



India and Russia in Central Asia: Growing Convergence of Interests?

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Abstract: Over the decades, the partnership between India and Russia has grown stronger, enabling them to undertake combined efforts for development and engagement in neighbouring regions and beyond. Central Asia, which is a common neighbourhood of both India and Russia, has historically and culturally had close relations with the two countries. Given India's status as a major rising economy and Russia's powerful presence with deep ties to the region, the two countries can work together to deepen engagement with Central Asia. The region has high economic, political, connectivity and cultural potential, and its significance has increased amidst the current international political and economic turmoil. This paper aims to identify the areas of convergence between India and Russia for practical cooperation both at the bilateral and regional levels to further strengthen their ties and contribute to the development of their common neighbourhood. Bilateral cooperation between India and Russia in Central Asia has great potential and is of significant interest. Trilateral cooperation of India and Russia with Central Asian republics has not been extensively researched and could emerge as a new area of interest. The paper explores this phenomenon in the context of economic and educational cooperation among the three sides, which can provide another anchor for regional stability, not only in Central Asia but also in the wider region.

Keywords: India-Russia relations, Central Asia, inter-regional cooperation, development.

For centuries, Central Asia has served as a common geographical region between the Indian subcontinent and the Russian landmass, facilitating the bi-directional transfer of ideas, knowledge, beliefs, goods, and people (Singh 2006). During the 19th century, India under British colonial rule and Tsarist Russia, as the two expanding empires, implemented policies aimed at monitoring and countering each other in the frontier regions of Afghanistan and Central Asia (Cooley 2012). The direct land

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linkages between South Asia and Central Asia were subsequently disrupted due to the partition of the subcontinent in the mid-20th century and the impact of Cold War politics on South Asia and Eurasia. However, India maintained its interactions with the Central Asian people through Moscow. As a significant privilege granted by the USSR to India, in the 1980s it established a consulate in Tashkent, which likely played a crucial role in developing India's relations with the five independent countries that constitute modern-day Central Asia: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic relations with all Central Asian countries soon after their independence (Dash 2012).

The independence of the five Central Asian states in the early 1990s allowed the region to reclaim its destiny and place it in the hands of its people. After a period of initial difficulties and consolidation, these republics stabilized themselves. In pursuit of economic development and international relations, they have adopted a multi-vector foreign policy approach, providing a flexible framework to establish beneficial relationships with international organizations, countries in Eurasia, South Asia, and other parts of the world (Patnaik, Tulsiram 2012).

For instance, Turkmenistan adopted a policy of "permanent neutrality" in its approach to international engagement. Unlike its Central Asian neighbors, the country initially did not join any regional political or military blocs, instead enhancing its economic interactions with regional and international actors (Hiro 2009: 210-215). However, following the elections in March 2022, the newly-elected President of Turkmenistan, Serdar Berdimuhamedov, elevated the country's strategic partnership with China to a "comprehensive strategic partnership" during his visit to Beijing in January 2023¹. Additionally, Ashgabat has reportedly expressed its commitment to upgrading its association with the Organization of Turkic States². It appears that Turkmenistan, within the framework of its policy of "permanent neutrality", is expanding its international engagements.

Central Asia is a vast area with a relatively small population. Despite the persistent security challenge from the situation in Afghanistan, which shares borders with three Central Asian countries, the region has largely remained stable over the past three decades. Russia maintains significant influence in Central Asia through various means and is considered an important actor in providing security in the region (Deshpande 2015). With its strong military presence in Central Asia through bilateral agreements, including its forces in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, Russia provides the necessary stability not only in Central Asia but also in the wider Eurasia.

¹ Chinese, Turkmen presidents hold talks, elevating ties to comprehensive strategic partnership. 2023. *Xinhua*. 6 January. Available at: https://english.www.gov.cn/news/topnews/202301/06/content_WS63b7e8bbc6d0a757729e52fc.html (accessed 20.04.2023).

² Khatamzadeh K. 2023. Turkmenistan expresses its commitment to becoming full member of Organization of Turkic States. *Trend news agency*. 17 March. Available at: <https://en.trend.az/casia/turkmenistan/3724692.html> (accessed 20.04.2023)

Russia's position as a large economy in the region makes it an attractive destination for millions of economic migrants from Central Asia, who seek employment opportunities. Additionally, a significant number of people from the region pursue higher education and professional training in various Russian cities. For these reasons, proficiency in the Russian language is a major advantage for Central Asian individuals. The high level of trust between Russia and the Central Asian states is considered to be the mainstay of Russia's influence in the region.

However, the recent actions taken by Russia in regards to Crimea and its initiation of a "special military operation" in Ukraine in February 2022 have caused concern in some parts of Central Asia. The conflict has been generally viewed negatively by the people of the region³. At a time when regional economies are attempting to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the conflict has also affected the income of migrants from the region who work in Russia and send remittances back home. Furthermore, the sanctions imposed by Western nations on Russia have caused disruptions in the export of natural resources, including hydrocarbons, to global markets. In this context, Russia may want to re-examine its strategy in Central Asia and find a dependable partner with a positive reputation among the common people in the region.

An inter-regional partnership among India, Russia, and Central Asian countries has the potential to bring about beneficial outcomes for all stakeholders (Joy 2007). The historical understanding between India and Russia, their shared perspective on international and regional developments, cultural affinity, and strong goodwill among their people provide a robust foundation upon which to build a wider inter-regional cooperation (Warikoo 2018).

India-Russia relations

India-Russia "special and privileged strategic partnership" is characterized by common understanding and convergence of views on issues of mutual importance, boosting cooperation in various areas ranging from defence, security and economy to science and culture. Although the relationship has experienced some ups and downs over time, it has always bounced back with greater vigour and energy to chart a new course. The India-Russia relationship has been institutionalised at the highest political level through the leaders' summit, which has been ongoing for about two decades without major interruptions. In addition, there are various other mechanisms at the political and official level to constantly engage with each other.

³ Sharifli Y., Kao Ch.-L., Derbishova B. Russia's War in Ukraine and Its Impact on Central Asia. *The Diplomat*. 24 October 2022. Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/10/russias-war-in-ukraine-and-its-impact-on-central-asia/> (accessed 20.04.2023).

Recently, there has been an upward trajectory in Russian-Indian economic ties, especially after the start of the conflict in Ukraine. In 2022, the bilateral trade surpassed US\$27 billion, with Russia emerging as India's fifth largest trading partner due to India's increased purchase of Russian crude oil and fertilizers⁴. However, the trade balance remains heavily tilted in favor of Russia. It has been reported that both India and Russia have decided to conduct mutual trade in national currencies rather than in dollars and euros⁵. The two countries have already established a mechanism for mutual settlements in rubles and rupees, which is anticipated to help in reducing India's trade deficit with Russia. India has also engaged in talks with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), comprising Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia and Belarus, to conclude a preferential trade agreement with the bloc.

India and Russia also share common views on critical security issues in the region, particularly terrorism and extremism. The cooperation between India and Russia on Afghanistan has largely been productive, with both countries participating in various initiatives to provide security and economic stability in Afghanistan. As the largest South Asian economy, India has invested approximately US\$ 3 billion in Afghanistan over the last two decades, making it one of the largest regional aid partners for the Afghan people. India's involvement is considered essential to resolve the situation and establish long-term stability in Afghanistan, which is economically integrated with both South Asian and Central Asian economies. India has participated in various initiatives for peace and security in Afghanistan, as well as infrastructure development and capacity building programs (Joshi 2011). Meanwhile, Russia has not only participated in ongoing initiatives and programs to bring stability to Afghanistan, but has also developed the Moscow format framework to bring major stakeholders in Afghanistan together to work towards a peaceful settlement.

The shared perspectives on various regional and global matters and the enduring partnership based on cordiality between the two nations' citizens establish the basis to further expand the relationship into previously uncharted areas at the bilateral, regional, and international levels. This is also imperative due to the evolving regional situation.

The changing regional and global dynamics of the 21st century have provided Russia and India with new opportunities to explore mutual and reciprocal engagements. The world is pivoting towards the East and there is an anticipated resurgence of Eurasia. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the vulnerability of health infrastructure worldwide and emphasized the need for a people-centric approach, particu-

⁴ India seeks 'more balanced' trade with Russia: Ambassador. 2022. *Times of India*. 23 December. Available at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/96462014.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst (accessed 20.04.2023).

⁵ Russia and India will ditch dollar and euro in trade – Russian Foreign Ministry. 2022. *RT*. 22 December. Available at: <https://www.rt.com/business/568652-russia-india-ditch-dollar-euro/> (accessed 20.04.2023).

larly in public healthcare. The ongoing conflict in Ukraine has had significant regional and global implications. As a result of these changes and disruptions, there is a growing emphasis on resilient connectivity, food and energy security, and public health.

Cooperation among India, Russia and Central Asian countries

To strengthen their role in the international arena, it is crucial for India, Russia, and Central Asian partners to come together and focus on practical cooperation and results-oriented agendas. India has become the fifth-largest economy in the world, while Russia is experiencing a resurgence in political and military influence, and the Central Asian countries are eager to pursue development. Therefore, it is essential to reinvigorate a common understanding and policy synergy among the three parties through enhanced political, economic, cultural, and people-to-people interactions. Initially, important areas of cooperation could include connectivity, public health, economic cooperation, and education, laying a solid foundation for future spillover into other areas.

Cooperation between India and Russia in Central Asia is a topic that requires further examination. Central Asia has the potential to become an area of strong partnership, and both countries appear to be willing to expand their cooperation in the region. Potential areas of collaboration that could yield tangible benefits in the near future include joint infrastructure projects, the exploration of hydrocarbons and natural resources, and joint research in the fields of agriculture and the environment. Russia has significant influence in the region, including close political and security relations with the governments in the region and deep linguistic ties. Russian investment in the region amounts to approximately US\$ 20 billion, and more than 7,500 Russian businesses and joint ventures operate in Central Asia⁶.

After the start of Russia's military operation in Ukraine and the imposition of sanctions by Western countries, thousands of young Russians have migrated to Central Asian countries to avoid military service and to overcome the impact of these sanctions. This trend has been particularly pronounced since Moscow's announcement of partial mobilization in September 2022⁷. The migrants have also brought with them capital, businesses, and expertise, which many experts in Central Asian countries believe can contribute to the region's economic and social development⁸. This migration is expected to further enhance economic relations between Russia and Central Asian countries.

⁶ Lavrov S. 2017. Russia-Central Asia: A Time-Tested Partnership. *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. October 4. Available at: http://www.mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/ckNonkJE02Bw/content/id/2884944 (accessed 20.04.2023).

⁷ Oladipo D. 2022. Factbox: Where have Russians been fleeing to since mobilisation began? *Reuters*. 5 October. Available at: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/where-have-russians-been-fleeing-since-mobilisation-began-2022-10-06/> (accessed 20.04.2023).

⁸ Russians Flock to Central Asia. 2022. Institute for War & Peace Reporting. *IWPR Central Asia*. 15 October. Available at: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/russians-flock-central-asia> (accessed 20.04.2023).

Meanwhile, India is rapidly expanding and diversifying its market, seeking to connect with the global and regional economic systems. India's goodwill in the region, lack of historical legacy, and perception as a partner by Central Asian people make it a desirable collaborator (Warikoo 2016). As a major emerging economy, India has the potential to invest in the region. Nonetheless, businesses from India have been hindered from realizing their potential and establishing a significant presence in Central Asia due to the lack of direct surface connectivity and a relatively small size of the regional market (Khan 2020).

Improving financial connectivity between India and Central Asian countries is also imperative. Indian banks have limited presence in the region, which impedes investments and financial transactions with regional businesses. There is potential for them to expand their operations in the region and play a greater role in promoting trade and investment between the two sides. Collaboration with Russia could be significant for all concerned countries in these areas. In fact, there are no major divergences or differences between India and Russia towards Central Asia. They share a common objective of achieving peace, stability, and economic development in the region.

Connectivity initiatives

In the context of cooperation between India, Russia, and Central Asian countries, connectivity stands out as a key area for collaboration. In the early 2000s, several initiatives were launched by regional countries in Eurasia aimed at enhancing inter-regional connectivity in all aspects. These regional initiatives, which involve Central Asian countries, India, and Russia, prioritize economic and political cooperation, as well as improving transport connectivity.

The Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA) held its inaugural summit in June 2002, with the goal of promoting peace, security, and stability in Asia through enhanced cooperation. CICA is currently undergoing a transformation into an international organization. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), which India became an observer of in 2005 before becoming a member in 2017, was established in June 2001. The organization focuses on combating terrorism, extremism, and separatism, but is increasingly working towards greater cooperation in economic and connectivity fields. The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) was also conceptualized around the same time, with the aim of improving physical connectivity.

The INSTC was launched in September 2000 in St. Petersburg, being one of the earliest multilateral connectivity initiatives of the 21st century. India, Russia, and Iran were the main initiators of this corridor, which was later joined by other members, including Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan from Central Asia. Other Central Asian countries are expected to join the INSTC in the coming years. The INSTC, which spans more than 7,000 kilometers and comprises a multi-modal network of ship, rail, and road links, has been promoted as a secure, short, and viable route to connect the

Arctic region with the Indian Ocean through the Eurasian land and waters. This route also links India to Afghanistan and Central Asia, thus addressing the issue of lack of direct land transport linkages that have hindered India's trade with these regions.

The INSTC route faced challenges in gaining traction among the business community, traders, and freight forwarders due to various reasons. These included the absence of a small rail section on its rail link, limited awareness among leading business agencies, irregular shipping services between India and Iran, lack of insurance coverage for the Bill of Lading⁹, comparatively longer container return time, and insufficient incentives to start and support the movement of goods on this route. However, the situation has since changed, and the INSTC link has become functional.

In recent years, there has been a renewed emphasis on the INSTC among regional countries, and the project has gained momentum. The tariffs for cargo transportation between India and Russia through the India-Iran-Azerbaijan-Russia line of the INSTC network were finalized by Russian and Azerbaijani railways¹⁰. The blockage of the Suez Canal in 2021 further highlighted the significance of an alternative route in the form of the INSTC for international trade. In June 2022, the INSTC began its operation with the first shipment from Russia to India¹¹. Utilizing the multimodal transport corridor, containers from St. Petersburg reached Mumbai in July 2022. The cargo travelled by rail from St. Petersburg to the Russian seaport of Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea, then by ship to the Iranian Caspian Sea port of Anzali, and from there by rail to the Bandar Abbas port in Iran, and finally by ship to Mumbai¹².

In terms of inter-regional connectivity, the Chabahar port in Iran is emerging as another crucial link. India has made investments in the development of the port, which is situated outside the congested Strait of Hormuz and the Persian Gulf. India is seeking to integrate the Chabahar port with the INSTC initiative. The Port has rapidly gained attention from international shippers since its inception. The operations of the Chabahar Port were taken over by the India Ports Global Limited (IPGL) in December 2018. By December 2021, it had handled 160 vessels, 14,420 TEUs (Twenty-foot Equivalent Units), and 3.2 million tonnes of bulk and general cargo¹³. The Shaheed

⁹ Dry Run Study of INSTC Trade Route. 2015. *Press Information Bureau, Government of India*. 20 March. Available at: <http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=117455> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹⁰ First train from India to Russia via Azerbaijan to be Sent until End of March. 2016. *News.az*. 16 February. Available at: <http://news.az/articles/economy/105179> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹¹ INSTC Begins Operations. 2022. *Maritime Gateway*. 13 June. Available at: <https://www.maritimegateway.com/instc-begins-operations/#:~:text=June%2013%2C%202022%201%3A21%20am%20The%20International%20North-South,Iranian-Russian%20port%20Solyanka%20in%20the%20Astrakhan%20region%20said> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹² First Russia rail shipment to India reaches Mumbai with more to come. 2022. *RailFreight.com*. 18 July. Available at: <https://www.railfreight.com/corridors/2022/07/18/first-russia-rail-shipment-to-india-reaches-mumbai-with-more-to-come/?gdpr=accept> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹³ Zafar A. 2022. Growing Significance of Iran's Chabahar Port for Landlocked SCO Nations. *Indian Council of World Affairs*. 12 August. Available at: https://icwa.in/show_content.php?lang=1&level=3&ls_id=7753&lid=5162 (accessed 20.04.2023).

Beheshti terminal at the Chabahar Port handles shipments and trans-shipments from countries such as Russia, Brazil, Thailand, Germany, Ukraine, Oman, Romania, Bangladesh, Australia, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, and the UAE¹⁴.

To enhance the efficiency of the INSTC and promote trade along this route, India and Russia can consider establishing a dedicated agency in consultation with other INSTC partner countries, particularly the landlocked Central Asian states. This agency could comprise existing INSTC members, private enterprises, freight forwarders, and transporters. The establishment of such an agency could help improve connectivity and streamline the movement of goods across regions connected by the INSTC.

India–Russia–Central Asia cooperation in education and medicine

In order to further improve ties and promote collaboration, a potential area of focus could be in the field of education, particularly in medical education. All three sides could explore partnership opportunities in this area. India is currently facing a shortage of trained doctors, with a doctor-to-population ratio of approximately 0.7 per 1,000 persons, which falls below the ideal ratio recommended by the WHO of 1:1,000. This shortage is expected to widen in the coming years, with an estimated need for three million doctors in the next two decades. Meeting this demand would require significant investments, estimated at up to US \$245 billion, to bring India's healthcare system up to the desired level¹⁵.

At the same time, the economic growth in India has triggered the expansion of the middle class, leading to an increasing desire among young people to pursue higher education. The medical and engineering fields are highly regarded professions in Indian society, and most Indian students aspire to study in these fields. However, due to limited availability of seats in educational institutions in the country, particularly for medical courses, many students are unable to pursue their desired careers. Consequently, some students enroll in institutions abroad, including those in Russia and Central Asian countries, to pursue their studies there.

India and Russia have the potential to collaborate effectively with partner countries in Central Asia in this field. A feasible approach would be to establish a mechanism that would enable Indian educational institutions to leverage the infrastructure of Russian and Central Asian educational institutions to provide medical and other courses to Indian students. This mechanism could be standardized and expanded by ensuring mutual recognition of degrees among participating countries. Such an ar-

¹⁴ Question No. 189 Status of Chabahar Project. 2021. *Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India*. 10 December. Available at: <https://mea.gov.in/lok-sabha.htm?dtl/34624/QUESTION+NO+189+STATUS+OF+CHABAHAR+PROJECT> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹⁵ India needs 3.5 million hospital beds, 3 million doctors by 2034: report. 2016. *Deccan Chronicle*. 10 January. Available at: <http://www.deccanchronicle.com/150127/nation-current-affairs/article/india-needs-35-million-hospital-beds-3-million-doctors-2034> (accessed 20.04.2023).

rangement would benefit Indian students significantly and generate revenue for participating institutions. It would also bring substantial revenue to the host country and foster people-to-people contacts. Alternatively, Russia and other nations could invest in India's healthcare system. Given India's need for massive investment in healthcare, including the requirement for 3.5 million beds by 2034¹⁶, this investment would be highly beneficial.

India-Russia cooperation in energy in Central Asia

Russia and several Central Asian countries have a surplus of energy, whereas India relies on substantial imports to meet its energy demands. As India's economy continues to grow, it requires an affordable and uninterrupted energy supply, which the Eurasian region can provide and sustain in the long term. Such cooperation can establish long-term energy security for buyers and ensure financial stability for sellers, facilitating better future planning for both parties. Additionally, Central Asia, particularly Kazakhstan, is a significant global source of uranium. In 2019, Kazakhstan produced approximately 43% of the world's uranium¹⁷. India has a substantial purchase agreement with Kazakhstan for uranium, while Russia is an important partner in the development of nuclear power plants in India.

Civil nuclear energy development cooperation represents a promising area of trilateral collaboration among India, Russia, and Central Asian partners. India and Russia have already established a framework for such cooperation with a third country. The Rooppur project in Bangladesh is the first undertaking of an Indo-Russian agreement to develop atomic energy projects in third countries¹⁸. The availability of resources in Central Asian countries, together with Indian investment and energy demand, and Russian technology, provides a significant scope for cooperation in the nuclear energy field. This offers the three parties an opportunity to play an influential role in the international nuclear energy and technology sector.

The potential for hydropower resources in Central Asian countries, particularly in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, presents a substantial opportunity as well. Kyrgyzstan alone is estimated to have a hydropower potential of 140-170 TWh, of which reportedly only 10% has been exploited¹⁹. Similarly, Tajikistan's hydropower resources are estimated to

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Uranium and Nuclear Power in Kazakhstan. *World Nuclear Association*. Available at: <https://www.world-nuclear.org/information-library/country-profiles/countries-g-n/kazakhstan.aspx> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹⁸ India, Russia, Bangladesh sign pact for Rooppur atomic plant. 2018. *Mint*. 1 March. Available at: <https://www.livemint.com/Industry/QD5ex7YkwRkooAmYgWPVHK/India-Russia-Bangladesh-sign-pact-for-Rooppur-atomic-plant.html> (accessed 20.04.2023).

¹⁹ Kyrgyzstan. *International Hydropower Association*. March 2020. Available at: <https://www.hydropower.org/country-profiles/kyrgyzstan> (accessed 20.04.2023).

be 317 billion kWh per year, of which only 4-5% has been utilized²⁰. Both India and Russia possess expertise in hydropower generation, and their collaboration in Central Asia could help in not only harnessing the natural resources of the region but also meeting the electricity demand in South Asia.

India has demonstrated its capability in developing low-cost, high-quality technology across various sectors such as ICT, pharmaceuticals, agriculture, automobiles, and space. Central Asian countries could benefit from India's expertise, particularly in small and medium enterprises, chemicals, agriculture, dairy, and food processing sectors. Russia, meanwhile, could be a valuable partner in this regard for both India and Central Asia.

Conclusion

The bilateral ties between India and Russia have withstood the test of time and continue to grow stronger. The partnership is now entering the next phase of growth with the involvement of like-minded countries in different regions. In the coming years, India-Russia collaboration in the Eurasian region is expected to play a pivotal role and provide new impetus to regional connectivity initiatives. Their coordinated approach in devising the future political, economic, and security agenda of the region will be crucial. Central Asia presents a significant opportunity for India and Russia to expand their energy, security, and transportation linkages. Indian financial institutions should also explore potential collaboration opportunities with Russia's presence in the financial sector in the region.

Regional organizations should increase their engagement and synergize their efforts for better results. The viability of the EAEU and the INSTC would be enhanced if they complement each other. Central Asian countries aim to have seamless access to international transportation and shipping networks. Without efficient transportation, economic activities cannot develop at a rapid pace, and without economic engagement, transport will become unsustainable. India's current Chairmanship of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) (2022-23) is likely to bring a greater focus on connectivity and smooth transit among member countries of the organization, including Russia.

To further explore the potential for trilateral cooperation among India, Russia, and Central Asian countries, a number of sector-specific studies could be undertaken to assess prospect and challenges in areas such as inter-regional connectivity, food security, energy, and the economy.

²⁰ The energy sector of the Republic of Tajikistan. *Ministry of foreign affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan*. 6 July 2019. Available at: <https://mfa.tj/en/main/view/185/the-energy-sector-of-the-republic-of-tajikistan> (accessed 20.04.2023).

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The author declares the absence of conflict of interests.

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Индия и Россия в Центральной Азии: сближение позиций?

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Индийский совет по международным делам, Индия

Партнёрство между Индией и Россией укреплялось на протяжении десятилетий, что, в частности, позволило двум странам совместно содействовать развитию соседних регионов. Центральная Азия, будучи пространством общего соседства Индии и России, исторически и культурно близка к ним обоим. Индийский экономический потенциал и российское влияние, основывающееся на глубоких связях с регионом, могут быть объединены в целях развития взаимодействия со странами Центральной Азии. Они обладают высоким экономическим, политическим, транзитным и культурным потенциалом, значение которого только возросло на фоне текущей глобальной политической и экономической нестабильности. В статье предпринимается попытка определить сферы сближения интересов Индии и России, в которых на практике было бы возможно сотрудничество на региональном уровне, содействующее как укреплению двусторонних связей, так и развитию центральноазиатского региона. В качестве таких сфер выделяются транзитные и логистические проекты, образовательное сотрудничество, а также атомная и гидроэнергетика. Продуктивное трёхстороннее взаимодействие Индии, России и стран Центральной Азии может внести существенный вклад в укреплении стабильности на всем евразийском пространстве.

Ключевые слова: индийско-российские отношения, Центральная Азия, региональное сотрудничество, развитие.

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