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Putin-Modi Summit: An attempt to build a new multi-polar world order?

When Russian President Vladimir Putin holds his summit meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi next week, they will be reinforcing a longstanding complex web of relationship which encompasses political, strategic and economic ties, giving heft to both

But the bigger question being asked by many is, will it also reinforce the idea of a multi-polar world that many see emerging? The summit, after all, comes at a time when the rise of China, trade wars, actual conflict in Europe, West Asia and nearer home in Asia is threatening the world order as we have known it since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Despite the changes all around, India's long-standing strategic comfort with Russia continues to shape New Delhi's foreign policy. Former Ambassador and author Rajiv Dogra noted that Moscow has repeatedly backed India at critical moments, "including by using its veto at the UN to shield New Delhi from pressure over Kashmir".

Similarly, Dogra noted "we have stood by Russia even after the collapse of the Soviet empire and more recently by continuing oil purchases from Moscow despite strong US pressure."

From the 1990s till the first decade of this century, the world saw a unipolar power scenario where USA was the sole global power. However, with the rise of China on the one hand and the emergence of a clutch of "middle powers" who include Russia, India, Germany and Indonesia, the world's power structure is no longer the simple bi-polar one that existed post Second World War II till the collapse of the Soviet Union, when Moscow and Washington where the two nodes of the world order.

From Asia to Africa to Europe, these Middle powers' refuse to fit into the world order which either of the two



most powerful countries in the world would like to see ordained.

While Russia's deepening alignment with China is widely acknowledged, Moscow remains wary of Beijing's longterm ambitions and sees India as an essential strategic hedge," Dogra pointed

New Delhi, for its part, has avoided condemning Russia over the Ukraine war and has resisted both American and European pressure to shift its stance. Putin's visit, occurring despite the ongoing conflict, underscores that Moscow still places significant value on its relationship with India.

Putin's trip, slated for December 4 –5, 2025, for the annual India-Russia Summit, will of course besides discussing global affairs, concentrate on advancing political, defence, nuclear and hightechnology cooperation, areas that have historically anchored bilateral ties between the two and have become even more crucial in a world fractured by tariff wars, and renewed global tensions.

Indian and Russian officials are preparing a series of defence agreements that would mark one of the most substantial military-technical packages in years. New Delhi is expected to push ahead with plans to acquire more \$-400 air defence systems after the platform's performance during Operation Sindoor reinforced its value to India's air defence

Maj Gen Arun Roye (Retd), a defense analyst who had worked in Russia, said,

"The Indian defence relationship with Russia is in large measure because of our need for committed and diversified defence partners, especially now that we live in a multi-polar world.

The two sides are also expected to expand the BrahMos joint venture by approving work to extend the missile's range, strengthening one of India's most successful examples of Indo-Russian defence cooperation.

Besides, the Indian Air Force's Su-30MKI fleet is likely to undergo a new round of upgrades, with discussions focused on integrating long-range RVV-BD air-to-air missiles that would significantly enhance India's beyond-visualrange capabilities.

More ambitious talks on licensed production and transfer of technology of the Su-57E stealth fighter in India may or may also be part of a deal sweetener. But it is to seen whether India will go in for an untested system.

Maj Gen Roye, who is also Director of strategic think tank CENERS-K, said, "Going in for the Su-57E stealth fighter will be a political decision, but we should certainly look at that offer very seriously and we need to continue joint research and development with Russians in defense and other security relat-

Civil nuclear cooperation forms the second major pillar of Putin's agenda, with both sides accelerating plans for new nuclear power projects.

Russia's Rosatom and India's Department of Atomic Energy are working on technical specifications for large VVER-1200 reactors and small modular reactors (SMRs), signalling a shift toward serial construction and higher localisation of components. India too has its own highly successful SMR programme. Cooperation between the two is a distinct possibility, officials who work in the sec-

Floating nuclear power plants and thorium-based designs under study add a layer of technological experimentation aligned with India's clean-energy ambi

India is also a signatory to the nuclear power plant that Russia is building in Bangladesh, and has helped with various infrastructural equipment in the

India has also been major buyer of Russian oil which sparked a trade war of sorts, with the US slapping a penal 50 per cent tariff on most Indian exports. However a proposed peace deal in Ukraine and fast tracking of trade talks with Washington means, that relations between the three are likely to be on even keel.

Rare earths and critical minerals, an area where supply chains are vulnerable to geopolitical pressure, are emerging as an additional strand of cooperation. India, looking to diversify beyond China, is considering joint ventures in Russia's mineral-rich Far East, along with scientific partnerships between institutions such as CSIR-IMMT and Russian research entities. Discussions include commercialising Russian rare earth processing technologies in India and setting up pilot projects that fit New Delhi's strategy to develop domestic magnet and materials manufacturing for electric vehicles, clean energy systems and defence applications.

For New Delhi, the visit reinforces the message that its relationship with Moscow remains relevant despite deepening ties with the United States and Eu-

India continues to see Russia as a critical source of defence technology, spare parts and energy cooperation at a time when global supply chains are increasingly politicised

Me'gong Festival Brings Global Icons to Garo Hills



Meghalaya is set to elevate its cultural calendar to new heights as the Me'gong Festival returns to Tura on December 5th and 6th with a global lineup led by

Yellow Claw to headline Meghalaya's flagship festival on Dec 5-6 pop-rock legend Richard

Richard Marx and

Marx and internationally acclaimed electronic duo Yellow Claw. The 2025 edition reinforces the State's rapidly expanding cultural economy framework envisioned by Conrad K. Sangma, Chief Minister, where festivals serve as engines for tourism, livelihoods, and community-led growth.

Me'gong has, over the years, transformed into one of Meghalaya's most influential cultural showcases. The 2024 edition



recorded over 3 lakh visitors across two days, one of the largest festival footfalls in the Northeast, reflecting its rising national and international appeal. This growing scale is central to the Chief Minister's vision of building an economic ecosystem fuelled by music, culture, creativity, and indigenous heritage. From hospitality and transport to artisans, food entrepreneurs, and local youth, the festival generates widespread economic opportunities and anchors the emergence of Garo Hills as a major cultural and tourism hub.

Festival set to return with a spectacular lineup

The Me'gong Festival is set to

return with a spectacular lineup, headlined by Bollywood sensations Kanika Kapoor and Neeti Mohan. They will be joined by an impressive roster of local bands, including Rough Road, Hoi Hoi Makbil, Haystack Ladies, G-Hills Finest, Crack Gang, and Ahaia. This diverse mix of local artists and global sensations promises to bring an electrifying energy to the stage for a memorable celebration in the Garo Hills Notably, the 2024 edition of the festival saw iconic Swedish rock band EU-ROPE performed for the first time in Northeast India.

Visitors can sayour authentic Garo cuisine

to Me'gong can savour authentic Garo cuisine, along with attending craft exhibitions, weaving workshops, bamboo artistry, and beaded jewellery that reflect the region's rich craftsmanship. Continuing its commitment to sustainability, the festival follows zero-plastic operations, community-led waste systems, and eco-friendly installations that align with Meghalaya's environmental ethos.

Me'gong plays a pivotal role in Meghalaya's holistic tourism development strategy, which focuses on expanding infrastructure, empowering community tourism, and ensuring equitable benefits across all regions. The Garo Hills, once an underexplored destination, have rapidly emerged as a vibrant cultural and adventure tourism hotspot, owing significantly to Me'gong's national and global visibility.

With world-renowned performers, indigenous cultural experiences, sustainable practices, and a vibrant community-driven ecosystem, Me'gong Festival 2025 is set to once again turn the Garo Hills into a global cultural stage. Updates on ticketing, schedules, and festival highlights will be available on the Meghalaya Tourism website and official social media platforms.

This December, Meghalaya invites visitors from across India and the world to witness the Garo Hills at their cultural, creative, and celebratory best.

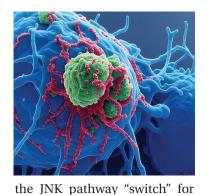
New drug to bypass resistance in deadly childhood cancer

have identified a drug that can help overcome treatment resistance in relapsed neuroblastoma — the deadly childhood

The discovery could improve neuroblastoma treatment the most common solid tumour in children outside the brain — which currently claims nine out of 10 young patients who experience recurrence, Xinhua news agency reported

According to Australia's Garvan Institute of Medical Research, the drug combination can bypass the cellular defences these tumours develop that lead to relapse. The team showed that the approved lymphoma drug — romidepsin – triggers neuroblastoma cell death via alternative pathways, bypassing blocked routes to improve chemotherapy-resistant cases in children.

Researchers found standard chemotherapy drugs rely on



cell death. In relapsed tumours, this switch has often stopped working, meaning treatments are no longer effective.

The findings made in animal models showed that romidepsin combined with standard chemotherapy halts tu-mour growth via alternative cell-death pathways, bypassing the blocked JNK pathway common in resistant cases.

The combo reduced tumour growth, extended survival, and allowed lower chemo doses,

potentially reducing side effects for young children, according to the findings published in Science Advances.

"Finding a way to overcome the resistant state of relapsed high-risk neuroblastomas has been a major goal for my lab," said David Croucher, Associate Professor at the Garvan Insti-

"These tumours can be highly resistant to chemotherapy - and the statistics once patients get to that point are devastating for families," he added.

Romidepsin is already approved for use in other cancers and has been tested for safety in children, which could potentially accelerate the development of the drug as a new treatment option for neuroblastoma. However, any clinical application requires further testing and clinical trials to establish the combination's safety and efficacy in neuroblastoma, Croucher said.

Ayurveda offers personalised approach to tackle obesity, metabolic disorders: Ayush Minister

Ayurveda offers personalised approach to tackle obesity and metabolic disorders, said Prataprao Jadhav, Minister of State (IC) for Ayush, on Saturday. In a bid to strengthen research-driven integrative healthcare and advance treatment for obesity and metabolic syndrome, the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), Ministry of Ayush, through its Central Ayurveda Research Institute (CARI), Bengaluru, is organising a two-day International Conference on Ayurveda and integrative approaches to

tackle the conditions. "India continues to strengthen its work in integrative healthcare, and Ayurveda is central to this transformation. Obesity and metabolic disorders are among the most pressing public-health challenges of our time. This conference reflects our resolve to strengthen evidence-based approaches that combine the knowledge of Ayurveda with the rigor of modern medical science," said Jad-"The Government of India is committed to promoting research, innovation, and interdisciplinary

collaboration to enhance global



health outcomes," he added. The scientific event will be held from December 1-2 at the A.V. Rama Rao Auditorium, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru. Organised in collaboration with the IISc and NIMHANS, the conference seeks to address the rising global burden of obesity and metabolic syndrome through evidence-based Ayurvedic and integrative medical approaches.

"The rising burden of metabolic diseases demands collaborative, science-driven solutions. Ayurveda offers a holistic, preventive, and personalised approach, which becomes even more powerful when integrated with contemporary biomedical advancements. This conference is an important step towards expanding

India's leadership in integrative research, strengthening clinical evidence, and shaping future health policies," said Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush. "This conference is designed to bridge traditional Ayurvedic knowledge with cutting-edge biomedical research through evidencebased dialogue. The outcomes will contribute meaningfully to integrative care frameworks, translational research, and global health policy, added Dr. Rabinarayan Acharya, Director General, CCRAS

The conference will bring together leading experts from Ayurveda modern medicine, life sciences, and public health from India and abroad The academic programme features plenary sessions, parallel scientific sessions, and a symposium on translational science and integrative management of type-2 diabetes, obesity, and dyslipidemia. More than 700 delegates are expected to participate, with 267 oral presentations, 120 virtual paper presentations, 70 posters, and 16 keynote and plenary talks by eminent scientists, clinicians, and researchers.