

## India Review

A PUBLICATION OF THE EMBASSY OF INDIA, KABUL

http://kabulmea.nic.in

VOLUME 3 ISSUE 3 MARCH 2007



President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam takes the salute at the Republic Day parade on January 26. Russian President Vladimir Putin, centre, was the chief guest at the celebrations. Also seen in the photo is Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, left.

Russian President Vladimir Putin was in India on a two-day official visit from January 25 with a view to boosting business and strategic ties and expanding cooperation in civilian nuclear energy.

During his visit, the Russian leader held wideranging discussion with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and called on President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. He said Russia would help India build more nuclear power plants and also expand civil nuclear cooperation as the two countries took their strategic ties to "new heights" by signing nine agreements in areas ranging from energy and space to business and culture.

Prime Minister Singh and President Putin signed an ambitious Joint Statement after their talks that placed the new phase in their strategic relationship in a global perspective and underlined greater cooperation on key issues like the United Nations reforms, terrorism, the Iran nuclear crisis and stability in Central Asia and Afghanistan.

Describing Putin as "a world leader and a special friend of

## India, Russia Sign Nine Agreements

- A Joint Statement on the outcome of Putin's visit.
- Programmes of cultural exchanges for 2007-09.
- Protocol on holding 'Year of Russia in India' (2008) and 'Year of India in Russia' (2009).
- MOI for the construction of additional nuclear power plant units at Kudankulam.
- Agreement on the access of India to navigation signals of the Russian GLONASS and GLONASS Radio Frequency Spectrum for peaceful purposes.
- Agreement for joint satellite project Youthsat.
- Protocol for exchange of information on the movement of goods and conveyances.
- Cooperation between Saraf Agency Private Limited, Vneshekonom Bank of Russia and Joint Stock Company Technochim Holding.

India", Manmohan Singh set the tone for the new era in relations with a resurgent Russia by underscoring the special significance of Putin's two-day visit that "will impart a new momentum and carry our strategic partnership to new heights".

Putin was the chief guest at India's 58th Republic Day parade, where India showcased the cutting edge Russian weaponry in its arsenal.

It had the desired effect as Putin repeatedly nodded his head as the jointly developed BrahMos supersonic cruise missile and the T-72 main battle tanks that have been purchased from Russia rolled down Rajpath during the two-hour parade during the Republic Day celebration on January 26.

In fact, such was the keenness with which Putin watched the proceedings that President Kalam, who took the salute, repeatedly turned to him to point out the finer points of the pageant — whether relating to weaponry, the uniforms of the marching contingents, or the diverse tableaux on view.

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## Highlights of the Joint Statement

- India and Russia reaffirmed the importance of their strategic partnership, which serves their national interests, strengthens bilateral relations and contributes to international peace and security
- Recognised that nuclear energy provides a safe, environmental-friendly and sustainable source of energy and believe that nuclear energy will provide an indispensable source of energy to future generations.
- Resolved to further emphasise their willingness to expand and strengthen their scientific and other exchanges, and bilateral dialogue on peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
- Noted with satisfaction their ongoing cooperation in construction of nuclear power plants at Kudankulam and reaffirmed their commitment to work together to expand civil nuclear energy cooperation.
- Agreed to signed an agreement on cooperation in the construction of four additional power units at Kudankulam.
- Agreed that Russia will work with the NSG to create conditions favourable to the amendment of guidelines for facilitating expansion of civilian nuclear energy cooperation with India.
- Recognised importance of R&D for development of innovative technologies.
- Expressed willingness to further expand and strengthen their bilateral civilian nuclear energy cooperation.
- Agreed to work out a comprehensive programme of cooperation in peaceful use of atomic energy.