

# INDIA HOLDS TALKS WITH RUSSIA, JAPAN FOR TRILATERAL COOPERATION IN TRANSPORT, COAL MINING AMONG OTHERS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India's Foreign Policy evolution and changes

**New Delhi:** [India](#), Japan and [Russia](#) have identified energy, coal mining, transport and logistics, maritime connectivity, diamond processing, pharmaceuticals and healthcare among areas of potential cooperation in the Russian Far East, a statement after talks among the three countries said on Wednesday.

The talks among representatives of the three countries, that took place last week, happened for the first time, the statement said adding that it was at the Track II or semi official level.

It may be seen as an attempt by India and Japan – both part of the grouping loosely known as the Quad along with the US and Australia -- to engage Russia. Russia and China – who have developed strong ties in recent years – are opposed to the Quad seen as a US led initiative and aimed at containing Beijing.

The first round of the India-Japan-Russia was hosted by the Indian government backed Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) think tank with Japan's Economic Research Institute for Northeast Asia (ERINA) and Russia's Far East Investment and Export Agency (FEIEA) attending as co-partners.

"The focus of the first dialogue was on the exchange of views and information among the three sides on their respective outlook on the economic opportunities in the Russian Far East," the statement said.

"The participants agreed that it is in the three countries' shared interest to promote the trilateral framework to harness economic opportunities in the Russian Far East for mutual benefit," it said. The three identified energy, coal mining, transport and logistics, maritime connectivity, diamond processing, agro-industry, forestry, pharmaceuticals, healthcare, high technology, scientific research, capacity building, tourism, humanitarian fields as potential areas of trilateral cooperation, it said.

All three countries welcomed their growing links in the Arctic, "recognising the inter-connected nature of regional development alongside the Russian Far East," it said.

"It was suggested to explore the potential for trilateral partnership in the development of the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route through the promotion of investment and trade linkages," the statement said.

The three countries agreed that their business communities were important to identify areas and concrete projects for trilateral cooperation and sought the appointment of representatives to carry forward the economic dialogue, it added.

The talks on cooperation in the Russia Far East come little more than a year after after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the region in September 2019. During the visit, Modi pledged \$1 billion dollars for the development of the Russian Far East – a vast region comprising roughly a third of Russia's territory and rich in natural resources including minerals, hydrocarbons, timber and fish but economically under developed. A harsh climate, sparse population,

increasing migration from the area, poor infrastructure and lack of connectivity are seen as some of the factors contributing to the region remaining underdeveloped. In recent years, China too has shown an interest in the region which borders it and is rich in minerals.

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