# India-Russia 2+2 Summit

## Why in news?

Russian president, Vladimir Putin‘s visit to India for India-Russia 2+2 Summit must be utilized to reset the India-Russia relationship amidst a series of differences.

## How has the relationship evolved over the years?

- **Historically** - For the past 70 years since Independence, Russia have been a time-tested ally and major defence supplier for India.
- During the cold war, the relationship was very strong and even gave rise to U.S. suspicions that India was an unofficial part of the Soviet camp.
- Notably, this was despite New Delhi’s affirmations that it was a leading member of the “Non-Aligned Movement” (NAM).
- **India’s Shift** - India has traditionally sought to maintain a balance between superpowers and refrained from joining groups for preserving its sovereignty.
- But in recent years this position appears to have shifted in favour of finding new allies, with changing power structures and security concerns.
- This change was amply in displayed when India actively pursued the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (involving US, India, Japan, and Australia).
- Notably, this has been conceptualised as security alliance with a vision of ensuring freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific region (targeted at China).
- **Russia’s Shift** - In parallel to these creeping changes, Russia’s interest towards Pakistan and China has increased and warmth with India decreased.
- Russia-Pakistan relationship is on an upward trajectory, with Russia signalling support for Pakistan’s candidature to the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- Joint military exercises between Russia and Pakistan held in 2017, is another major concern as Russia is a long-time trusted military partner for India.

## What differing opinion has been a concern?

- Difference of opinion over Af-Pak region
- Differences over America's Indo-Pacific strategy
- Continuing conflict between the Kremlin and the West
- Absence of a thriving commercial relationship between India and Russia- India-Russia annual trade in goods is stuck at about $10 billion
- India's closeness with the US and Russia's embrace of China

## What is expected at 21st annual India-Russia summit ?

- During the summit, PM Modi and the Russian President will review the prospects of bilateral relations and will discuss ways to further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two countries.
- Before the annual summit, India and Russia will also hold the first **2+2 dialogue** to be held at the level of the foreign and defence ministers.
- The agenda for the dialogue will cover political and defence issues of mutual interest.
- There is speculation about a new 10-year defence pact between the two countries.
- The two leaders are also expected to preside over the signing of an agreement on mutual logistical support for each other's armed forces.
- The two sides are also expected to focus on the situation in Afghanistan and the rising threat of terrorism including from groups like Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed.

## How does the US-Russia relation affect India?

- The Cold war era dispute has been a cause of concern for India till today and the Biden administration recognises the importance of ending this permanent crisis in US-Russian relations.
- The Biden administration, which is focused on winning the intensifying strategic competition with China, values a stable relationship with Russia.
- There have been fears over the US sanctions on the purchase of S-400 missiles by India.
- A less conflictual relationship between Washington and Moscow will be a huge relief for India.
- Delhi hopes that Washington appreciates its assessment that Russian neutrality is critical in balancing China in the east.

## References


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