

4. India-Canada Security Cooperation – International Relation

India and Canada agree to shared workplan to guide bilateral cooperation on national security. India and Canada have resumed high-level security talks to repair diplomatic ties strained by allegations regarding Khalistan extremism. The dialogue established a structured work plan involving liaison officers and cybersecurity cooperation to tackle transnational crime, drugs, and extremist financing.

Context- High-Level Security Dialogue

National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval held high-level talks with Canadian officials in Ottawa. The primary objective was to strengthen security cooperation, streamline information sharing, and rebuild institutional links after a period of significant diplomatic strain.

Background of Diplomatic Strain

2023 Allegations- The relationship deteriorated sharply in 2023 when Canada alleged the involvement of Indian officials in the killing of a Canadian citizen linked to Khalistan extremism.

India's Response- India firmly rejected these allegations, terming them "absurd and politically motivated."

Consequences- This led to a series of retaliatory measures, including diplomatic expulsions, the suspension of trade negotiations, and an overall freeze in bilateral engagement.

Current Shift- The recent dialogue marks a calibrated effort to restore functional cooperation, specifically focusing on security and law enforcement domains.

Key Outcomes of the Dialogue

The talks resulted in concrete measures to operationalize security cooperation.

Work Plan on National Security- Both nations agreed to implement a structured work plan that will guide future cooperation on national security and law enforcement matters.

Appointment of Liaison Officers

Objective- To streamline bilateral communication and facilitate real-time information sharing.

Action- India and Canada will post security and law-enforcement liaison officers in each other's countries.

Focus Areas for Cooperation

- Combating illegal drug trafficking, with a specific focus on fentanyl precursors.
- Dismantling transnational organised criminal networks.
- Addressing extremist financing and document fraud.

Addressing Extremism and Diaspora Issues- Discussions specifically covered the threats posed by extremist fundraising, intimidation tactics, and propaganda linked to organized crime networks operating within the diaspora.

Cybersecurity Cooperation

Policy Formalization- Both sides agreed to formalize cooperation on cybersecurity policy.

Institutional Mechanisms- New mechanisms for sharing information on cyber threats will be institutionalized.

Brief on India-Canada Relations

The relationship is underpinned by shared democratic values, Commonwealth membership, and extensive people-to-people ties.

Historical Relations- Diplomatic relations were established in 1947. Ties were historically strained following India's nuclear tests in 1974 and 1998 due to Canada's strong non-proliferation stance.

Economic Cooperation

Trade Volume- From January to August 2024, total bilateral trade in goods stood at USD 8.55 billion (Exports- USD 5.22 billion; Imports- USD 3.33 billion).

Ongoing Negotiations- Discussions continue regarding a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) and a Foreign Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (FIPA).

Civil Nuclear Cooperation

Agreement- A Nuclear Cooperation Agreement (NCA) was signed in 2010 and became operational in 2013.

Oversight- A Joint Committee oversees the implementation of the 2010 Agreement on "Cooperation in Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy".

Space Cooperation

Framework- MoUs were signed in 1996 and 2003 between ISRO and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

Scope- Cooperation encompasses satellite tracking, space astronomy, and commercial satellite launches.

Commercial Launches- ISRO's commercial arm, ANTRIX, has successfully launched multiple Canadian nanosatellites.

Science and Technology

Arctic Studies- The Department of Earth Science and Polar Canada have initiated a program for knowledge exchange and scientific research on Cold Climate (Arctic) Studies.

Memorandum of Cooperation- Signed in 2020 between the National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR) and POLAR Canada.

People-to-People Links

Diaspora- There are approximately 1.8 million Indo-Canadians and one million non-resident Indians in Canada, constituting over 3% of the population.

Student Mobility- India is the largest source of international students in Canada, accounting for around 40% of the total international student body.

Cultural Influence- Strong cultural exchanges and a vibrant diaspora significantly influence bilateral perceptions.

Multilateral Cooperation- Both countries collaborate in various international forums, including the G20, Commonwealth, United Nations, and the International Solar Alliance.

Way Ahead

Foundations- The relationship possesses strong foundations and significant potential in sectors like trade, education, and clean energy.

Challenges- Bilateral ties remain fragile, with political sensitivities and security concerns acting as key irritants.

Future Trajectory- Success depends on the ability of both nations to manage these differences while simultaneously leveraging shared interests for mutual benefit.

Source- <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/national-security-advisor-ajit-doval-in-canada/article70608076.ece>