India – Russia: Reviving Ties

What are the signs of severing relations between India and Russia?

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- Despite a deep political and diplomatic partnership for decades, the Indo-Russian relationship is beginning to show **early signs of rigor mortis.**
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- Ties are overwhelmingly dependent on the sale and, in recent years, joint production of weapons systems.
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- The only other area of cooperation that has reflected the “special and privileged” nature of the relationship is nuclear energy.
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- Beyond this, the trade and investment relationship is virtually non-existent.
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- Even in natural gas and oil, where flourishing trade should have existed given Russia’s abundant supply and India’s growing demand, very little exists beyond a few notable Indian investments in Russian oil and gas companies and fields.
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- The deals signed last year, if they come to fruition, could however boost mutual investments in this sector.
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How can their relations be sealed again?

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- One way is for India and Russia to direct their attention towards collaboration in new and emerging technologies.
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- There are **four broad areas** where the two countries can join forces.
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- **Quantum Computing** - uses subatomic particles for computing instead of standard binary bits, is poised to be the next great technological leap.
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- It is imperative for India to invest in necessary research and development.

There exists some indigenous expertise, but a credible support structure is lacking.
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- Russia has been making a concerted effort to pioneer quantum computing, primarily through the **Russian Quantum Centre.**
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- Significant collaboration in this sector will allow India access to the cutting-edge infrastructure necessary to indigenously develop this technology while providing Russia with ready market access for any quantum technologies it may develop in the future.
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- **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics** - Indian investments, whether public or private, in this sector have been negligible.
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- Despite a large talent pool, neither the Indian state nor the private sector has made a concerted effort to take advantage of this sector's possibilities.
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- Russia, on the other hand, has made great strides in the militarization of AI and robotics and in allied fields like drone warfare, which could be immensely beneficial for India.
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- A greater emphasis on AI and robotics will help extend the military relationship into the future.
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- **Cyber security** -. India has much to learn from the Russian experience.
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- The two countries have recently signed an agreement which establishes a **high-level dialogue on cyber issues** and provides for cooperation, coordination and exchange of information on counter-terrorism.
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- With India currently establishing a unified cyber agency, closer collaboration with Russia would immensely benefit Indian cyber preparedness.
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- **IT, Software & Big Data** - Russia's highly developed IT infrastructure is facing an increasing shortage of skilled labour.
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- Indian IT talent is well placed to take advantage of this shortfall. Russia could also be an outlet for Indian IT investment.
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- Each of the four areas listed above require only the most basic government intervention.
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- If a credible bilateral trade framework for these sectors can be put in place, there is enough momentum for market forces to drive collaboration.

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