

India - Russia Bilateral Relations: Modi-Putin Discuss 'Special Strategic' Ties, Future Roadmap

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Why in News?

- The Indian PM and Russian President had a good conversation on various regional and global issues, including Russia's Presidency of the BRICS in 2024.
- They discussed a range of aspects related to the "special and privileged strategic partnership" between the two countries.

Overview of India - Russia Bilateral Relations

- Russia has been a longstanding and time-tested partner for India and development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy.
- Since the signing of the "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in 2000, India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship.
- During the visit of the Russian President to India in 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of a "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership."
- During his recent visit to Russia, the Indian Foreign Minister said that India-Russia relations remain "very steady, very strong and mutually beneficial" and are based on "strategic convergence" and "geopolitical interests".

Different Areas of Cooperation in the India - Russia Bilateral Relations

- Political relations:
 - The India-Russia Intergovernmental Commission (IRIGC) has two divisions – the Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation and the Military & Military-Technical Cooperation.
 - In 2021, a new dimension to the bilateral cooperation was added with the first 2+2 Dialogue (Foreign and Defence Ministers of both countries) taking place.
 - Both countries remain in touch at multilateral engagements as well. For example, they met on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit in Jakarta, BRICS in South Africa, SCO in Goa and G20 in New Delhi in 2023.
- Trade and Economic relations:
 - In April-December 2022, the bilateral trade reached an all-time high of \$45 billion with a trade deficit of \$35bn in Russia's favour.
 - Major items of export from India include pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, electrical machinery and mechanical appliances, iron & steel, etc.
 - Major items of import from Russia include oil and petroleum products, fertilisers, mineral resources, precious stones and metals, vegetable oils, etc.
- Defence and security cooperation:
 - India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence and is guided by the Agreement on the Programme for Military Technical Cooperation.
 - The Agreement for 2021-2031 was signed during the inaugural meeting of India-Russia 2+2 Dialogue which was held in Delhi in 2021.
 - Bilateral projects include the supply of S-400, licensed production of T-90 tanks and Su-30 MKI, supply of MiG-29 and Kamov helicopters, production of Ak-203 rifles in India and BrahMos missiles, etc.
- Science and technology cooperation:
 - After India's independence, the erstwhile Soviet Union's assistance was crucial to the establishment of Bhilai Steel Plant, Indian Institute of Technology (Bombay) and India's space program.
 - Today, India and Russia work together on basic sciences, materials science, mathematics and cutting-edge areas like
 - India's manned spaceflight program (Gaganyaan),
 - Nanotechnologies and

- Quantum computing.
- India's only nuclear power plant established with another country (Russia) is the Kudankulam Nuclear Plant in Tamil Nadu.
- Education: Education is a major source for the Indian population in Russia. As per most recent data, there are around 25,000 Indian nationals of which a majority are Indian students studying medicine.
- Cultural cooperation:
 - In recent times, Indian cinema has begun to make a gradual comeback with more frequent film screenings across Russia.
 - Yoga is immensely popular across Russia as well with very enthusiastic and large gatherings of participants each year on International Day of Yoga.

Some Recent Challenges for India-Russia Ties

- India and Russia have an annual summit at the leaders' level, where the Indian PM and the Russian President visit each other's country every alternate year.
- However, after the war in Ukraine broke out, the Indian PM did not travel to Russia for the annual summit in 2022 and Putin could not come for the G20 summit in Delhi in September last year.
- While it is the Indian PM's turn to visit Russia for the annual summit, the visit didn't take place last year. The last summit was held in 2021 in Delhi, during Putin's visit.

News Summary Regarding Modi-Putin Discussions on Bilateral Ties

- The phone call between the two leaders comes a day after a meeting of the national security advisors of almost 80 countries in Davos to discuss a peace formula for Ukraine.
- In a post on X, Modi said he and Putin also agreed to chalk out a roadmap for future initiatives and expressed interest in further intensifying mutually beneficial bilateral ties.
- Both leaders emphasised their "readiness to closely coordinate their approaches to the BRICS agenda", adding that "India intends to help implement the goals and objectives of Russia's chairmanship".
- The leaders also touched on several other international issues, including the situation around Ukraine. During his conversations with Putin, Modi has said that it is not a time of war.

Q1) What is the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)?

The SCO is an intergovernmental Eurasian political, economic, international security and defence organisation. Since its formation in 2001, it has primarily concentrated on regional security challenges, including the battle against regional terrorism, ethnic separatism, and religious extremism.

Q2) What is unique about the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant project?

The Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is the largest nuclear power plant in India, situated in Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu. Construction began in 2002, but the launch was delayed due to protests by local fishermen. It became operational in 2013.

Source: [Modi and Putin discuss 'special strategic' ties, future roadmap | TH](#)

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