

# XI, PUTIN THINK BIG ON LIFTING RUSSIA'S 'FAR EAST'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: Effect of policies and politics of developed countries on India's interests

Xi Jinping and his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Vladivostok. AFP/SERGEI CHIRIKOV

China and Russia are signalling their intent of working together to link the Russian 'far east' with the Asia-Pacific as part of a larger Eurasian integration plan.

Chinese President Xi Jinping arrived on Tuesday in Vladivostok — a coastal city in Russia's resource-rich 'far east' — to discuss plans with his Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin for developing the region.

## Economic forum

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his South Korean counterpart Lee Nak-yeon have also marked their presence at the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF), which Mr. Putin is hosting. Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu is leading an Indian delegation to the forum. Observers say that his visit is part of a fresh round of New Delhi's engagement with Moscow, which will culminate in October when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host Mr. Putin for the India-Russia annual summit.

## Putin's regional plan

Analysts say that presence of the two leaders who have arrived from Tokyo and Seoul demonstrates the interest of key countries of the Asia-Pacific in realising Mr. Putin's ambitious regional plan, which has China and other countries, including India, as possible partners.

The Vladivostok conclave is being held amid a massive ongoing Russia-China joint military exercise — an indication of Beijing and Moscow's intent to deter a military strike on Eurasia's core. The Vostok-2018 is involving a mammoth 3,00,000 troops.

On Tuesday, Russia-China Investment Fund (RCIF) — a joint undertaking of the state-owned China Investment Corporation and Russian sovereign wealth fund — announced that a group of Russian and Chinese businesses are considering 73 joint investment projects, with a cumulative value of more than \$100 billion.

According to Russian media, Russia and China are also expected to discuss reconstruction in Syria. Russia's Tass news agency quoted Russia's Ambassador in China Andrei Denisov as saying on the sidelines of the EEF that Moscow and Beijing are unlikely to compete in the economic recovery of Syria.

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