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India-Belarus: 12th Inter-Governmental Commission in New Delhi, fresh push to trade and investment



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Why in News

The 12th meeting of the India-Belarus Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC) was held in New Delhi on 16 November 2026. It was co-chaired by India's Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada and Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov. The two sides agreed to deepen trade and investment ties, diversify bilateral trade and expand cooperation in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals and the minerals sector. The 13th session will be held in 2027.

Introduction: what is the IGC

Inter-Governmental Commission (IGC): A regular ministerial-level mechanism set up between two countries to review and advance economic, trade, scientific-technical and cultural cooperation. It works through sectoral sub-committees/working groups and sets the joint direction at each meeting. India has similar commissions with several countries; with Belarus, it is the principal platform for trade and investment dialogue.

Main Body: outcomes of the 12th meeting

- **Trade diversification:** Both sides stressed diversifying the bilateral trade basket beyond traditional items.
- **Sectoral cooperation:** Agreement to deepen cooperation in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals and minerals.
- **Investment and technology:** Discussion on advancing investment opportunities and technical cooperation; continuing dialogue on regulatory and standardization issues.
- **Next session:** The 13th session will be held in 2027 (the cited report does not specify the venue).
- **Delegations:** Business and official delegations from both countries took part.

Exam relevance

For Prelims: The meeting number (12th), place (New Delhi), date (16 November 2026), co-chairs (Jitin Prasada - Maxim Ryzhenkov) and the areas of cooperation are direct question areas.

For Mains: Economic diplomacy with smaller countries, India's trade strategy in Eurasia and balancing ties amid geopolitical pressures - GS-II analysis.

Way Forward

Implementing the agreed direction now rests with the concerned ministries and working groups. Progress on trade diversification and investment projects will be watched ahead of the 13th session in 2027.

Prelims Practice Questions

Q1. With reference to the 12th meeting of the India-Belarus Inter-Governmental Commission, consider the following statements:
Statement 1: The meeting was held on 16 November 2026 in New Delhi
Statement 2: Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov co-chaired it
Statement 3: The two sides agreed to hold the 13th session in 2027

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer and Explanation

Correct answer: (d) 1, 2 and 3

Explanation: All three statements are correct: the meeting was held in New Delhi on 16 November 2026; Jitin Prasada for India and Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov for Belarus were the co-chairs; and the 13th session was agreed for 2027.

Q2. Which of the following was NOT among the areas marked for cooperation at the 12th India-Belarus IGC?

(a) Agriculture

(b) Food processing

(c) Space exploration

(d) Pharmaceuticals

Answer and Explanation

Correct answer: (c) Space exploration

Explanation: The meeting agreed to deepen cooperation in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals and minerals; space exploration is not among them.

Mains Practice Question

How do mechanisms like Inter-Governmental Commissions with small and medium-sized countries help India's economic diplomacy? Discuss with reference to India-Belarus relations. (GS-II; 250 words)

Answer Outline:

Introduction: Introduce the 12th IGC and the agreement to deepen bilateral trade and investment.

Main Body: The role of IGCs - regular dialogue, sectoral working groups, resolution of regulatory issues; complementarities in minerals (potash etc.), pharma and agriculture; the strategic view of market diversification in Eurasia; challenges - payment mechanisms, logistics and sanctions-related conditions.

Conclusion: Conclude that institutional mechanisms build durable, stable ties; a focus on implementation is essential.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Short answer: The 12th India-Belarus IGC was held in New Delhi on 16 November 2026, with agreement on deepening trade and investment, diversifying trade and expanding cooperation in agriculture, food processing, pharmaceuticals and minerals; the next session is in 2027.

Q: Who chaired the meeting?

India's Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada and Belarusian Foreign Minister Maxim Ryzhenkov co-chaired it.

Q: What does the IGC do?

It is a regular ministerial-level mechanism that reviews and advances economic, trade, technical and cultural cooperation between two countries.

Q: When and where is the next meeting?

The 13th session will be held in 2027; the cited report does not specify the venue.

Sources

- DD News - India, Belarus agree to deepen trade and investment ties at 12th Inter-Governmental Commission meeting: https://ddnews.gov.in/en/india-belarus-agree-to-deepen-trade-and-investment-ties-at-12th-inter-governmental-commission-meeting/

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