RIC Trilateral Foreign Minister's Meet – The stakes for India

Why in news?

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The 15th foreign ministerial meeting of the trilateral grouping, Russia, India and China (RIC) is to be held shortly.

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What is the significance of the meet for Indo-China relations?

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- It comes in the backdrop of months of tense relations between India & China on multiple issues.
- This would also be the first high profile Chinese official visit after Mr. Xi was assured a 2nd term with greater popularity.
- Notably, China blocking India's entry into NSG and tensions in Arunachal & Doklam plateau were the recent tension points.
- Beijing also continues to ignore India's objections to the China-Pakistan-Economic Corridor (CPEC).
- This passes through disputed PoK and thereby violates India's sovereignty.

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How is the current India - Russia relationship?

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- Russia and India have held the same positions on several of the key problems in international relations for many years now.
- Both intend to create an inclusive world order by strengthening global institutions like the United Nations.

- But economic sanctions by EU & US against Russia (due to the Crimean annexation) has already made Russia heavily dependent on Chinese trade.
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- Also, Russia's Afghan policy and its recent Pakistan outreach are disaligned to that of India's perspectives.
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- Hence, India and Russia need to strengthen their wanning relationship that has been built on mutual trust and confidence over decades.
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How does the future look?

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- China is expected to follow an assertive path in the geo-political & economic sphere in the near future.
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- Due to its financial might and economic heft, there is a possibility that China would unilaterally dominate the affairs of the RIC.
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- This calls for strong strategic thinking on India's & Russia's part to hinder China from unilaterally dominating affairs.
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- Chinese expansion into Central Asia and Eastern Europe appears to be a concern for Russia as these regions have traditionally its forte.
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- While building its relationship with China, Russia is wary of increasing Chinese dominance in the geopolitical order – India should capitalise on this.
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Source: Economic Times

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