

Putin and Modi announce expansion of trade ties amid Trump pressure

By RAJESH ROY & AIJAZ HUSSAIN/AP
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Russian President Vladimir Putin held talks with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday at an annual summit and agreed to diversify mutual economic ties, as the United States presses India to revise its decades-old partnership with Russia.

The 23rd Russia-India Summit comes at a pivotal moment as the US pushes for a Ukraine peace deal while seeking global cooperation. It will test New Delhi's efforts to balance relations with Moscow and Washington as the nearly four-year war in Ukraine grinds on.

Putin was received by Modi at an airport in New Delhi on Thursday. The Indian leader gave Putin a bear hug and a tight handshake with the gusto of an old friend.

Leaders outline Russia-India expanding ties

After the talks, Putin and Modi announced that India and Russia have finalised an economic cooperation programme until 2030, which will help diversify mutual businesses to boost annual trade to \$100 billion by 2030. They also emphasized strong energy ties.

Bilateral trade between the two countries stood at \$68.7 billion in the last fiscal year ended March. The trade is heavily skewed in favor of Russia with deep deficits for India, which it is looking to bridge by pushing exports.

"To achieve this significant goal, a programme for the development of Russian-Indian economic cooperation until 2030 has been agreed upon," Putin said.

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AP/RSS

Russian President Vladimir Putin (centre) shakes hands with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi as President Droupadi Murmu looks on during a ceremonial reception at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi, India, on Friday.

Nepal 'cannot end' malaria until India does so

Unregulated cross-border movement fuels malaria cases in Nepal, warns latest WHO report.

By ARJUN POUDEL

KATHMANDU, DEC 5

Nepal's fight against malaria is complicated by the ongoing presence of the disease in India, experts say, as the latest report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) shows a sharp increase in locally transmitted cases and two deaths in Nepal in 2024.

Besides the two deaths, 37 people were infected with locally transmitted malaria in Nepal last year, the WHO

report showed. The "World malaria report 2025" by UN's apex health body published on Thursday shows that cases of indigenous malaria or locally transmitted malaria rose 146.7 percent in 2024 compared to 2023, when only 15 cases of indigenous malaria were detected and no one died.

What has alarmed doctors as well as entomologists is that a more than two-fold rise in locally transmitted cases and deaths could hinder the country's efforts to achieve elimina-

tion status for the disease, which is potentially fatal.

"If there are deaths despite the availability of testing and effective treatment throughout the country, it is a serious issue," said Dr Yasho Vardhan Pradhan, former director general at the department of Health Services. "How is it possible to achieve the elimination goal, if deaths and new cases of locally transmitted malaria keep rising?"

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