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Changing Global Geopolitics: Modi-Xi Jinping-Putin Meet

SCO countries could seek a stable trade arrangement similar to BRICS, and there are likely to be some agreements on regional trade and logistics infrastructure.



Russian President Vladimir Putin, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping hold a meeting on the sidelines of the G20 summit in Osaka on June 28, 2019. (AFP)



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By **Anuradha Chenoy**

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New Delhi: The meeting between President Xi Jinping, Prime Minister Modi and President Putin on August 31-September 1, in Tianjin as part of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), will be a high-profile event that will attract world attention. The three leaders together project the idea of Eurasian power, symbolising a 'pivot to Asia' from within the region.

This meeting strengthens other forums of the Global majority, like the BRICS and the construction of a multipolar international system. The hosts- the Chinese- have worked relentlessly to make this meeting a success as it will be followed by a commemorative Chinese parade (September 3) to mark 80 years since World War II, the Japanese surrender and the end of the Anti-Fascist War in September 1945.

With 20 other leaders in attendance for both the SCO and the parade, the Chinese are giving clear signals that no one is likely to miss. Putin's presence at this event establishes his legitimacy with the Global South, especially after President Trump welcomed him in equal terms at the Anchorage-Alaska US-Russia Peace Summit. The Europeans will take this with a pinch of salt.



File - Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during a meeting, in New Delhi (PTI)

For Prime Minister Modi, smarting from the Trump shock, this will be an opportunity to show that the world is diverse, and while India still considers the US a strategic partner, it will not bend and scrape to US dictates, and options are possible. There is a narrative floating that India is turning to China in the face of Trump tariffs.

The truth is that India has learnt that the US cannot be fully trusted. India will have to diversify its relations and geoeconomics. That India's strategic autonomy policy stands and that a process towards normalisation of relations with China is well on way. This SCO meeting will be a step forward.

The Tianjin meeting and declaration will undoubtedly emphasise free and fair trade, as all the countries present are reeling under the shock of unilateral tariffs thrown at them by the Trump regime.

While several of them have negotiated a 'deal', there is no doubt that the Trump administration has extracted a heavy toll on many of them (for example, Vietnam faced 46% to 20% tariffs,) and the heavily sanctioned and recently bombed Iran, represented by President Pezeshkian.

So, the SCO countries could seek a stable trade arrangement similar to BRICS, and there are likely to be some agreements on regional trade and logistics infrastructure. The SCO, originally designed as a security organisation, will discuss the issue of terrorism, and India would like a strong condemnation in general terms.

There would be discussion on humanitarian issues and Russia would be keen to start discussion on regional -Eurasian security architecture, where all would be welcomed, even though there are several outstanding bilateral issues within SCO members. Some new countries, like Saudi Arabia, have applied for full membership, which would be considered.

A key to the success and strengthening of the SCO, the BRICS, regional stability and multipolarity is the normalisation and improvement of relations between India and China. India and China are in the process of taking steps towards this, though there is a long way yet to go.

In this context, Prime Minister Modi and President Xi Jinping initiated a de-freeze when they met at the Kazan (Russia) BRICS Summit in October 2024, since Chinese Indian relations were cold after a re-conflagration of border conflict between the two (Galwan, Himalayan region, 2022).



Traditional Russian wooden dolls called Matryoshka depicting China's President Xi Jinping, left, and U.S. President Donald Trump (AP)

The Sino-Indian thaw sped up with Foreign Minister Wang Yi's visit (18-19 August 2025), where the Chinese and Indian Foreign Ministers noted the normalisation process between the countries across all sectors.

The 'Ten Point Consensus Framework' that emerged with Wang Yi and India's National Security Advisor Aji Doval meeting, as part of the 24th round of talks between these two Special Representatives on the resolution of the boundary dispute, is particularly important. They agreed to establish an expert group that will work on demarcation within the framework of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) for border management and control; to establish a general level talks mechanism at various military points to promote de-escalation; agreed to an exchange of views on cross-boundary river cooperation, including on flood control. The Chinese side (being the upper riparian) agreed to share emergency hydrological information on relevant rivers.

They agreed to reopen 3 traditional boundary trade markets. (Xinhua and Global Times, August 20, 2025). The next round of this engagement will be in China 2026, which ensures continuity of the dialogue and compliance measurements.

In Taiwan, the Chinese readout says that "Jaishankar said Taiwan is part of China". The Indian External Affairs Ministry Press Release explains that the Chinese side raised the issue of Taiwan. "The Indian side underlined that there was no change in

its position on the issue.” (18-19 August 2025) And the Indians engage with Taiwan like much of the world does on economic and cultural issues.



File photo - PM Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin (IANS)

Prime Minister Modi had the final word when he met with Wang Yi and endorsed the consensus that peace and tranquilly on the border be well managed, that India-China cooperation is indispensable for the ‘Asian century’ and will contribute to development. This Sino-Indian engagement just before the Tianjin meeting between Presidents PUTIN, Xi and Modi makes the SCO meeting smooth and important. Of course, many things can come in the way, but signals are that Russia, China and India have the capacity to keep constructing a multipolar system. Such a system opens possibilities for better development for countries of the Global South. Their eyeballs are fixated on this meeting. The meeting between Xi, Modi and Putin can go a long way.

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