

Narendra Modi Strengthening Russian-Indian Partnership: Implications and Perspectives in Multipolar World

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*Indian **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's** two-day (July 8-9) official visit to hold talks with Russian **President Vladimir Putin** indicated the significant depth of their bilateral relations within the context of global changes. Russia's closeness in enhancing and deepening economic cooperation also has an intertwined strategy for ensuring readiness against threats from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a political and military alliance of countries from Europe and North America. But India has, thus far, shown pragmatism in approach as it builds a strong partnership with the United States and, at the same time, maintains ties with Russia.*

Narendra Modi's agenda was really loaded. Choosing Moscow after his re-election as prime minister underlined the importance of Russian-Indian relations, at least from the Soviet era through Moscow's post Soviet economic transformations until today. Today, both are staunch members of the 'informal association' - BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.) Long before that was RIC 'trioka' (Russia, India and China), which according to the Russia Foreign Ministry would be revived. Russia and India also belong to the G20, and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).

Notwithstanding the common visions, Russia and India have distinctive features in geography, politics and economy. India is the third-largest economy in the world. It is probably the largest country in the world by population, 1.4 billion people. Russia was only recently upgraded into middle-income category and said to have overtaken Japan, which has only stripes of land and estimated population of 128 million people. By contrast, Russia with an extremely huge territory and vast natural resources, can boast of tiny population of 143 million. It took Russia more than thirty years, after Soviet's collapse, to join middle-level income countries and to overtake Japan. Despite its achievements, Russia is still far away

from what economists referred to as private-oriented economy. Russia's economy is largely state-controlled.

Modi emphasized during his conversation with Putin that "India is the largest democracy; it is considered the mother of democracy" and therefore democratic elections were very important and huge in scale. "It is the first time in 60 years that a government has been elected for a third term in a row. The first time it happened was when India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, was elected for a third term. I have done the same 60 years later. The people of India have given me a chance to serve my homeland," underscored Modi. According to the official transcript, the Indian people voted for Modi on the principle: reform, perform and transform. Putin and Modi had their first informal encounter at the presidential residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, Moscow Region.

A new era is setting in the world, wrote the local Russia's Kommersant newspaper on the eve of PM Modi's visit. According to the newspaper, India considers itself the leader of the Global South, and Russia, one of the driving forces shaping a multipolar world, recognizes each other as important political partners. An additional factor pushing Moscow and New Delhi toward rapprochement is the increasing pressure on Russia and India from the United States.

What Moscow Offers India

Russia-India relations have flourished across all areas under Putin's leadership for 25 years, i.e. since 1991. The trustworthy relations has hit new milestones and new heights these past few years. In the current global context, India and Russia, as well as their partnership, have taken on a new importance. It is hard to overestimate Russia-India cooperation in the ff; trade and the economy, in the military-technical industry, nuclear and hydrogen energy, in high technology and space development.

In the Grand Kremlin Palace, several documents were discussed, negotiated and outlined bilateral economic sectors for India's strategic cooperation with Russia until 2030.

The programme was signed of Russian-Indian cooperation in trade, economic and investment spheres in the Russian Far East for 2024-2029, and on the principles of cooperation in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. Given the vast territory of the Far East, and with its tiny 6.3 million people, China and India have been showing high interest in investment sectors in the region. In the Far East region, Russia is collaborating with Asian countries in trade and investment, strengthening its economic ties especially with China, India, North Korea and Vietnam.

Already local media reports said earlier that India has been a major buyer of Russian oil since the start of the 'special military operation' and it has amassed a trade deficit worth around \$60 billion in its dealings with Russia.

Head of the Center for the Indian Ocean Region at IMEMO, Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), Alexey Kupriyanov said in an interview with Nezavisimaya Gazeta:

"While the trade deficit problem cannot be solved through negotiations, it can be resolved as the trade structure levels off and Indian exports to Russia grow. These mostly include high-tech products that India either produces itself or buys in the West to resell to Russia."

In January-April, Russia was the second largest supplier of goods to India (with only China ahead of it with deliveries worth \$32.6 billion). In turn, exports of Indian goods to Russia increased by 21% to \$1.6 billion, with Russia rising from 33rd to 29th place among recipients of goods from India. The top five importers of Indian goods include the United States, the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Singapore, and China.

During negotiations on July 9, inter-agency documents were signed concerning issues of climate change and low-carbon development, geodesy and cartography, healthcare and pharmaceuticals, scientific research and logistics in the polar regions, and cooperation in the field of television broadcasting. A number of signed agreements concern investment and arbitration issues.

In addition, economic cooperation featured prominently in the bilateral discussions, ended with signing memorandums of understanding between the all-Russia Public Organisation Delovaya Rossiya (Business Russia) and the Trade Promotion Council of India, as well as between the National Research University Higher School of Economics (Russia) and Jawaharlal Nehru University (New Delhi, India). The world will be watching with eagles eyes for the tangible results from these ambitious initiatives and strategies in shaping the evolving regional politics and economy not only in Russia but also in Eurasian region and, further the global dynamics.

Crowning the two-day interaction, President Vladimir Putin decorated Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, with “the Order of St Andrew the Apostle” in a modest ceremony held in St Andrew’s Hall of the Grand Kremlin Palace. According to the decree, Modi was honored with this award “for his outstanding merit in development of the particularly privileged strategic partnership between the Russian Federation and the Republic of India, as well as friendly ties between Russian and Indian peoples.”

This order can be awarded to heads of foreign states for outstanding services to the Russian Federation. It is the oldest order instituted more than three centuries ago by Russian Emperor Peter the Great.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Indian economy in 2024 was nominally worth \$3.94 trillion. Driven by growth, India’s nominal GDP per capita increased steadily from \$308 in 1991 and now reached an estimated \$2,731 in 2024. India is officially known as the Republic of India located in South Asia. It is the seventh-largest country by area; the most populous country as of June 2024. India borders the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

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