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# TODAY'S ANALYSIS

## (09 July 2024)

### TOPICS TO BE COVERED

- PM MODI'S VISIT TO RUSSIA
- MCQs



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## PM MODI'S VISIT TO RUSSIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin on **July 8 and 9**. The two leaders have met a **total 16 times since Modi became Prime Minister**, but **not since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022**, provoking wide-ranging western sanctions.

### THE PREVIOUS VISITS BY THE LEADERS:

Modi last went to Russia for the **Eastern Economic Forum meeting in Vladivostok in September 2019**;

**Putin last visited India in December 2021** for the annual bilateral summit.

### THE MEETING

From India's perspective, Modi's visit is **part of the series of annual bilateral summits between the leaders of the two countries** that has been **ongoing since 2000**.

**Twenty-one summits**, the highest **institutionalised dialogue mechanism** in the **strategic partnership**, have so far taken place in India and Russia.

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Since their **last summit in December 2021**, Modi and Putin have had at least **10 telephone conversations** to review progress on bilateral cooperation and exchange views on regional and global issues of mutual interest.

## THE BROKEN TRADITION

In **choosing Russia for his first bilateral visit** after being sworn in, Modi has **broken with the tradition** of India's new Prime Minister travelling first to a neighbouring country, a template that he followed in both **June 2014 (Bhutan) and June 2019 (Maldives and Sri Lanka)**.

He **travelled to Italy last month**, but that was for a **multilateral meeting of G7 leaders**.

## SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TIMING

The **visit to Russia is a statement of the importance** New Delhi accords to its **relationship with Moscow**, and an underlining of this foreign policy priority.

**Modi will be meeting Putin** around the same time as **leaders of the 32 nations in the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)** gather in Washington DC from **July 9-11** to celebrate **75 years of the anti-Russia military alliance**.

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## THE BACKGROUND OF INDIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH RUSSIA

India's relationship with Russia is **seven decades old**. Veteran Indian policymakers carry fond memories of the **generosity and friendship of the USSR**, a goodwill that has been transferred to the relationship with Russia — even though the **transactional approach of the Kremlin today is qualitatively very different** from the worldview and priorities of the leadership of **the erstwhile Soviet Union**.

Over the years, as **India has diversified its relationships in a multi-polar world**, the India-Russia relationship has **stagnated in some areas and atrophied in others**.

**Defence is the strongest pillar** of the strategic partnership by far, with **nuclear and space cooperation** also occupying an important place. **Energy imports** have increased exponentially in the last few years.

## THE EVOLUTION OF DEFENCE PARTNERSHIP

**The USSR was & is India's main supplier of defence equipment** during the decades of the Cold War, and even now, **between 60 and 70 per cent of India's defence equipment is estimated to be of Russian and Soviet origin**.

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## FROM BUYER-SELLER TO CO DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS:

The defence cooperation has **evolved over time from a buyer-seller** framework to one involving joint R & D, co-development and joint production. **(1988)**

### ❖ JOINT DEVELOPMENT

- Brahmos Cruise missile.
- Sukhoi Su-30 MKI
- Iyushin/HAL
- KA 226 Helicopters.



### ❖ PURCHASES

- S-400 Triumf
- T.90s Bhishma.
- Akula-II
- INS Vikramaditya
- Mil Mi-17
- Tu 220M3 bombers.

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## HAS INDIA DIVERSIFIED ITS DEFENCE IMPORTS?

Over the last 25 years, **India has sought to look beyond Russia** — especially to the **United States, France, and Israel** for the supply of defence equipment.

However, **it still cannot afford to alienate Moscow**, particularly at a time when **Indian soldiers are in a standoff with the Chinese People's Liberation Army** along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

It is **essential for India to have a regular and reliable supply** of equipment and spares from Russia, and for Moscow to not share its sensitive defence technologies with Beijing.

## ARE RUSSIAN ARMS EXPORTS TO INDIA EXCLUSIVE?

**P S Raghavan**, chairman of **India's National Security Advisory Board** and a former **Indian Ambassador to Russia**, wrote in 2022,

**“President Putin has said that Russia does not transfer to any other country the military technologies shared with India. This is an assurance that India must constantly verify in respect of the weaponry and technologies that Moscow supplies to Beijing, as also the nature of their intelligence-sharing arrangements.”**

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## THE ENERGY TRADE

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, **India has been buying large amounts of Russian oil at a discount** to cushion the inflationary impact of rising crude prices.

The purchase of Russian crude has **pushed bilateral trade volumes beyond expectations and targets.** (\$30 billion by 2025).

### INDIA'S OVERALL TRADE WITH RUSSIA:

However, bilateral trade reached an all-time high of **\$65.70 billion in FY 2023-24**, according to data from the Department of Commerce. The balance of trade was heavily in Russia's favour, and India's **\$61.44 billion imports** were made up mostly by **Russian oil and petroleum products, fertilisers, mineral resources, precious stones and metals, and vegetable oils.**

## THE DIPLOMATIC TIGHTROPE

- The war has, however, **put India in a delicate diplomatic position** with its Western allies.

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- New Delhi has **walked the diplomatic tightrope**, not explicitly condemning the Russian invasion but calling for an international probe into the Bucha massacre in the early weeks of the war.
- India **expressed concern over threats of nuclear war** issued by Russian Leaders.
- India has **abstained from voting against Russia** in several resolutions at the United Nations Security Council.
- On his November 2022 visit, **Jaishankar had conveyed that India is on the side of “peace, respect for international law and support for the UN Charter”, and “strongly advocates a return to dialogue and diplomacy”.**
- New Delhi has reiterated that **respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity** of states is an essential element of the international order, which has been perceived as a euphemism for telling Russia that it has violated these basic norms.
- At their last in-person bilateral meeting in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in September 2022, Modi had told Putin that **“this is not the era of war”** — a line that was later used in the G20’s Bali Declaration that November,

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## INDIA AMIDST RUSSIA UKRAINE WAR

- There is a perception that **India is positioning itself as a neutral player** that could be a mediator between the two sides.
- **Modi is one of the few world leaders who have had phone conversations with both Putin and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine.**
- **Zelenskiy invited Modi to visit** during their meeting at the G7 in Italy, and there has been **some talk of the Prime Minister possibly travelling to Kyiv.**
- However, **Modi stayed away from the peace summit on Ukraine** hosted by Switzerland last month, and India did not sign the joint communique.
  - Russia called the summit a “waste of time” and did not attend, and India took the position that “only those options acceptable to both parties can lead to abiding peace”.

## CAN INDIA MEDIATE?

**Back in September 2022, Mexico had proposed that a committee including Modi, Pope Francis, and UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres** should try to mediate in the crisis.

**Guterres had reached out separately to India for help** in defusing the situation — Jaishankar had disclosed in September 2022 that India had weighed in with Russia on grain shipment from ports on the Black Sea.

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New Delhi had also conveyed to Moscow **global concerns about the safety of nuclear plants in Ukraine.**

## THE WEST & RUSSIA

Modi's visit to Russia comes **days after a series of meetings between India and the West.**

At the **G7**, Modi met, besides the leader of Ukraine, Western leaders.

US National Security Advisor **Jake Sullivan then visited New Delhi.** This was followed by a **visit by a US Congressional delegation led by Congressman Michael McCaul and former US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi** to meet the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala, and the top Indian Leadership.

## THE IRRITANT IN RELATIONSHIP

An **irritant in ties has been the presence of Indians in Russia who are believed to have been "misled" into joining the war in Ukraine.**

**Four Indians have been killed and 10 have returned, but another 40 are believed to be still in Russia.**

New Delhi has asked for their **early discharge, and the issue is expected to be discussed during Modi's visit.**

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## MCQs

1. Consider the following statements and mark the correct one:

1. India & Russia have ended their buyer seller relationship and are now co Development partners wrt defence production.

2. India & russia are referred to as All Weather Friends.

- (A) Only 1
- (B) Only 2
- (C) Both 1 & 2
- (D) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans. (B)**

2. Consider the statements and mark **how many** of them is/are correct?

- 1. India & Russia are having Summit level bilateral talks annually.
- 2. Russia is India's largest oil supplier for FY24.
- 3. Russia has a Trade Surplus wrt India.

- (A) Only 1 statement is correct.
- (B) Only 2 statements are correct.
- (C) All the statements are correct.
- (D) None of the statements are correct.

**Ans. (C)**

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3. Which of the following defence product is under joint development by India & Russia?

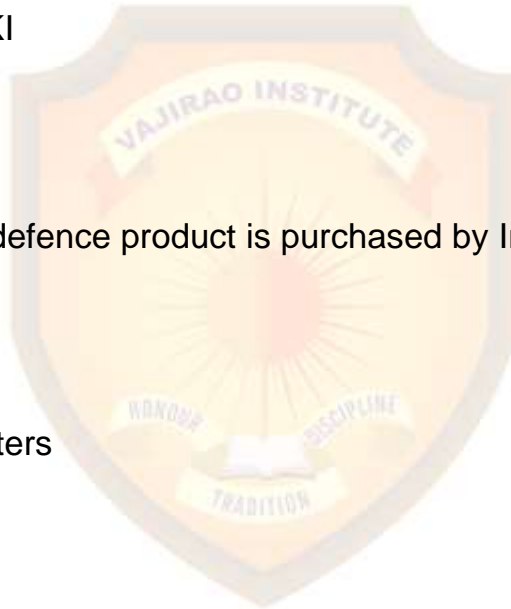
- (A) Akula-ii
- (B) S 400 triumf
- (C) T90s bhishma
- (D) Sukhoi Su 30 MKI

**Ans. (D)**

4. Which of the following defence product is purchased by India from Russia?

- (A) Brahmos
- (B) Mil Mi 17 helicopters
- (C) Ilyushin
- (D) None of the above

**Ans. (B)**



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