevan International Dance Festival.
- Indian films have gained popularity in Armenia, and the Armenian film industry has also made a name for itself in India.

Economic ties:

- India and Armenia have been exploring ways to strengthen their economic ties in recent years.
- The two countries have identified several areas of cooperation, including IT, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, and tourism.
- In 2017, a delegation of Indian business leaders visited Armenia to explore investment opportunities in the country.
- The Indian companies were particularly interested in the IT sector, which is one of the fastest-growing sectors in Armenia.
- The Armenian government has also been promoting the country as an attractive destination for IT companies by providing tax incentives and other benefits.
- In the pharmaceutical sector, India is one of the world's largest producers of generic medicines, and there is a significant potential for cooperation between India and Armenia in this sector.
- Armenia is a country with a rich cultural and historical heritage, and India could explore opportunities to promote religious tourism to Armenia, given the country's significant Christian heritage.
- Another sector that holds great promise for cooperation is renewable energy.
- Armenia has set a target to generate 50% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2025, and India, as a leader in renewable energy, could provide expertise and investment in this area.

Political and Defence ties:

- India and Armenia share a common interest in promoting peace, stability, and development in their respective regions.
- The two countries have been cooperating in various international fora, including the United Nations and the Non-Aligned Movement.
- In 2017, then Indian Foreign Minister, Sushma Swaraj, visited Armenia to participate in the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting and discussed ways to strengthen their political and economic ties.
- In 2018, the Armenian President, Armen Sarkissian, visited India and met with Indian President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and other senior officials. The two sides discussed ways to boost trade and investment, particularly in the IT sector.
- In October 2022, Armenia signed a major defence deal with India for procurement of Pinaka multi-rocket launch systems and their ammunition, among others, in a deal worth around ₹2,500 crore.

