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EDITORIAL

The Beacon of India-UK Strategic ties

Key Points of the Article/Editorial

Background

- Although separated by thousands of miles, India and United Kingdom are inherently connected by the ocean, the world's great global commons. Trade in food and goods underwrites our mutual prosperity, supporting the lives and livelihoods of so many. Global trade is predominantly a maritime activity, and this remains a fundamental truth in the Information Age too.
- Both India and United Kingdom need to secure, and make free from aggression and exploitation, the global lifelines of goods and resource that flow across the seas and on which our economies rely. But the norms of behaviour upon the seas - norms which have enabled globalization to flourish, and the wider rules-based International Order of which they are a part - are all increasingly under threat, from the Black Sea to the Red Sea to the South China Sea.

Essence of Operation Prosperity Guardian

- Local actions are having global ramifications, affecting the movement of goods and food that are vital for life and livelihoods. That's the reason due to which, in December 2023, the United Kingdom, the United States and other partners joined in Operation Prosperity Guardian to defend and protect commercial shipping in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.
- The U.K., India, and the world have a common interest in ensuring this wanton violence and disregard for international law are not allowed to become normalized.

Impact of Russia-Ukraine Conflict

- Over the last two years, Ukraine has persevered as a sovereign and independent nation. It stands as a sentinel for democracy and freedom. Its armed forces have regained 50% of the territory illegally seized by Russia since February 2022.
- They have taken the fight to the Black Sea Fleet and, utilizing novel and innovative tactics, have destroyed or damaged numerous ships, pushing the Russian Navy ever further east.
- This has reopened maritime corridors, enabling the flow of grain exports which are the lifeblood of the Ukrainian economy and a source of global food security.
- A shift in the centre of gravity of the global economy is already under way and by 2050 it will sit firmly in the Indo-Asia-Pacific.
- The establishment in 2023 of the U.K. tilt to the Indo-Asia-Pacific as a permanent pillar of policy is, therefore, hugely welcomed and favourable for India and its people.
- The possibilities for global prosperity cannot be understated and the importance of the Indo-Asia Pacific to the world, has never been clearer.

Defence Ties Between India and U.K.

- India and the United Kingdom (U.K.) have a longstanding history of defense ties, rooted in



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historical connections and shared strategic interests. Over the years, defense cooperation between the two countries has evolved and expanded across various domains, including military training, defense trade, joint exercises, and strategic dialogues.

- Military training and exchange programs are an integral part of the defense ties between India and the U.K. Both countries regularly conduct joint military exercises, such as the bilateral Exercise Ajeya Warrior, aimed at enhancing interoperability and sharing best practices between their armed forces.
- Additionally, Indian and British military personnel often participate in exchange programs and training courses to foster mutual understanding and cooperation.
- Defense trade is another important aspect of the bilateral relationship. The U.K. is a significant supplier of defense equipment and technology to India, with collaborations ranging from aircraft and naval vessels to advanced defense systems.
- Moreover, defense industry partnerships and joint ventures between Indian and British companies have contributed to technology transfer, co-production, and indigenous capability development in both countries.
- Strategic dialogues and engagements between India and the U.K. on defense and security issues play a vital role in shaping bilateral cooperation and addressing common challenges. These dialogues encompass a wide range of topics, including counterterrorism, maritime security, cyber defense, and regional stability.
- Overall, the defense ties between India and the U.K. are characterized by a mix of historical legacy, mutual interests, and strategic imperatives.
- As both countries continue to navigate evolving security dynamics and global challenges, their defense cooperation is expected to remain an essential pillar of the broader bilateral relationship.
- Therefore, the strategic ties between India and the United Kingdom are characterized by historical connections, shared values, and converging interests in various domains. As two vibrant democracies with significant global influence, both countries have recognized the importance of deepening their partnership across political, economic, and security realms.
- India and the U.K. have made significant strides in enhancing bilateral cooperation in recent years, particularly in areas such as defense, trade, investment, education, and technology.
- Through regular high-level dialogues, joint initiatives, and collaborative efforts, they have strengthened their engagement on regional and global issues of mutual concern, including counterterrorism, climate change, and maritime security.
- Moreover, the people-to-people ties between India and the U.K., driven by a large diaspora community and cultural exchanges, serve as a strong foundation for further expanding and deepening bilateral relations.
- In essence, the strategic ties between India and the U.K. are poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the 21st century, anchored in shared values, common interests, and a shared commitment to promoting peace, prosperity, and development on a global scale.