



# Mega business summit during Putin's visit to be first of its kind

100 CEOs from each of the two countries will take part in the event

**D**ESPITE a strong strategic partnership, India-Russia trade ties are yet to live up to their full potential. In what is good news though, during President Vladimir Putin's visit to Delhi, 100 CEOs from each side will meet for a mega bilateral business summit, the first of its kind.

India and Russia have expanded their bilateral trade target to \$50 billion by 2025 from the current level of \$30 billion, a target achieved seven years earlier than the set timeframe. The two sides have also felt the need to develop bilateral cooperation in attracting companies to the special economic zones (SEZs) of both countries.

A representative office of Russian Export Center JSC will be opened in Mumbai this October. It will provide comprehensive support to Russian exporters entering the Indian market by organising targeted activities, advising in the field of logistics and customs regulation and providing information to Indian companies on Russian exporters to India, as well as facilitating financial support.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation and India's Ministry of Commerce and Industry are preparing a joint action strategy for enhancing bilateral trade and investment. The strategy will be presented during the India-Russia Annual Summit, officials told Sputnik News.

Moscow and Delhi will also soon test the implementation of the Green Corridor project before it is rolled out in a full-fledged manner. The Green Corridor project was mooted by Russia's Federal Customs Service. It has proposed that the two countries create a list of entrepreneurs or companies whose goods, on a reciprocal basis, will not have to pass through a customs inspection during border crossings, according to sources familiar with the subject.



Russia is already implementing the Green Corridor project with Finland and Turkey. Moscow has also signed such agreements with China and Italy. The Russian government considers the Green Corridor project as one of the most important levers for increasing mutual trade.

"The main advantage of the 'green corridor' is that goods being transported by entrepreneurs will not have to undergo customs inspection and examination when crossing the border — measures now commonly used to minimise risks. This also applies to documents. Samples and specimens will not be taken. The provision of original copies of documents is not needed, and so on," explained a person familiar with the matter.

Both countries would have lists of entrepreneurs or companies characterised as "bonafide participants in foreign economic activities." To include one's name on the registry, a number of criteria need to be met: the company must have no outstanding unpaid customs duties

and absence of rulings on administrative violations in the countries among which the project is being implemented.

The mechanism itself should work as follows — an electronic pre-declaration is issued for the cargo; it is assigned a unique individual number in accordance with the identifier in the "green corridor" registry. The customs inspector thus already knows what goods are being shipped and does not need to inspect them — then without stopping, the cargo passes through the customs clearance post.

In addition, it is assumed that for green corridor participants, there would be a separate post and a special inspector to serve them at the customs terminal.

Another project, the completion of which is being eagerly awaited, is the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a route which primarily involves moving freight from India, Iran, Azerbaijan and Russia via ship, rail, and road. It will substantially reduce the time taken and cost for transport of goods be-

tween India and Eurasia once fully functional and increase economic activities between India and the resource-rich Russia as well as European markets.

The INSTC has moved closer to implementation after India decided to join the TIR international customs convention.

A study conducted by the Federation of Freight Forwarders' Associations in India showed that the INSTC would be 30% cheaper and 40% shorter than the existing routes.

Meanwhile, Russia and India are also looking to strengthen cooperation in the field of civilian aircraft manufacturing and expand collaboration in the aluminum sector.

India has proposed to develop collaboration between the Geological Survey of India (GSI) and its Russian counterpart to explore deep-seated or concealed mineral deposits in India.

To provide India with world-class infrastructure, Russia has expressed interest in developing cooperation between Sinaru — Transport Machines JSC and Indian Railways in the field of supplying track equipment for the construction, repair, and maintenance of railways, as well as other projects in the field of railway engineering.

Diamonds have led to an increase in Indo-Russian trade. With the aim of upholding and promoting the sustainable growth of the market, both India and Russia are cooperating on the development of diamond marketing campaigns by the Diamond Producers Association (DPA).

Within the framework of multilateral international cooperation in the diamond sector, Delhi and Moscow have expressed mutual interest in establishing a permanent secretariat of the Kimberley Process (KP) and improving its peer review mechanism within discussions that are still ongoing in the KP.

MESSAGE  
**H.E. D.B. VENKATESH VARMA**  
AMBASSADOR OF INDIA  
TO THE RUSSIAN  
FEDERATION



I am very glad to know that The Indian Express group is planning to publish a Special Country Report on Russia, coinciding with the 19th India-Russia Bilateral Summit, to be held in India in October, 2018.

India's ties with Russia are unique and multidimensional. Our Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership has been built on the strong foundations of mutual trust, bilateral understanding and time-tested friendship. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President of the Russian Federation have met on numerous occasions reflecting the desire of both countries to maintain regular contact and frequent consultations on issues of contemporary relevance and global significance. Over the last several decades, our ties have greatly benefitted from the enormous goodwill that happily exists amongst the people of both countries. India stands fully committed to our unparalleled and unique partnership.

This initiative taken by The Indian Express group will help carry this positive message to millions of Indians.

## Putin to Modi: Our Efforts are Successful as Bilateral Trade Turnover is Growing



**R**USSIAN President Vladimir Putin has said that his close contacts with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi contribute to a significant increase in bilateral trade between the two countries.

"I recall your visit to Sochi; we had very good, kind, friendly and informative talks, and now we are preparing for my visit to India in October this year," Putin said at a meeting with Modi on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg earlier this year.

"Our efforts are successful as the bilateral trade turnover is growing. Last year it grew by 24% and in the first five months of this year by another 26%," the Russian president said.

Five emerging economies known as the BRICS — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — held the group's anniversary summit in Johannesburg in July.

Russian President Vladimir Putin also met China's Xi Jinping on the fringe of the summit to discuss international issues, the media reported. They held a bilateral meeting to exchange their views on the "current international situation" and major issues of common concern, China's state news agency Xinhua reported.

*Sammy (Manoj) Kotwani, president of Indian Business Alliance (IBA), spoke to us on expectations from President Putin's visit to India. Excerpts:*

**IBA in Russia has been playing a significant role in strengthening Indo-Russian relations; Could you elaborate on the activities?**

IBA has been playing a pivotal role in the Indo-Russian relationship. We do not have any presence of national chamber of commerce in Russia; this role is very well served by IBA. Started as a small group by Indian business people, today we boast a member base of more than 200. The reach and effectiveness of IBA is on a par with organisations like American Chamber of Commerce in India (AMCHAM), Association of European Businesses in the Russian Federation (AEB) and other such bodies. IBA interacts with the higher administration in Russia and strives for the development of Indian business and community in all aspects, including taxation, trade, antimonopoly, immigration, labour, healthcare, education, among others.

**What are your expectations from Russian President's visit to India and what discussions does IBA think should be given priority?**

Our expectation from the visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin is not only on an upgrade of the business and trade



Sammy Kotwani, Hon. President, Indian Business Alliance

cooperation with India, but also business activities between India and Russia. More Indian businesses should be invited to Russia and Russian companies should be persuaded to start business in India.

**What are the issues faced by Indian entrepreneurs in Russia and what would be the recommendation of IBA to both the governments to resolve them for speedy growth of**

**mutual trade and relations?**

The main concern is trade tariff. To boost trade between the two countries, there should be mutual understanding on tariffs on certain products without hurting the local producers. Amidst the prevailing global trade war, we need to protect our mutual interests. Another area of strategic interest is energy supply. With the global disruption in crude supply due to embargoes, it is very important to ensure the supplies and to have a dependable partner.

**Could you highlight the sectors in Russia which have the presence of Indian companies and what should be the focus segment that needs to be targeted?**

Indian companies are well established in the fields of pharmaceuticals and knitwear. But I feel that the real potential of our business still remains unexplored and that is in the areas of small & medium machine building industry, petrochemicals, food processing, agriculture, among others. Russian presence in India is required in the fields of composites, high technology, material science, information technology and defence spares.

## Russia earns praise for World Cup

**W**ITH the FIFA World Cup 2018 hosted by Russia turning out to be a grand success, the Russian Federation has evoked praise and appreciation for its organisation of the event.

Former captain of the Indian football team and one of the most legendary soccer players in the whole of South Asia, IM Vijayan, in an exclusive interview, appreciated "the warmth of the hosts who went out of their way to make the guests feel comfortable and at home."

Some of the guests had returned with sweet memories and some like him had even had the opportunity to watch the semi-finals live, he added.



Vijayan sounded especially excited about the kind of team departures the knockout round of the tournament witnessed.

IM Vijayan, known for his extraordi-

nary volleys, lighting fast pace and swift movement on the pitch, is one of the most successful players to have represented India on the international circuit. He made his debut for the national team in the year 1989 and wore Indian team colours at various international tournaments such as the Nehru Cup, World Cup qualifiers, SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) Cup and SAF Games.

The former Indian striker visited Russia to witness the World Cup semifinals, exuding hope that India would be playing in the FIFA World Cup soon.

"I am hopeful, the future looks very bright," the former captain observed.

## Roscosmos invites India to be a partner in manned space missions

*Company head also says a satellite grouping of Russia, India and China for earth's remote sensing is possible*

**R**USSIA has invited India to become a partner in training for manned space missions and in creating a satellite constellation for remote sensing of the earth, Roscosmos head Dmitry Rogozin told reporters in New Delhi.

"The Russian Federation may become India's partner in manned space missions, and today we confirmed our readiness to move forward in this direction. This work includes equipment, spacecraft's damage control and calculations, which are extremely important for avoiding emergency situations," Rogozin said after a meeting with National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India Ajit Kumar Doval.

"In general, it would be important for us not just to train Indian astronauts, be it in the Star City or another Russian centre. It would also be good for them to practise in real space. Today I put forward our proposal to the Indian side: if they have the desire, the determination and the budget, we are ready to provide training for first Indian cosmonauts and send them to the International Space Station on board a Russian spacecraft. Therefore, they can get the grasp of how the station works, what the real space is like and what they can face there," he continued.

Rogozin also said that Russia invited India to take part in a joint programme to create a satellite grouping for remote sensing of the earth.

"Roscosmos is ready to develop cooperation with India in the sphere of remote sensing of the earth, too. We know about the recent tragic



Roscosmos head Dmitry Rogozin

events in India, about people perishing in floods during the monsoon period. However, this threat can be countered if you have an orbital satellite grouping that can show you how negative processes develop," the Russian official said.

"At the first stage, we are ready to provide India with the data and the picture, so that our partners could make decisions in time to save people's lives and property. At the next stage, we are ready to create a joint satellite grouping for remote sensing of the earth," he went on.

The Roscosmos official said that a joint satellite grouping of Russia, India and China was possible.

"The same proposal was voiced to our Chinese partners. India could join it. In this case, the huge territory of Eurasia will be covered with a single satellite grouping for remote sensing of the earth. It will save thousands of lives during natural disasters, forecast the vegetation period of crops, as well as river overflows, forest fires and many other things," Rogozin added.