



INDIA - GERMANY RELATIONS - GS II MAINS

Q. Germany is one of India's most important partners in Europe owing to the strength of bilateral relations. Discuss the prospects of Indo-German relationship in the present geo-political context. (15 marks, 250 words)

News: *Germany pushes for inter-governmental agreement for submarine deal with India*

What's in the news?

- Germany has presented a government to government proposal for the sale of six advanced conventional submarines to India for the Navy's **P-75I procurement programme**, diplomatic sources confirmed.

Key takeaways:

- India and Germany discussed the deal at the highest level during the visit of German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius in June 2023.
- **Only Germany and Spain technically meet the criteria to submit bids under the P-75I deadline**, which saw several extensions before finally culminating in July 2023.
- The deal is being progressed under the '**strategic partnership**' of the defence procurement procedure.

India-Germany Relations:

1. Bilateral relations:

- Germany is one of India's most important partners in Europe owing to the strength of bilateral relations, as also Germany's key role in the EU.
- India was among the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with the Federal Republic of Germany after the Second World War.

2. Strategic Partnership:

- India and Germany have had a 'Strategic Partnership' since May 2000, which has been further strengthened with the launch of Inter-Governmental Consultations (IGC) in **2011** at the level of Heads of Government.
- It allows for a comprehensive review of cooperation and identification of fresh areas of engagement. India is among a select group of countries with which Germany has such a dialogue mechanism.
- India and Germany have a shared interest in **upholding democratic values, a rules-based international order, and reform of multilateral institutions**. These issues are expected to figure in the discussions, especially in the context of China's assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.



3. Institutional Cooperation Arrangements:

- Several institutionalized arrangements exist between India and Germany to discuss bilateral and global issues of interest, namely, **Foreign Office Consultations, High Defence Committee, Indo-German Energy Forum, Indo German Environment Forum, S&T Committee and Joint Working Groups in various fields, including skill development, automotive, agriculture, tourism, water and waste management.**
- Both countries consult each other and coordinate positions in multilateral fora including G-20 and in the UN on global issues such as climate change and sustainable development.
- There have been consultations between the two countries on various subjects such as UN issues, international cyber issues, disarmament and non-proliferation, export control, Asia and Africa.

4. Multilateral Cooperation:

- Germany and India support each other on UNSC expansion within the framework of the **G-4.**
- Germany joined the **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI)** in February 2020 and participated in the first Governing Council meeting in March 2020.
- In April 2021, the German Federal Cabinet approved the signing of the amended framework agreement of the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**, and thereby Germany's accession to the ISA.

5. Security Cooperation:

- The MoU on Security Cooperation signed at the 3rd IGC held in Delhi in 2015 defines collaboration in this field.

6. Defence Cooperation:

- **Bilateral Defence Cooperation Agreement** signed in September 2006 and the **Agreement on Mutual Protection of Classified Information** signed in October 2007, provide the framework for bilateral defence ties.

7. Economic & Commercial Relations:

- **Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe.** It has consistently been among India's top ten global partners and was the seventh-largest trading partner in FY 2020-21.
- Bilateral trade in 2020-21 was USD 21.76 billion registering a marginal decline of about 1% over FY 2019-20.

8. Science & Technology:

- Bilateral Science and Technology cooperation is implemented under an Inter-Governmental Agreement on **'Cooperation in Scientific Research and Technological Development'** signed in May 1974.
- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) are the nodal agencies for overall coordination. An apex Indo-German Committee on S&T, established in 1994 coordinates the implementation of cooperation and joint review of activities.

9. Culture:

- The Indo-German cultural relations have a long tradition that was derived through the systematic and academic study of Indian literature, especially Vedas & Upanishads, and also translation of famous works from Sanskrit to German language.



- Most importantly, the translation of **Kalidasa's 'Shakuntala' in 1791** envisaged institution-based scientific research on sacred Indian texts for the quest of Indian philosophy and literature.
- **Max Mueller** was the first scholar of Indo-European languages to translate and publish Upanishads and Rigveda.

10. Indian Diaspora:

- There are around 2.03 lakh (December 2021) Indian passport holders and Indian-origin people (about 1.60 lakh NRIs/Indian Passport holders and around 43,000 PIOs) in Germany.
- India and Germany signed a comprehensive partnership on migration and mobility meant to ease travel for research, study and work for people in both countries.

11. Energy Partnership:

- Under the energy partnership, the **Green Hydrogen Task Force** will develop a Green Hydrogen Roadmap.

Challenges:

1. Historical:

- Earlier, Cold War politics, as well as the lack of development in India caused German governments to treat the world's largest democracy with indifference for many years.

2. Political:

- Germany has expressed concerns about **Kashmir lockdown and the rights of minorities in India** and has begun to cast a shadow over the "shared political values" (freedom and the rights of minorities) with India.

3. Economical:

- Further, Germany and the European Union are skeptical about **India's trade liberalization measures**, as Germany and EU bat for more liberal labour regulations.
- India had recently celebrated remarkable improvements in the ease of doing business, indicating its willingness to remove bureaucratic hurdles.
- However, technical regulations in trade like testing requirements are a real burden for German Companies.

WAY FORWARD:

- **Germany had recognized India as a strategic partner in the Indo-Pacific region** especially when the region is gaining importance in the geopolitics of the globe.
- The India-Germany partnership has the potential to resolve global issues like **food security, energy, defence security, and green development**.
- Germany will preside over the G7 in 2022, and starting in December 2022, India will preside over the G20. This provides a chance to work together and coordinate the efforts.
- The India-Germany partnership in **green development and tackling climate change** is crucial to fulfilling sustainable development goals.