

India-Russia Relation

Russia has been a longstanding and time-tested partner for India. Development of India-Russia relations has been a key pillar of India's foreign policy. Since the signing of "Declaration on the India-Russia Strategic Partnership" in October 2000 (during the visit of President Putin), India-Russia ties have acquired a qualitatively new character with enhanced levels of cooperation in almost all areas of the bilateral relationship including political, security, defence, trade and economy, science & technology, culture, and people-to-people ties. Under the Strategic Partnership, several institutionalized dialogue mechanisms operate at both political and official levels to ensure regular interaction and follow-up on cooperation activities. During the visit of the Russian President to India in December 2010, the Strategic Partnership was elevated to the level of "Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership."

2. Despite Covid-19 related challenges, India-Russia relations have continued to deepen, with enhanced cooperation in all areas of the bilateral relationship, including political engagements, security, defence, trade & economy, science & technology and culture. Cooperation was further strengthened through joint efforts in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic, including in the field of vaccine trials and production, supply of drugs and repatriation of citizens of both countries.

Political relations

3. On April 12, 2019, President Putin signed the Executive Order On Awarding PM Russia's highest state award, the Order of St Andrew the Apostle The First Called. The order was presented to PM for his distinguished contribution to the development of Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia and friendly ties between the peoples of both countries.

4. The Annual Summit between the Prime Minister of India and the President of the Russian Federation is the highest institutionalized dialogue mechanism in the strategic partnership between India and Russia. So far 21 Annual Summits have taken place alternatively in India and Russia. The last Summit was held on December 6, 2021 in New Delhi.

5. PM and President Putin had three telephone conversations in 2021: on April 28, 2021 during which PM thanked President Putin for Russia's assistance in fight against pandemic and also agreed to establish a 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries. In the telephone conversation on August 24, the two sides exchanged views on the situation in Afghanistan and agreed to establish a permanent channel of communication on the issue. In the telephone conversation on December 20, the two leaders followed up on various issues discussed during the recent visit of President Putin to India.

6. EAM and FM Lavrov met four times in 2021: (i) during FM Lavrov's visit to New Delhi on April 5-6, 2021, wherein the two sides discussed preparations for the Annual Summit later in the year along with other issues of bilateral cooperation, including cooperation in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic. (ii) On July 7-9, 2021, EAM visited Moscow and met with FM Lavrov, Deputy PM Yuri Borisov and Chairman, State Duma International Affairs Committee Leonid Slutsky. He also delivered a speech at Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO) on "India Russia ties in a changing world". (iii) EAM and FM Lavrov also met on the sidelines of the Ministerial Meeting of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held in Nursultan on October 11-12, 2021. (iv) FM Lavrov (accompanied by Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu) again visited New Delhi on December 6 to participate in the first India-Russia 2+2 Format Meeting. EAM and FM Lavrov also held a separate bilateral meeting on the sidelines.

7. On December 6, 2021, RM and Defence Minister Shoigu co-chaired the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) in New Delhi before meeting in the 2+2 Format.

8. Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, visited Russia to participate in the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok from 1- 5 September 2021. PM addressed the EEF Plenary virtually which was attended by President Putin. During the visit, he held meetings with Mr. Nikolay Shulginov, Minister of Energy of Russia, and with Mr. Alexei Chekunkov,

Russian Minister for Development of Far East and Arctic. In addition, along with the Russian Minister of Energy, he co-chaired India-Russia Business Dialogue, on the sidelines of EEF. He also held discussions with Russian Energy majors, including Rosneft, GazpromNeft and Sibur.

9. On invitation of the Russian Energy Minister, Mr Nikolay Shulginov, Minister of Steel led a delegation of Indian steel companies to Moscow on 14-15 October 2021 to participate in the Russian Energy Week. A landmark MoU on supply of coking coal from Russia to India and collaboration in steel sector was signed by the two sides on 14 October.

Foreign Office Consultations

10. During the 19th Annual Summit (2018), the two sides concluded a Protocol for Consultations between the foreign ministries for the period 2019-23.

11. On February 17-18, 2021 FS visited Moscow for Foreign Office Consultations with DFM Igor Morgulov. He also called on FM Lavrov and met DFM Sergey Ryabkov. He gave a speech at the Diplomatic Academy and interacted with experts from leading Russian think tanks over a breakfast meeting.

12. On 3-4 December 2020 Secretary West visited Moscow for consultations on UNSC-related issues with DFM Sergei Vershinin and held consultations on Arctic-related issues with Amb. Nikolai Korzhunov, Ambassador-at-Large on Arctic issues.

13. On February 16, 2021, FOC on foreign policy planning was held in Moscow between JS (PP&R) and Acting Director, Foreign Policy Planning Department, MFA.

14. On February 16, 2021, FOC on UNSC issues was held in Moscow between JS (UNP) and Director, International Organisations Department, MFA.

Security Council Cooperation

15. India and Russia maintain close cooperation between the Security Council secretariats led by NSA from the Indian side and Secretary of the Russian Security Council Mr. Nikolai Patrushev from the Russian side. They hold regular bilateral consultations besides meeting on the sidelines of various multilateral events. They met in Dushanbe on June 24, 2021 on the sidelines of SCO NSAs meeting. Nikolai Patrushev visited New Delhi on September 8 to hold inter-agency consultations led by NSA from the Indian side. Nikolai Patrushev again visited New Delhi to participate in the Delhi Regional Security Dialogue on Afghanistan, hosted by NSA on November 10, 2021. The two sides also maintain close coordination at Deputy NSA level.

Trade and Economic Cooperation

16. The India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC) is co-chaired by EAM and the Russian Deputy PM Yuri Borisov.

17. Intensifying the trade and economic relations has been identified as a priority area by both the leaders. Targets of increasing bilateral investment was revised to US \$50 billion and bilateral trade to US \$30 billion by 2025.

18. As per figures of Department of Commerce, bilateral trade during FY 2020 amounted USD 8.1 billion. Indian exports amounted USD 2.6 billion while imports from Russia amounted USD 5.48 billion. Disruptions in supply chain and other constraints due to the covid pandemic in 2020 led to a 19.5% decline in the bilateral trade from 2019 (Jan-Dec). During April – August 2021 (as per Department of Commerce), India's trade with Russia saw a strong revival, increasing by 54% compared with the same period last year.

19. Major items of export from India include electrical machinery, pharmaceuticals, organic chemicals, iron & steel, apparels, tea, coffee, vehicle spare parts. Major items of import from Russia include defense equipment, mineral resources, precious stones and metals, nuclear power equipment, fertilizers, electrical machinery, articles of steel, inorganic chemicals.

20. Trade in services: Bilateral trade in services has remained stable during the last 5 years with trade balance in Russia's favor. The figure stands at USD 973.645 million for the year 2020. Trade in services (Jan-Dec 2020) reduced to about 1 Bn as compared to 1.35 Bn (Jan- Dec 2019).

21. Bilateral investments between the two countries remain strong and surpassed the previous target of USD 30 billion in 2018, leading to revised target of USD 50 billion by 2025. The major bilateral investments by Russia in India are in the oil and gas, petrochemicals, banking, railways and steel sectors. Indian investments in Russia are mainly in oil and gas, diamond and pharmaceuticals sectors.

Regional Engagements

22. In follow-up to PM's visit to Vladivostok in 2019, efforts have been made to further develop cooperation with the Russian Far East region. A number of virtual meetings have been held between various Far East regions with Indian states, e.g. Haryana and Sakhalin region, Uttar Pradesh and Zabaikalsky Region to discuss the implementation of various commercial tie-ups made during visits of PM, CIM, CMs of 5 Indian states and Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel in 2019.

23. Similar efforts have been made to strengthen commercial relations with other regions outside Moscow and St. Petersburg, including Krasnoyarsk, Buryatia, Astrakhan, Krasnodar, Chechnya, Irkutsk, Volgograd, Kalmykia, Murmansk, Khanty-Mansyisk, Kurgan, etc.

24. During the 6th Eastern Economic Forum in 2021, a virtual meeting between Gujarat and Yakutia region was organized in the presence of Gujarat CM Shri Vijay Rupani and Mr. Aysen Nikolaev, Head of Republic of Yakutia region. The dialogue focused on sectors including diamond and jewelry, pharmaceuticals and ceramics. Virtual meetings were held between various Far East regions and Indian states, e.g., Haryana and Sakhalin region, Uttar Pradesh and Zabaikalsky Region to implement the MoUs.

International/Multilateral Organizations and Connectivity Projects:

25. **BRICS:** Notable engagements in 2021 under the Indian chairmanship were as follows:

- 16 March 2021: Under India's Chairship of the BRICS grouping, the first Meeting of the Deans of Diplomatic Academies took place virtually on 16 March 2021 on the theme, 'Diplomatic Training in the 21st Century: Challenges and Opportunities in a Post-Pandemic World'.
- 06 April 2021: India hosted the 1st Meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors virtually. The meeting was jointly chaired by Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs, and Governor, Reserve Bank of India.
- 22 April 2021: The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India hosted a virtual BRICS Seminar on Energy Storage Technologies (EST).
- 01 June 2021: EAM participated in the virtual meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/ International Relations. Outcome documents included (a) BRICS Joint Statement on Strengthening and reforming the Multilateral System; and (b) Media Statement of Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs/ International Relations
- 02 July 2021: The Minister of State (I/C) for Culture and Tourism chaired the 6th BRICS Culture Ministers' Meeting through video conference.
- 06 July 2021: Union Minister of State for Education, Communications and Electronics & Information Technology chaired the 8th meeting of BRICS education Ministers held virtually. Education Ministers from the five BRICS countries virtually signed a joint declaration on 6 July 2021, with the resolve to further strengthen their academic and research collaboration in higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).
- 13 July 2021: Minister for Tourism Shri G. Kishan Reddy chaired the BRICS Tourism Ministers' Meeting in virtual format.
- 15 July 2021: Union Minister for Labour & Employment chaired the BRICS Labour & Employment Ministers' Meeting in virtual format.
- 28 July 2021: Dr. R. R. Singh, MoS, MEA chaired the first BRICS Civil Forum 2021 in virtual format.
- 18 August 2021: Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles chaired the 5th meeting of BRICS Industry Ministers held virtually.
- 18 August 2021: Chairman, ISRO represented India at the meeting of Heads of BRICS Space Agencies. An Agreement for Cooperation in Remote Sensing Satellite Data Sharing was signed.

- 24 August 2021: NSA participated in the BRICS High Representatives responsible for National Security meeting. BRICS Counter Terrorism Action Plan was signed.
- 26 August 2021: Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs virtually chaired the second meeting of BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) along with Governor of Reserve Bank of India.
- 27 August 2021: Minister of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare participated in the BRICS Ministers of Agriculture meeting. Outcome documents of the meeting included (a) Action Plan 2021-2024 for Agricultural Cooperation of BRICS countries; and (b) Operationalization of BRICS Agriculture Research Platform.
- 27 August 2021: Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change chaired the 7th meeting of the BRICS Environment Ministerial 2021 in virtual format.
- 31 August 2021: The Union Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, and Minister of Information and Broadcasting hosted the 7th BRICS Youth Summit and the Meeting of 'BRICS Ministers and Heads of Agencies Responsible for Youth' through video conference.
- 02 September 2021: Union Minister of State for Power and Heavy Industries chaired the "Meeting of BRICS Ministers of Energy" in virtual format.
- 03 September 2021: Minister of Commerce and Industry, Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution and Textiles chaired the 11th BRICS Trade Ministers Meeting held in virtual format.
- 09 September 2021: PM chaired the 13th BRICS Summit in virtual format. Outcome document included New Delhi Declaration 2021.

26. **SCO:** Notable engagements in 2021 were as follows:

- 23 June 2021: NSA led the Indian delegation in the 16th Meeting of Secretaries of Security Councils of SCO held in Dushanbe.
- 30 June 2021: Minister of Health and Family Welfare participated in the Fourth Meeting of Health Ministers of SCO member States held in Video Conference format.
- 14 July 2021: EAM led the Indian delegation at the meeting of Council of Foreign Ministers of SCO held on 14 July 2021 in Dushanbe.
- 28 July 2021: Raksha Mantri took part in the meeting of Defense Ministers of SCO Member States held in Dushanbe. During the meeting it was decided to adopt the Plan of Cooperation between the SCO Defense Ministries for 2022-2023.
- 30 July 2021: Minister of Law & Justice and Minister of State for Law and Justice took part in the meeting of SCO Justice Ministers held on 30 July 2021 via video conference.
- 12 August 2021: Minister of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare led the Indian delegation at the meeting of Ministers of Agriculture of SCO Member States held online.
- 18 August 2021: Minister of State for Culture took part in the meeting (video conference) of SCO Ministers of Culture. 3 agreements of cooperation were finalized at the meeting.
- 17 September 2021: PM led the Indian delegation at the Summit of SCO Council of Heads of State, held in Dushanbe. He addressed the session via video link. PM also addressed the SCO-CSTO outreach session via video message. EAM attended the sessions in person.

27. **India-Russia-Japan trilateral consultations:** The first ever trilateral consultations between India, Russia, and Japan at track II level on cooperation in the Russian Far East were held on 20 January 2021 via DVC.

28. **NSG:** Russia has been a long standing supporter of India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group. Russia has expressed its strong support for India's membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in the 20th Bilateral Summit Joint Statement.

29. **UNSC:** On 09 August 2021, President Putin participated in a UNSC high-level open debate on "Enhancing Maritime Security: A Case for International Cooperation". It was chaired by PM and was organized during India's UNSC Presidency. Russia also supported organization as well as the outcomes of India's other two signature events at the UNSC viz. (a) UNSC Open Debate on "Protecting the Protectors: Technology and Peacekeeping" on 18 August 2021 and (b) UNSC Briefing on 'Threats to

International Peace and Security caused by Terrorist Acts'. Russia also reiterated its support to India's candidacy for the permanent membership of a reformed UN Security Council.

Defence Cooperation

30. India has longstanding and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of defence. India-Russia military technical cooperation has evolved from a buyer-seller framework to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence technologies and systems. The India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military & Military-Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-M&MTC) is co-chaired by Russian and Indian Defence Ministers and meets annually. Its last meeting was held in New Delhi on December 6, 2021.

Important recent events/engagements in the defence sector:

31. On June 21-24, 2021 Defence Secretary visited Moscow to participate in the 9th Moscow Conference on International Security. He also held a number of bilateral meetings to discuss issues of military and military-technical cooperation.

32. Chief of Defence Staff Late General Bipin Rawat visited Russia on September 22-24, 2021 to attend the conference of the Chiefs of General Staff of the SCO member states in Orenburg. He also witnessed the final validation exercise of multi-nation Exercise Peace Mission 2021 of SCO countries at Orenburg.

33. India-Russia joint training exercise INDRA-2021 was held in Volgograd, Russia from August 4-12, 2021 with the participation of 250 soldiers from each side. The inauguration ceremony of the exercises was presided over by Ambassador and Deputy Governor of Volgograd Region.

34. An Indian Army contingent participated in the multi-nation strategic drills, Zapad 2021, held from September 10-16, 2021 at Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia.

35. The seventh frigate of P1135.6 class, Tushil, for the Indian Navy was launched at Yantar Shipyard in Kaliningrad on October 28, 2021 in the presence of Ambassador and senior dignitaries of the Russian Federation.

Nuclear Energy

36. Russia is an important partner for India in the area of peaceful use of nuclear energy. It recognizes India as a country with advanced nuclear technology with an impeccable non-proliferation record. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant (KKNPP) Units 1 and 2 have already become operational and construction of Units 3 and 4 is going on. The first pouring of concrete for Units 5 was held on June 29, 2021 and for Unit 6 on December 20, 2021. Technical evaluation of the 2nd site is currently underway. DAE is also engaged in trilateral cooperation in the implementation of the Rooppur NPP construction project in Bangladesh along with the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh and Rosatom.

Space Cooperation

37. India-Russia cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space dates back to about four decades. Pursuant to the MoU between ISRO and Federal Space Agency of Russia 'ROSCOSMOS' on Joint Activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP), under the contract regarding support in "crew selection and space flight training", four astronauts were identified with Russian support for their training at the Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center. They successfully completed their training and have returned to India.

Science & Technology

38. The Working Group on Science and Technology functioning under IRIGC-TEC, the Integrated Long Term Programme (ILTP) and the Basic Science Cooperation Program are the three main institutional mechanisms for bilateral Science & Technology cooperation.

39. A number of new initiatives in the field of S&T include India-Russia Bridge to Innovation, cooperation in telemedicine, creation of a Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), GIAN, and the Russia-India Network (RIN) of Universities. Novel areas of cooperation are being explored in spheres like start-up, space technologies, arctic & the antarctic research, basic research & COVID-19 solutions.

40. In the field of student exchange, Atal Innovation Mission and SIRIUS conducted a Co-innovation and Hackathon on 07-21 November 20. This program focused on developing Technology Interventions through Web / Mobile Applications for grass root level solutions to big challenges like Machine Translation; Distance Education; Health & Well-being; Digital asset monitoring etc. Atal Innovation Mission and Indian students also took part in 2020 Festival Nauki Russia and 4 Indian students were declared as winners in different categories.

Think tanks events

41. Following events were organised between think tanks of India and Russia in 2020-21:

- May 15, 2020: A Joint Webinar on “Tracking the India-Russia relationship during the Covid 19 pandemic” was held between ORF and Valdai Club via DVC.
- July 15, 2020: Conference on “India-Russia Relations in the context of Post-Pandemic Global Order” was held between Indian Council for World Affairs and Russian International Affairs Council via DVC.
- 23 July, 2020: Webinar on “Russia-India Relations and the Pandemic Test of Global Governance” was held between ORF and BRICS Russia Expert Council National Committee on BRICS Research via DVC.
- 20 October 2020: Dialogue on India-Russia Strategic Partnership was held between [Indian Council for World Affairs and Russian International Affairs Council](#) via DVC.
- Raisina Dialogue 2021: Mr. Andrei Bystritsky, Chairman Valdai Discussion Club, and Ms. Anastasia Likhacheva, Director, CCEIS, Higher School of Economics, participated in the Raisina Dialogue 2021.

Other important events:

42. August 10, 2021: An event was organized in the Embassy to commemorate 50th anniversary of the Indo-Soviet Treaty of 1971 with the participation of former Russian diplomats with ties to India, Indologists, representatives from MFA, think tanks, journalists, etc.

Cultural cooperation

43. There is a strong tradition of Indian studies in Russia. Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre (JNCC), Moscow, maintains close cooperation with leading Russian institutions. About 20 Russian institutions, including leading universities and schools, regularly teach Hindi to about 1500 Russian students. Apart from Hindi, languages such as Tamil, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Sanskrit and Pali are taught in Russian Institutions. There is a strong interest among Russian people in Indian dance, music, yoga and Ayurveda. JNCC conducts classes in yoga, dance, music and Hindi for approximately 500 students every month.

44. Russia has been an active partner country for ITEC scholarship with around 118 Russians taking the benefit in 2019-20. The number of ICCR scholarships has been steadily growing every year.

Cooperation in the fight against Covid-19

45. India and Russia cooperate closely in the fight against Covid-19, including in vaccine trials and production, supply of critical medical supplies and repatriation of each other's citizens. SPUTNIK-V received DCGI approval for emergency use in India on April 13, 2021, making it the first foreign-made vaccine to be permitted for use in India, and third overall. Many leading Indian pharmaceutical companies continue discussion on the possible vaccine contenders including EpivacCorona being developed by Vector Institute, Chumakov vaccine, as well as the second vaccine being developed by Gamaleya Institute 'Sputnik Light'. During the peak of COVID, India ensured supplies of the Hydroxychloroquine (HCQS) drug from IPCA labs to Russia. Large quantities of other drugs like paracetamol and other antibiotics were also sustained during the first wave of pandemic in Russia. In 26 Vande Bharat Mission flights, about 81 tons of cargo comprising of pharmaceutical products were exported from India to Russia, to ensure continuous supply of critical exports to the country.

January 2022