

India, Uzbekistan set \$5 bn trade target

Modi-Mirziyoyev talks focused on expanding cooperation in areas of trade, investment, infrastructure, critical minerals, mining, defence and security, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, health, information technology, digital public infrastructure, including UPI, and education.

TASHKENT, Aug 30 (PTI)

INDIA and Uzbekistan on Sunday decided to elevate their ties to a comprehensive strategic partnership and set a target of USD 5 billion in annual trade by 2030, following talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uzbek President Shavkat



Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the delegation-level talks with Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, at the Kuksaroy Presidential Palace in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. (PTI)

Mirziyoyev.

The two sides also agreed to establish a framework for long-term supply of Uranium from Uzbekistan to India in line with cooperation in the civil-nuclear energy sector.

The Modi-Mirziyoyev talks focused on expanding cooperation in areas of trade, investment,

infrastructure, critical minerals, mining, defence and security, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, health, information technology, digital public infrastructure, including UPI, and education.

The two sides also set a target of USD 5 billion in annual bilateral trade by 2030, Modi said in his press statement. The current

volume of bilateral trade between the two nations is over USD 1 billion. Both leaders announced the elevation of strategic ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership reflecting the growing depth and expanding scope of cooperation between India and Uzbekistan.

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PM Modi conferred with Uzbekistan's highest honour for foreign leaders

TASHKENT, Aug 30 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi was on Sunday conferred with Uzbekistan's highest honour for foreign leaders 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik' Order, which he dedicated to the "enduring" bond between India and Uzbekistan. The Prime Minister was conferred with the honour by Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev.

"Honoured to receive the 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik' Order. I dedicate this to the enduring bond between India and Uzbekistan," Modi said in a social media post.

The Ministry of External Affairs said on X that the Prime

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi being conferred with Uzbekistan's prestigious 'Oliy Darajali Do'stlik' by Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, at the Kuksaroy Presidential Palace. (PTI)

Ahead of SCO, Uzbekistan joins India in condemning cross-border terrorism

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As the two countries elevated their relations to a comprehensive strategic partnership, Uzbekistan joined India in unequivocally condemning, in a joint statement, terrorism, including cross-border terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, reiterated a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism and rejected justification of terrorism on any ground whatsoever.

Even though the two countries share strong counter-terrorism cooperation, this formulation is significant as Uzbekistan has not used the specific phrase "cross-border terrorism" in past apex level joint statements, like those issued after summit meetings in 2015, 2018 and in 2020. As per sources, this reflects stronger diplomatic alignment on state-sponsored terrorism and regional security dynamics, especially in the context of the SCO summit Tuesday in which leaders will address issues like the need for stronger counter-terrorism measures and the Afghanistan situation.

"The leaders called for concerted actions against terrorist entities and for disrupting terrorism financing networks, safe havens and infrastructure. They stressed that those responsible for terrorism should be held accountable and their perpetrators, their backers, facilitators and affiliates should be brought to justice," said the statement.

MAJOR OUTCOMES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

> Elevating ties to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership

> Letter of intent for conservation and restoration of ancient buddhist sites of Fayaz Tepa and KaraTepa located in Termez, Uzbekistan

> Grant of \$ 1 million for afforestation in the Aral Sea region

> MoU for cooperation in the field of Ayurveda and other traditional systems of medicine

> Cooperation in the fields of Geology and Mineral Resources

> MoU for an Economic and Financial Dialogue

> Cooperation agreement for



Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev confers the country's highest state honour on PM Narendra Modi for strengthening India-Uzbekistan ties

establishment of partnership relations between Gujarat and Samarkand region

> Lal Bahadur Shastri Scholarship for Hindi Language (100 Scholarships)

> ICCR Sanskrit Chair at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies

The strongest wording so far had come in the 2020 joint statement, after a virtual summit, in which PM Narendra Modi and President Shavkat Mirziyoyev condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and also underlined the need for every country to ensure that its territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks against other countries.

The leaders stressed the importance of strengthening cooperation in law enforcement and intelligence-sharing, and combating violent extremism, illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and cyber threats. They also reaffirmed in the joint statement the im-

portance of continued cooperation under the joint working group on counter-terrorism.

India and Uzbekistan, which shares border with Afghanistan, have shared concerns about radicalisation and influx of militant groups. For India, it's important to work with Uzbekistan and other countries in the region to prevent Afghanistan from turning into a haven for terrorist groups, particularly like the LeT and JeM based in Pakistan. Tashkent is also home to RATS, a permanent SCO body responsible for coordinating efforts by member-states against terrorism, extremism and separatism.

Close def ties reflect our deep mutual trust: Modi

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Modi also underscored the need for zero tolerance against terrorism and extremism, saying a stronger India-Uzbekistan partnership will be a powerful force for peace, progress and prosperity in Central Asia.

Modi and Mirziyoyev endorsed growing defence cooperation between the two countries, including through regular exchanges, capacity-building and joint activities, and expressed in a joint statement their commitment to address common security challenges by further strengthening such cooperation. Going forward, Modi said, both sides will promote direct linkages, co-production and co-development by the defence industries of both nations. "Close defence and security cooperation between our two countries reflects our deep mutual trust," said the PM.

Outlining an ambitious agenda for moving forward with "speed and tangible results" in this new phase of their partnership, the PM said both sides will also work systematically on market access, connectivity, banking and payment systems to achieve the target of \$5 billion of trade by 2030.

"We will work together to boost win-win cooperation in infrastructure development. Cooperation in DPI, AI, critical minerals, clean energy, space and nuclear energy is making our relationship future-ready," said Modi, adding that Uzbekistan is at the heart of Central Asia and at the heart of India's engagement with the region.

Both sides believe that while India is one of Uzbekistan's top 10 trading partners, their annual trade of \$1.32 billion remains significantly below its true potential. In the meeting, the two agreed to undertake joint measures to broaden the range of goods traded between the two countries, remove non-tariff barriers and promote industrial cooperation with a view to further increasing bilateral trade turnover. They also decided to create a joint working group to address non-tariff issues and investment barriers.

There was also focus on Global South cooperation with Modi saying that Uzbekistan's highest honour for a foreign leader that was conferred on him by the president had left India with the added responsibility of working with Uzbekistan as "Global South partners for the betterment of humanity".

India, Chile step up CEPA talks, aim to conclude pact this year: Govt

NEW DELHI, Aug 30 (IANS)

INDIA and Chile have stepped up efforts to deepen bilateral economic ties, with both countries pushing ahead with negotiations for a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) aimed at expanding trade and investment opportunities, the Ministry of Commerce & Industry said on Sunday.

Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal met Chile's Vice-Minister of International Economic Relations Paula Estevez Weinstein in Santiago on August 26 to advance discussions on the proposed trade pact.

During the meeting, India reiterated its commitment to an open, sustained and balanced approach to the negotiations, with the objective of creating meaningful and commercially viable opportunities for busi-



nesses and people in both countries. India and Chile's shared position as members of the Global South and their common strategic outlook were also highlighted as a strong foundation for closer economic cooperation.

Both sides stressed the need to build on the growing momentum in India-Chile relations and ensure that the CEPA delivers concrete outcomes for businesses in the two countries.

The agreement is expected to provide a framework for greater market access while strengthening cooperation across trade

and investment.

Agrawal highlighted significant potential for expanding economic engagement in sectors such as healthcare, pharmaceuticals, energy, minerals, agriculture, machinery and engineering.

A successful conclusion of the negotiations, he said, could provide further momentum to the expanding bilateral trade and economic partnership.

India is targeting the completion of CEPA negotiations within 2026 and is seeking a balanced and mutually beneficial agreement that delivers equitable and commercially meaningful outcomes for businesses on both sides.

The proposed pact is also expected to create new opportunities for trade and investment while encouraging cooperation in technology, talent and resilient supply chains.

Modi likely to hold bilateral talks with Iranian president

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PM Narendra Modi may have a bilateral meeting with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on the sidelines of the SCO summit in Kyrgyzstan Monday, official sources said. While Modi landed in Bishkek Sunday, the president was scheduled to arrive Monday morning, according to reports from Tehran.

Sources said efforts were on to schedule a meeting between the leaders Monday. This would be the first in-person meeting between Modi and Pezeshkian since the start of the US-Israel war with Iran on Feb 28.

The two, in fact, had last met on the margins of the Brics summit in Russia's Kazan in 2024. However, both have spoken with each other on several occasions, including after the West Asia conflict erupted, with Modi stressing the India remains a friend of Iran. Pezeshkian is also likely to visit India for the Brics summit next month.

If it happens, the meeting will see Modi reiterate India's position that all issues must be resolved through dialogue and diplomacy. He's also expected to highlight India's focus on ensuring the safety and well being of Indian nationals in the region, along with the importance of unhindered transit of energy and goods.



PM Narendra Modi pays floral tribute at the memorial of former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, Sunday

The two will also discuss trade, energy and connectivity ties that have come under strain because of the expiry of US sanctions waiver for the Chabahar port.

In a difficult balancing act, India has continued to maintain high-level engagement with Iran while repeatedly expressing solidarity with GCC States that came under attack from Tehran for hosting US bases. However, Tehran also expects India to call out the US and Israel for their Feb 28 strikes at the Brics forum, which is currently helmed by India. With the UAE also in the group, the challenge for India would be to forge a consensus on the West Asia situation that would allow a Brics declaration to be issued.

'ONE NATION, ONE TIME': Rules notified to make IST common time reference

NEW DELHI, Aug 30 (PTI)

THE Government has notified the Legal Metrology (Indian Standard Time) Rules, 2026, mandating Indian Standard Time (IST) as the single reference for legal, administrative, commercial and other official purposes across the country.

The nodal Consumer Affairs Ministry notified the rules on August 27 but they will come into force 180 days after their publication in the official gazette, giving Government departments, businesses, and institu-



Deptts, businesses, and institutions get 180-day window for compliance of rules

tions time to align their systems.

The move comes amid growing reliance on digital and technology-based systems -- from

banking and payments to telecommunications, railways, power grids and computer networks -- that depend on accurate and synchronised time stamps. The Ministry said inconsistencies between different time sources currently in use could affect the coordination and recording of such activities, prompting the push for a uniform national time standard.

The common time reference is expected to support accurate time-stamping of banking and digital payment transactions,

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Russia submits bid for 5 more S-400 squadrons

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New Delhi: Russia has submitted its response to India's tender for acquiring five more squadrons of S-400 Triumf long-range air defence system for Indian Air Force. "The defence ministry has received the response, and it is under process," a defence source told TOI. The deal is estimated to cost over Rs 50,000 crore.

India had deployed the S-400 Triumf systems to neutralise drones and missiles during Operation Sindoor last year.

India has already received four of the five S-400 squadrons ordered under the original 2018 agreement with Russia, with the fifth and final squadron expected to be delivered by Nov

this year. Russia shipped the fourth S-400 squadron in May this year.

In March this year, Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), defence ministry's highest decision-making body on military procurement, cleared procurement of a fresh batch of five S-400 systems from Russia.

India has also decided to purchase 280 short- and long-range S-400 missiles to replenish the stockpiles used during Op Sindoor, as well as to create a reserve of long-range weapons. India is estimated to have fired 11 long-range S-400 missiles at Pakistan, hitting fighter jets, early warning systems and transport aircraft. India is also considering setting up a private enterprise to maintain S-400 with the possibility of technology transfer.