



Ashish Singh, Strategic Affairs Editor, NewsX (centre) is seen moderating a session on Indo-UK military ties with General Bipin Rawat, Chairman CISC (left) and Admiral Tim Fraser CB, Vice Chief of the Defence Staff, UK (right).



(From left) Vice Admiral G. Ashok Kumar-Vice Chief, Indian Navy, Moderator Lt. Gen. Subrata Saha, Member-Nation Security Advisory Board, Lt. Gen. S.S. Hasabnis-Deputy Chief, Indian Army, Air Marshal Sandeep Singh, Deputy Chief, Indian Air Force at the summit.

# India, Russia poised to take ties to new heights

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The bilateral relationship between India and Russia—be it military, trade or international cooperation—has been quite old and the two

importance of strengthening the United Nations and resolving global and regional challenges and conflicts collectively by political means according to the international law and the UN charter, he added.

cost power for local customers. The third and fourth ones are under construction, with supply of their critical equipment being underway. Necessary preparations to start works related to units 5 and 6 are already going on.



Roman Babushkin, Charge d'Affaires, Russia, at the summit.

countries are willing to take it to new heights.

Speaking at the “Indian Defence & Airspace Summit”, Deputy Chief Mission of Russian Embassy Roman Babushkin said advanced level of Russian-Indian military and technical cooperation historically constitute one of the pillars of the strategic partnership between the two countries. This, according to him, is a two ways movement based on extraordinary mutual interest proceeding from the fact that the Indian Army is equipped with about 70% of the hardware provided by the Soviet Union and Russia.

Talking about the international cooperation, he said the two countries are actively promoting a truly multi-polar world with greater role of major developing countering and emerging economies in the global governance. At the same time, we are absolutely like-minded in terms of vital

“Dialogue in the Russia-India-China format, which we regard as a mechanism of strengthening confidence, mutual understanding and friendship between major Eurasian states has good potential. The format received a new impetus at the meetings of the troika leaders on the sidelines of the two G20 summits and confirmed the identity of similarity of the three country positions on typical issues on the global agenda,” Babushkin said.

India and Russia have cooperation in many areas. One of them is the nuclear power cooperation. Russia, as of now, is the only foreign country in India being in practical terms, involved in the construction of nuclear reactors. The flagship project—the Russian designed Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant based in Tamil Nadu—comprises of six blocks. The first two units are already operational, generating low

The Russian envoy said the two countries are committed to ensure trade facilitation through the extended use of national currencies. “In mutual payments, national currencies volumes have increased five-fold in the recent years – up to 32% in 2018. Both our countries are deeply engaged in the dedicated financial dialogue in the framework of the bilateral Working Group on Banking and Financial Matters as well as in BRICS,” he said.

The measures, according to him, being undertaken in this regard would definitely make our goal to achieve the turnover up to \$30 billion by 2025. “Importantly, we have signed the Action Strategy for advancing bilateral Trade-Economic and Investment Cooperation at the Vladivostok Summit, which would further streamline our dedicated efforts,” he pointed out.



A view of the VVIPs at the summit.

# ‘India, France bilateral ties marked by trust’

That explains France’s steadfast support for India’s bid for a permanent seat on the UNSC, says French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain.



H.E. French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain addressing the summit.

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Emmanuel Lenain, during the “Indian Defence & Aerospace Summit”, organised by the “NewsX” channel and *The Sunday Guardian* (ITV Network), here on Saturday. He said: “As the Indo-Pacific space started undergoing reconfiguration, we realised that India and France had commonalities not only because both belong to this region, but also because of their security and economic interests. I can tell you that enhancing the Indo-Pacific partnership will be at the heart of my mission in India.”

“Because, above all, we share the same vision for this region: the guarantee of freedom and safety of navigation, stability through the emergence of a multi-polar order, prosperity through sustainable development projects,” the French Ambassador said.

Recalling the foundation of this partnership, he said: “It was, in fact, in the areas of defence and aerospace that we began to build this relationship of trust, immediately after India became an

Similar cooperation involving production in India was developed in the 1960s on light helicopters, radars, anti-tank missiles and other defence and aerospace technologies.”

Our strategic partnership, he said, has grown to enable the two countries to better understand new threats—combating terrorism, maritime security and cyberspace. “All these areas have their dedicated dialogues at an appropriate level, which allows for an operational review of the cooperation,” he said.

“This strategic partnership has a vision. Most of our cooperation (terrorism, maritime and space security, cyberspace and digital technology) are now framed by joint statements that recognise the converging interests of our two countries and chart out the course we want to follow together. This strategic partnership has provided excellent foundations for our bilateral relations, which are solid and marked by trust. This is what explains our steadfast support for India’s bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council,” he added. Stressing the need for the

IOR), we are even building capacity with the ongoing project of CNES and ISRO on a constellation of satellites for maritime surveillance,” he said.

Stressing the need to increase exchanges on cyber defence and space defence, he said the two countries share their threat assessment and their response options to move towards a coordinated strategy. “Our two countries are engaged in a process of reflection and structuring of their stance on these issues: this is precisely the moment when we have to open up a dialogue and seek common courses of action. This year’s restart of the UN process to promote stability and security in cyberspace gives us a platform to accent its benefits,” he added.

Regardless of the stakes, adherence to the “old” values that characterise our two democracies, including the protection of individual freedoms and respect for the rule of law, should be our guide when we look for answers to “new” challenges—as in cyberspace—or renewed challenges, as in the fight against terrorism, the French Ambassador said.



(L-R) Ashish Singh, Strategic Affairs Editor, NewsX, Admiral Karambir Singh, Chief of the Naval Staff, Lt. Gen. M.N. Narvane, Vice Chief, Indian Army, Defence Secretary Dr Ajay Kumar, and Kartikeya Sharma, Founder, ITV Network, at the summit.



(L-R) Mats Palmberg, Saab, Ola Rignell, MD, Saab India, Sundar Mulchandani, MD, Argus, Ashish Talwar, Vice President, Mahindra Tech, along with other delegates at the summit.



Prof M.D. Nalapatt, Editorial Director, ITV Network, with French Ambassador Emmanuel Lenain at the summit.



Tahir Qadiry, Charge d'Affaires, Afghanistan.

# ‘Afghan govt recapturing villages from the Taliban’

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Tahir Qadiry, Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Afghanistan, began his speech at the Indian Defence & Aerospace Summit by saying, “Imagining India without Afghanistan and Afghanistan without India is impossible”, as he emphasised.

*Qadiry thanked India for supporting several significant projects in Afghanistan aimed at winning the hearts and minds of people there. One of the biggest investments of India in Afghanistan has been education.*

sised how their relations were as rooted in history and civilisational linkages as in modern, day-to-day dynamics.

“I came across a nice video of former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, where he sharing his experiences while in Ghazni. Vajpayee was surprised to find a hotel named Kanishka, a king who had ruled most of India. When he asked the hotel owner who this Kanishka was, he was told that the king was their forefather. To this Vajpayee said that perhaps our ancestors were the same. People of Afghanistan might have changed their way of worship but not their culture and tradition,” said Qadiry.

The Chargé d’Affaires of the Afghan Embassy recalled this story to showcase the depth of the India-Afghanistan relations. “This explains why India was the first country with which Afghanistan signed a strategic alliance in 2011, which is a blueprint for cooperation between the two countries.”

Qadiry thanked India for supporting several significant projects in Afghanistan aimed at winning the hearts and minds of people there. One of the biggest investments of India in Afghanistan has been education. “Since 2003, more than 60,000 Afghan students have been graduated from India. So, we have some of the brightest people among our ministers, think tanks, professors and civil servants are educated in India. Cur-

rently, 16,000 students are studying in India. India also gives scholarships Afghan students.”

The second biggest contribution, according to Qadiry, was India’s constant solidarity with Afghan democracy. “By deciding to build the Parliament building in Kabul, India has helped entrench democracy in Af-

ghanistan,” he said, adding how India has implemented 200 other projects, including the biggest water dam in Afghanistan, Salma Dam.

But India’s relations with Afghanistan isn’t just confined to education and infrastructure. “Military-wise, a week ago, India handed over the last helicopters to Afghanistan, total 7-8 helicopters. Also, India treats wounded Afghan soldiers,” he said.

Qadiry believed this would help the Afghanistan government effectively push back the Taliban. “The handing over of helicopters from our great friend India will further change the dynamics in our favour,” he said as he admitted that challenges still exist in tackling terror. “Yes, there are challenges because we are at the frontline of fighting terrorism. Our people are victims of that. The Taliban, despite a lot of efforts, have not been able to capture any main cities in Afghanistan. In fact, we are now recapturing some of the villages from them.”

The Chargé d’Affaires, Embassy of Afghanistan, also stated that the perception of Afghans in India of being a Kabuliwala must change. “Afghanistan has changed a lot. We are now developing economically very fast,” he said as he reminded how India is the prime destination for Afghan goods and products. “In 2017-18, the value of bilateral trade has reached \$1 billion. The same period saw 48% increase in Afghan export to India,” he added.