

# 'COOPERATION IN RUSSIAN FAR EAST IS A PRIORITY'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Russia

A file photo of PM Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

India sees Russia as a long-term, reliable partner and at the upcoming bilateral summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin, both nations are set to add new areas of cooperation beyond the traditional ones, said Indian envoy in Russia D.B. Venkatesh Varma.

“Russian Far East is a priority for us, it’s a priority for Russia. We see commonalities in terms of economic cooperation and investment. You can expect some major announcements on how India-Russia relations are going to be diversified. And cooperation in the Russian Far East will be a major component of that diversification,” Mr. Varma told a small group of journalists from New Delhi at the Indian Embassy in Moscow.

Mr. Modi has been invited as the chief guest of the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok by Mr. Putin on September 5. Mr. Varma said the summit, to be held on the sidelines of the EEF, would not only consolidate traditional areas of cooperation—defence, nuclear, space and energy—but also inter-regional cooperation.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar arrived in Moscow on Tuesday for talks with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov to finalise preparations for the summit meeting. He will speak at the Valdai discussion club on Indo-Pacific and will hold discussions with Mr. Lavrov on Wednesday.

Mr. Varma said the special and privileged partnership between the two countries was poised for a “new leap forward”. He pointed to the “summer of intense activity” between the two countries.

Minister of Oil and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan will be in Moscow later this week, which officials said was for negotiations on expansion of energy cooperation, including long-term gas supplies. Next week, India and Russia are likely to seal a military logistics support agreement, the Agreement on Reciprocal Logistics Support (ARLS).

*( The writer is in Moscow on the invitation of the Russian government for the MAKS-2019 air show )*

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