India Russia 2+2 Summit – Part2

Why in news?

Russian President Vladimir Putin has concluded a short summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi, highlighting the “all-weather” partnership between the two countries.

What are the highlights of the summit?

- A clutch of 28 agreements were signed, 19 of which are commercial in nature, ranging from defence to scientific cooperation.
- **Defence**- The two nations signed an agreement for joint production of over 6 lakh AK-203 assault rifles at a manufacturing facility in Uttar Pradesh’s Amethi .
- Moscow has agreed on a 10-year military-technical plan that includes technology transfer to India.
- The two nations were ready to go ahead with the S-400 missile deal despite the threat of USA’s Countering America’s Adversaries Through Sanctions Act.
- **Afghanistan issue**- Russia has pitched for inducting India into the extended group on Afghanistan comprising the US, Russia, China and Pakistan.
- New Delhi has been kept out of meetings of this grouping earlier this year.
- **Nuclear energy**- Russia is building the 6,000-MW project at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu, which will have six VVER-1000 nuclear reactors, and is in talks with India to construct more reactors at a new site that is yet to be identified
- Both countries have an ambitious vision for building at least 10 more reactors with the highest standards of safety in India.
- **Others**- India and Russia are also putting their best foot forward to enhance collaboration in the fields of space, transport and connectivity, energy, trade and health.
- This friendship is being witnessed in the golden jubilee year of the landmark Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation which makes it more special.

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What are the challenges ahead?

- **Pandemic**- The pandemic has periodically crippled the growth of both economies and the threats to public health remain despite considerable progress with vaccinations.
- **Russia- U.S. ties**- The relationship between the two nations is showing signs of wearing away this as U.S. warns Russia that it will face sanctions if it seeks to occupy Ukraine.
- India has so far held firm to its mantra of 'strategic autonomy' in a multipolar world, but South Block will have to work hard to manage the tightrope act between Moscow and Washington.
- India and China have forged an uneasy truce across their Himalayan border in the aftermath of the Galwan valley exchange in 2020, yet there are numerous potential flashpoints that could send ties into a spiral again, including China's historically provocative actions in the South China Sea and its thinly veiled insecurity about India joining the Quad for Indo-Pacific security.
- **China factor**- Moscow has a managed to remain friends with both its mega-neighbours, but it will require a robust focus on confidence-boosting cooperative initiatives if India and Russia are to safely navigate the complex geopolitical landscape that they occupy.
- **Economic sphere**- The joint statement correctly noted that bilateral trade does not reflect the potential of strength and depth of India-Russia strategic partnership and stressed upon the need for greater efforts to raise bilateral trade to $30 billion by 2025.
- The Indo-Russian relationship is multifaceted but more ballast is needed on the economic front to realise the potential of a Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership.

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