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SANSAD TV: AIR- INDIA'S ROLE IN EVOLVING GEOPOL- ITICS

Introduction

India is emerging as a key player in global geopolitics due to its strategic location, growing economy, and robust democratic institutions. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent diplomatic efforts and visits highlight India's proactive stance in international affairs.

Strategic Engagements

Russia:

- Prime Minister Modi's visit to Moscow underscored a robust economic agenda, aiming to strengthen bilateral ties.
- During discussions with President Vladimir Putin, a target of USD 100 billion in bilateral trade by 2030 was set.
- Furthermore, the development of a bilateral payment settlement mechanism using national currencies marks a significant step in mitigating the impact of sanctions and fostering economic cooperation.
- This mechanism harks back to the historical rupee-rouble trade agreement from the Soviet era, which facilitated trade without involving foreign exchange.

United States:

- [The Indo-US relationship](#) remains a cornerstone of India's strategic engagements. Shared interests in counter-terrorism, defense cooperation, and economic collaboration have deepened this partnership.
- India's designation as a Major Defense Partner by the US and the signing of foundational defense agreements underscore this growing alignment.
- These developments highlight the mutual benefits and strategic importance of the Indo-US partnership in the current global context.

China:

- [India navigates a complex relationship with China](#), marked by economic interdependence and strategic competition.
- Diplomatic initiatives such as the Wuhan and Mamallapuram summits illustrate efforts to manage tensions and foster dialogue.
- However, ongoing border disputes, as evidenced by the Galwan Valley clash, continue to challenge the relationship.
- Despite these tensions, both nations recognize the importance of maintaining economic ties and regional stability.

Regional Influence

South Asia:

- India's regional influence is particularly pronounced in South Asia, where it plays a crucial role in promoting stability and cooperation.
- The 'Neighborhood First' policy underscores India's commitment to fostering regional stability and enhancing economic integration.
- Initiatives like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIM-STECC) aim to address common security challenges and promote economic collaboration among member states.

[Indian Ocean Region \(IOR\):](#)

- In the Indian Ocean Region, India's strategic location and naval capabilities are crucial for maintaining maritime security and ensuring freedom of navigation.
- The Indian Navy's increased presence and participation in exercises like the Malabar series, which involves the US, Japan, and Australia, highlight India's commitment to a free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region.
- Additionally, initiatives like the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI) exemplify India's proactive stance in promoting regional co-

operation and security.

Economic Partnerships

India-Russia Economic Cooperation:

- Economic partnerships are central to India's geopolitical strategy, with the India-Russia relationship being a prime example.
- India's procurement of crude oil from Russia has surged, helping to manage its oil import bill amid rising global prices.
- The potential for Indian investments in Russia's Far East and the development of upstream oil projects further underscores the deepening economic ties between the two nations.
- Additionally, India's push for greater market access in Russia, particularly in agricultural and industrial sectors, reflects its strategic economic interests.

India-Eurasian Economic Union Trade Agreement:

- The long-discussed India-Eurasian Economic Union trade agreement aims to enhance trade with member countries, despite challenges such as high freight costs and competition from China.
- This agreement seeks to broaden the bilateral trade basket and expand economic engagement between India and the Eurasian Economic Union, thereby fostering mutual economic growth and development.

India-Austria Economic Engagement:

- India's engagement with Austria, highlighted by Prime Minister Modi's visit, underscores a focus on high-technology and sustainable development.
- Collaborative efforts in areas such as artificial intelligence, digital technology, and renewable energy highlight the potential for deeper economic ties between the two nations.
- The establishment of a startup bridge and cooperation in sustainable technologies further illustrate the scope for mutual benefits and long-term collaboration.

Way Forward

- To navigate the [complexities of evolving geopolitics](#), India must continue to pursue a balanced and pragmatic foreign policy.
- Strengthening strategic partnerships with major global powers, such as the US, EU, Japan, and ASEAN countries, will be crucial for India's geopolitical aspirations.
- Simultaneously, maintaining robust defense and economic ties with Russia and managing a cautious yet constructive relationship with China will be imperative for regional stability.
- Enhancing regional cooperation through platforms like SAARC and BIMSTEC, while promoting maritime security in the IOR, should remain priorities. India's active participation in multilateral forums needs to be amplified to reflect its rising global stature.
- Advocacy for United Nations Security Council (UNSC) reforms and active involvement in global economic discussions will further cement India's position as a responsible global power.

Conclusion

- India's evolving role in geopolitics is a testament to its growing influence and strategic foresight.
- By navigating complex international relationships and fostering regional and global partnerships, India is poised to play a pivotal role in shaping the future geopolitical order.
- As the world gravitates towards multipolarity, India's balanced approach, grounded in its democratic values and strategic interests, will be instrumental in promoting global stability and prosperity.
- Through sustained diplomatic efforts and strategic engagements, India can ensure that its voice resonates powerfully on the global stage, contributing to a more equitable and harmonious world order.