



## INDIA - GREECE RELATIONS - GS II MAINS

**Q.** Examine the key factors driving the strengthening relationship between Greece and India, and their significance in enhancing bilateral cooperation. (15 marks, 250 words)

**News:** *State Visit of Prime Minister of Greece to India*

### What's in the news?

- Prime Minister of the Hellenic Republic (Greece), Kyriakos Mitsotakis is on a State visit to India from 21-22 February 2024.
- PM Mitsotakis will be the Chief Guest and Keynote Speaker at the 9th Raisina Dialogue, 2024 in New Delhi.

### Factors Strengthening India - Greece Relationship:

#### 1. Strategic Geographic Positions:

- Both India and Greece are situated in key geopolitical locations, making each country an important strategic partner for the other in their respective regions.

#### 2. Military Cooperation:

- Joint military exercises between the Indian Navy and Air Force and the Greek armed forces demonstrate growing strategic and defence collaboration.

#### 3. Economic and Infrastructure Development:

- Economic reforms in Greece, combined with the potential India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), open new avenues for business collaborations.

#### 4. Advocacy for Broader Relations:

- Greece's support for the EU-India Bilateral Trade and Investment Agreement and its role as a reliable partner in the EU and NATO, strengthen its relationship with India.

#### 5. Interconnected Regional Stability:

- The security of the East Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean regions are interlinked, emphasizing the importance of the Greece-India partnership in global stability.

#### 6. Cultural and Educational Exchanges:

- Efforts to enhance people-to-people ties through student exchange programs, cultural events, and media cooperation play a vital role in deepening mutual understanding and respect.

### Economic and Business Opportunities:

#### 1. Infrastructure Projects:

- An Indian construction company is collaborating with a Greek firm to build a new airport on the island of Crete, showcasing cross-border infrastructure cooperation.

#### 2. Banking and Finance:

- A major systemic bank in Greece has partnered with a prominent Indian financial institution to sell mutual fund products globally, indicating a growing financial relationship.



### 3. Investment by Business Leaders:

- Notable investments include those by an Indian business family in the Greek food industry, demonstrating the potential for cross-industry investment.

### 4. Shipping Industry Expansion:

- An Indian shipping company has opened a brokerage firm in Athens, aiming to become a key player in the trans-Atlantic shipping market, highlighting opportunities in maritime trade.

### 5. Support from Influential Investors:

- Indian-Canadian billionaire Prem Watsa, a major foreign investor in Greece, endorses the potential of Greek-Indian business cooperation, emphasizing the investment appeal of both countries.

## Geopolitical Significance of Indo-Greek Relationship:

### 1. Strong Foundation Based on Longstanding Ties:

- The historical context of the developing relationship between Greece and India (diplomatic relations established in 1950) adds depth to their contemporary diplomatic efforts.
- Moreover, the diplomatic exchange gains significance against the backdrop of India's rising status as a global power.
- India is viewed not only as an old friend but also as a dynamic and influential player on the international stage.

### 2. Contemporary Diplomacy:

- The historic visit of the Indian PM to Greece in August 2023 marked a pivotal moment, setting the stage for increased collaboration.
- The excitement generated in Greece, particularly among political leaders and business figures, underscored the perceived opportunities in forging a strategic partnership with India.

### 3. Geo-Strategic Location of Both Countries:

- The geopolitical significance of this burgeoning relationship is heightened by the geographical locations of both nations.
- Greece and India find themselves strategically positioned in regions crucial to the global system, albeit facing geopolitical volatility.
- Recent events in the Red Sea underscore the interdependence of the East Mediterranean, where Greece is situated, and the Indian Ocean region on security, stability, and prosperity.
- The awareness of these shared challenges emphasises the strategic imperative for Greece and India to collaborate and contribute to regional and global stability.

### 4. Gateway to Europe and Asia:

- The Greek PM's assertion that India will find no better gateway to Europe than my country, and for Greece, there is no better gateway to Asia than a close strategic relationship with India.
- It encapsulates the recognition of each country's unique role in serving as a bridge to the other's region.
- This understanding reflects not only a pragmatic acknowledgment of geographical realities but also a strategic vision to leverage each other's strengths for mutual benefit.



## WAY FORWARD:

### 1. Cross-Cultural Understanding:

- By increasing university student exchange programs, there will be a deliberate effort to expose the younger generation to each other's cultures, traditions, and educational systems.
- This not only enhances cross-cultural understanding but also lays the foundation for future collaborations and friendships.

### 2. Cultural Exchanges:

- Cultural exchanges stand as another pillar in strengthening ties between Greece and India.
- By promoting cultural events, exhibitions, and festivals, both nations create opportunities for their citizens to experience and appreciate the diversity of each other's cultural expressions.
- This will serve as bridges that connect the hearts and minds of people, fostering a sense of shared identity and appreciation for the uniqueness of each culture.

### 3. Media Cooperation:

- Media cooperation is identified as a crucial avenue to bridge the geographical gap and keep the citizens of both nations informed about the developments, cultural nuances, and societal trends.
- Collaborative efforts in media, including joint productions, cultural documentaries, and news coverage, facilitate a nuanced understanding of each other's realities.

The exchange of visits between the political leaders of Greece and India within a short timeframe reflects their determination and the urgency attached to advancing the strategic partnership. As the world enters a critical year in 2024, the responsibility now lies with policymakers and businesses to build upon this momentum and strengthen the Greece-India strategic partnership.