

## **Report: Eastern Economic Forum 2019**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Eastern Economic Forum took place in Vladivostok from September 4-6, 2019.

This year, the theme of the Forum was "The Far East- horizons of development", and all events in the programme had, accordingly, a strong focus on the Russian Far East.

### **Participation:**

This year, as per the organizing agency- the Roscongress Foundation, the EEF was attended by 8500 participants from 65 countries (including 1300 media representatives). The number of participants increased by 2500 from last year's EEF.

The maximum number of participants was from Japan (588), followed by China (395), Republic of Korea (285), India (204), Mongolia (69), USA (65), Singapore (58), Vietnam (55), Great Britain (49), and Malaysia (48).

### **Outcomes:**

Representatives of 440 companies were present at the Forum. 270 agreements were signed for the amount of more than 3.4 trillion Rubles (USD 52.308 billion). [Increased since last year, when 220 MOU's/agreements, worth 3 trillion Rubles were signed.]

### **India at EEF 2019:**

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi attended this year's Forum as the Chief Guest on invitation of the Russian President. This was the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Russian Far East.

[Prime Minister's visit was preceded by a series of preparatory visits to lay the groundwork for serious engagement by India in this region, the development of which has been identified as a national priority by Russia. India's Commerce & Industries Minister Shri Piyush Goyal, Chief Ministers and senior representatives of five Indian States led a 127-strong business delegation just two weeks prior to the Prime Minister's visit. This was in addition to many engagements on both sides in the past few months including exchange of top business delegations between India and Vladivostok, visits by Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Trutnev, and CEO of Far East Investment and Export Agency Mr. Leonid Petukhov to India, and External Affairs Minister Dr. S. Jaishankar to Russia.]

### Plenary Session:

As part of the Eastern Economic Forum, the Prime Minister attended the Plenary Session of the Forum on September 05, 2019. Among those present at the session were heads of state and government of foreign countries, heads of major Russian and international companies, leading politicians and experts. The other Heads of State/ Government present during this Session were President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of Mongolia Khaltmaagiin Battulga, Prime Minister of Malaysia Mahathir Mohamad, and Prime Minister of Japan Shinzo Abe.

President Putin, in his opening remarks, *inter-alia*,

- Welcomed the heads of leading countries of the Asia-Pacific region, major investors, businessmen, members of the public and expert circles to Vladivostok, the capital of Primorye, and of the entire Far Eastern Federal District of Russia.
- Underlined the significant resources invested by Russia in modernizing transport, business, educational infrastructure, and improving the capital of the region as a modern, dynamically developing city, as one of the scientific and educational centers of the Asia-Pacific region. He mentioned that due to support measures started in 2015, investors invested 612 billion rubles in the region's economy, put into operation 242 new plants, and created more than 39 thousand jobs. As a result, industrial production growth in the Far East over the past five years amounted to almost 23 percent, almost three times higher than in the whole country.
- Announced that Russia will launch large infrastructure, transport, industrial projects and construction projects in the region and beyond, and also offered new, largely unique support tools for business in the Far East. He appealed to all potential investors to take advantage of these opportunities.
- (Regarding India,) mentioned that Russia has joint space projects with India, and will explore possibility of collaboration in constructing modern, large-capacity vessels. He also mentioned Rosneft's investment in one of the largest oil refineries in India; part of Rosneft's area of responsibility includes one of the major ports of India.

In his address, the Prime Minister laid out the following salient points:

- India will provide a \$1 billion line of credit to further contribute to the development of the Far East. This is the first time that India is giving a line of credit to a particular region of a country. This announcement will be the take-off point of India's Act Far East policy.

- Invitation to all the 11 Governors of the Russian Far East to visit India to take forward the outcomes of the Eastern Economic Forum.
- About 50 business agreements have been signed in many areas, in preparation for India's participation in EEF.
- Once shipping route between Vladivostok and Chennai becomes operational, Vladivostok will become India's springboard in North East Asia market
- India's relations in this region will have a strong foundation of rule based order, respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity and abstaining from interfering in the internal affairs of a country.

### Far East Street Exhibition

Prime Minister visited the Far East Street exhibition held on the embankment of Ajax Bay, Russky Island, along with President Vladimir Putin. At the exhibition, 11 Far East regions and federal ministries presented their economic capabilities, opportunities for tourism, cultural traditions, as well as their current and prospective investment projects. The two leaders visited the Buryatia, Kamchatka and Primorye displays, as well as the display of Russian made Helicopters.

### India Lounge:

Prime Minister visited 'The India Lounge' - an Indian Business Pavilion prepared by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) with the support of Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and Invest India. During his visit to the India Lounge, Prime Minister met with some of the eminent Indian business leaders attending the forum. He also launched the Innovation Bridge between Start up India and Skolkovo Foundation including a Start up challenge hosted by Bharat Forge. In addition, Prime Minister visited the redesigned Invest India website and witnessed a demonstration of the interactive Invest India chat-bot. Prime Minister also launched a report by FICCI titled 'India-Russia Far East: Forging New Investment and Trade Linkages'.

### International Judo Tournament:

Prime Minister Modi attended the final match of the Jigoro Kano International Judo Tournament on 5th September at the Fetisov Hockey Arena in Vladivostok, along with President Putin, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and President Battulga. Held under the patronage of President Putin and PM Abe, this was the third edition of the tournament, organized annually on the

sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum since 2017 jointly by the Russian Judo Federation, Japanese Judo Federation and the International Judo Federation.

This was the first time an Indian contingent, comprising of an all men's team of six players, participated in the tournament, along with their counterparts from China, Russia, Japan, Mongolia and Korea. The tournament final attended by the leaders, kicked off with a parade of all participating teams including India. Prime Minister met with the Indian team members during this engagement.

#### Indian Business-participation at EEF-2019

About 40 leading Indian businesspersons visited the Forum this year. They had a series of interactions with their counterparts from Russia, in particular, those hailing from the Russian Far East. All companies present took part in the India-Russia Business Dialogue co-organized on the Russian side by the Far East Investment and Export Agency. On the Russian side, the dialogue was headed by First Deputy Minister of Ministry for Development of the Russian Far East and Arctic- Mr. Sergei Tyrtsev. Russian Minister of Natural Resources and Environment Mr. Dmitry Kobylkin also attended the dialogue. Secretary, DPIIT, Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra headed the dialogue from the Indian side.

#### Thematic Sessions:

There were about 90 sessions organized during this year's edition of EEF on the following 4 themes:

- i. New Solutions to Increase Economic Growth;
- ii. Creating Business Conditions;
- iii. Far East and Asian-Pacific Region: Developing Opportunities for Cooperation;
- iv. New Solutions to Increase Living Standards

Around 10 sessions saw Indian participation. Officers from DPIIT and the Mission also attended some sessions and interacted with business participants on both sides to follow up on the interests for mutual trade and investment.

#### Outcomes:

About 50 documents- governmental and commercial, were signed/exchanged during the visit of Prime Minister to Vladivostok.

During the joint media appearance of Prime Minister Modi and President Putin, 15 important documents were exchanged. These included the landmark Joint Statement "Reaching New Heights of Cooperation through Trust and Partnership", and the Joint Strategy for the enhancement of India- Russia trade and investments. In addition, 35 commercial documents were signed by various Russian and Indian entities on the sidelines of the visit. Of these, about 10 pertained to mining, minerals and rare earth sector and an equal number pertained to education, culture, entrepreneurship and innovation. Other sectors covered by the remaining Agreements/Memorandums of Understanding were energy, IT, agriculture, investment funding, timber, healthcare, diamonds, media, defence, chemicals and manpower, etc.

In addition to these, the following two important documents were also signed separately during the EEF:

1. Joint Statement on Cooperation between India and Russia in Hydrocarbon Sector for 2019-2024, and;
2. Memorandum of Understanding between NitiAayog and Ministry for the development of the Far East and Arctic, under the preparation for program of Indian-Russian cooperation in trade, economic and investment spheres in the Russian Far East for 2020-2025

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