



P.L.RAJ IAS & IPS ACADEMY

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2. India-Italy Special Strategic Partnership – Deepening Indo-Mediterranean Ties – International Relation

1. Why in News

1. India and Italy upgraded bilateral ties to "Special Strategic Partnership" during PM Modi's visit to Italy
2. Elevates relations positioning nations as primary geopolitical, economic, technological anchors across Indo-Mediterranean corridor
3. Target – Increase bilateral trade from €14 billion to €20 billion by 2029
4. Defence industrial roadmap finalized for co-development and co-production
5. Support for India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) strengthening supply chains, logistics, energy connectivity
6. 2027 designated "India-Italy Year of Culture and Tourism" marking 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations

2. Key Highlights of India-Italy Meeting

Special Strategic Partnership Announced

1. India and Italy elevated bilateral relations to "Special Strategic Partnership"
2. Signifies fundamental upgrade in ties deepening long-term strategic cooperation
3. Positioning nations as primary anchors across Indo-Mediterranean corridor (geopolitical, economic, technological)
4. Highest tier of partnership below formal alliances

Execution of Partnership Plan

1. Established Foreign Ministers-led mechanism reviewing India-Italy Joint Strategic Action Plan 2025-29
2. Providing strategic guidance to Special Strategic Partnership implementation
3. Regular high-level consultations ensuring coordination

Trade and Investment Cooperation Strengthened

1. Target – Increase bilateral trade from €14 billion to €20 billion by 2029 (~43% increase)
2. Focus sectors – Manufacturing, machinery, automobiles, energy, fashion, pharmaceuticals, textiles
3. Investment facilitation mechanisms, business delegation exchanges

Defence Industrial Roadmap Finalized

1. Agreed on co-development and co-production in defence manufacturing
2. New defence industrial roadmap aligning priorities
3. Areas – Naval systems, aerospace, electronics, ammunition
4. Supporting India's Atmanirbhar Bharat, Make in India initiatives

"Indo-Mediterranean" Axis

1. Supported India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)
2. Strengthening supply chains, logistics, energy connectivity
3. Italy strategic gateway to Europe for IMEC
4. Complementing Italy's Mediterranean positioning with India's Indo-Pacific role

Maritime Partnership Enhanced

1. Signed agreements on maritime transport, ports modernization, logistics, blue economy cooperation
2. MoU – Italy's participation in National Maritime Heritage Complex development at Lothal (Gujarat; ancient Harappan port)
3. Leveraging Italy's maritime expertise (shipping, shipbuilding, port management)

Extended Cooperation Areas

1. Artificial Intelligence, space technologies, critical minerals, clean energy, higher education, Ayurveda, climate research
2. Comprehensive partnership covering emerging technologies and traditional sectors

Trilateral Partnership

1. Work together in trilateral initiatives with African partners
2. Areas – Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI—Aadhaar, UPI models), agriculture, education, healthcare, AI, connectivity, infrastructure, renewable energy
3. Aligning India's development partnership in Africa with Italy's Mattei Plan (energy, migration cooperation with Africa)

80th Anniversary Celebration

1. 2027 designated "India-Italy Year of Culture and Tourism"
2. Marking 80th anniversary of diplomatic relations (established 1947)
3. Cultural exchanges, tourism promotion, academic cooperation

3. India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)

Overview

1. Proposed multi-modal connectivity and infrastructure initiative linking India, West Asia, Europe
2. Launched through MoU at 2023 G20 Summit, New Delhi
3. Signatories – India, USA, Saudi Arabia, UAE, France, Germany, Italy, European Union

Structure

1. **Eastern Corridor** – Connecting India to Arabian Gulf (ports in India → UAE, Saudi Arabia)
2. **Northern Corridor** – Linking Gulf region to Europe (Arabian Gulf → Jordan, Israel → Mediterranean → Europe)
3. Integrated rail and shipping networks

Key Objectives

1. **Enhancing trade connectivity** – Integrate ports, railways, shipping reducing logistics costs, transportation time
2. **Strengthening energy security** – Facilitate energy transport networks including clean energy grids, green hydrogen pipelines
3. **Promoting digital connectivity** – Undersea cables, digital infrastructure improving communication, cross-border financial integration
4. **Diversifying global supply chains** – Reduce dependence on traditional chokepoints (Suez Canal, Malacca Strait), create resilient supply chains
5. **Encouraging economic integration** – Connect major economic regions stimulating investment, manufacturing, employment

Italy's Role in IMEC

1. Strategic Mediterranean gateway to Europe
2. Ports (Genoa, Trieste, Naples) potential IMEC terminals
3. Complementing India's Indo-Pacific focus with Italy's Mediterranean positioning

4. About India-Italy Relations

Diplomatic Foundation

1. Established 1947 soon after India's independence
2. Share democratic values, rule of law, pluralism
3. Cooperation across trade, defence, technology, culture, multilateral diplomacy

Economic Cooperation

1. Italy among India's major European trading partners
2. Bilateral trade – €14 billion (2024)
3. **Italian strengths** – Manufacturing, machinery, automobiles, luxury goods (fashion, design), energy technologies
4. **Indian exports** – Textiles, leather, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, IT services
5. **Indian imports** – Machinery, equipment, chemicals, metals

Defence Cooperation

1. Increasing cooperation in defence technology, maritime security, defence industrial production
2. Joint exercises, training programs, naval cooperation
3. Italian defence companies (Leonardo, Fincantieri) exploring partnerships with Indian firms

Multilateral Engagement

1. Cooperate in G20, United Nations, India-EU dialogue mechanisms
2. Common positions on climate change, sustainable development, counter-terrorism
3. Italy supported India's UNSC permanent membership bid

Connectivity and Infrastructure

1. Italy supports IMEC connecting India, West Asia, Europe through integrated transport and energy corridors
2. Infrastructure investments, port development cooperation

Science and Technology Partnership

1. Expanded cooperation in AI, digital infrastructure, clean energy, semiconductors, space technologies
2. Joint research projects, technology transfers, startup collaboration

Cultural and People-to-People Ties

1. Cultural exchanges, tourism, academic cooperation, mobility agreements
2. Italy home to over 200,000 Indians (largest, most rapidly growing Indian population in EU)
3. Italian language, culture studies in India; Indian diaspora strengthening ties

5. Significance of Recent Meeting

Strengthens India's Engagement with Europe

1. Reinforces strategic outreach amid global geopolitical, economic uncertainties (US-China tensions, Russia-Ukraine war)
2. Europe emerging as technology, investment, regulatory partner

Supports Resilient Global Supply Chains

1. IMEC and maritime cooperation reduce dependence on traditional chokepoints (Suez Canal, Malacca Strait)
2. Improves trade connectivity, diversification

Enhances Defence and Technology Capabilities

1. Defence co-production, technology collaboration support India's strategic autonomy, industrial modernization

2. Reducing import dependence, building indigenous capabilities

Boosts Energy and Economic Security

1. Cooperation in critical minerals, clean energy, logistics improves India's energy security, economic resilience
2. Green hydrogen, renewable energy partnerships

6. Conclusion

India-Italy Special Strategic Partnership reflects growing convergence in trade, connectivity, defence, global governance between two major democratic powers. Elevating ties positions nations as Indo-Mediterranean anchors supporting IMEC, targeting €20 billion trade by 2029, finalizing defence industrial roadmap, enhancing maritime cooperation including Lothal heritage complex, and expanding AI-space-clean energy-critical minerals collaboration ensuring strategic depth amid global uncertainties.

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