Indo-Russia Sochi Bilateral

What is the issue?

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- Recently, the Indian PM and the Russian President met for an extended bilateral in Sochi in Russia.
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- This is seen as an appropriate recalibration to arrest the degradation of diplomatic ties in recent years.
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What issues are likely to have been discussed at Sochi?

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- The Sochi visit was aimed at resetting and rebalancing bilateral ties that have weakened over the past few years.
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- The special understanding between India and Russia has frayed, with India drifting closer to the U.S. and Russia to China.
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- **Defence -** India currently has orders of over $12 billion for Russian military hardware, which is pending delivery.
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- A new US law (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act) seeks to curtail trade with countries engaging its adversaries.
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- Hence, Modi's visit was significant to assure Mr. Putin that India is committed to the purchases and won't be deterred by US pressure.
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- **Regional -** Russia's recent military exercises and arms sales to Pakistan has got India cautious on Russia's changing outlook towards South Asia.
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- Also, the increasing engagement of Russians with the Afghani Taliban is another point of concern form the Indian perspective.
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- An outreach like Sochi would hence be beneficial to know each other's

political foresight and extract concession in some areas to address stress points.
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- **Global -** The global instability caused due to the US president Trump is another issue that necessitated increased Indo-Russia engagements.
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- An outreach to Russia in the backdrop of such inconsistencies emanating from the US would also help in correcting the westward tilt in India's diplomacy.
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What are the outcomes?

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- The Sochi meet with Russia and the previously held Wuhan meet with China were both said to be informal in nature.
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- These might have helped in dispelling apprehensions between countries, the post meet conferences have largely been devoid of significance.
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- While such meets are needed to break the ice, a noticeable shift in foreign policy can't happen without sufficient transparency.
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- Importantly, Indian and Russia have planned for greater cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, a region where India is already involved with US.
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- Notably, Quad (India, US, Japan, and Australia) is also envisioned as a security grouping for the Indo-Pacific region.
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Source: The Hindu

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