

First Ganga-Volga Dialogue of Civilizations Held

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Eminent scholars from India and Russia participated in the first Ganga-Volga Dialogue of Civilizations earlier this week here, wherein they deliberated upon the existing and emerging spheres of bilateral cooperation between the two countries.

As many as 15 scholars from Russia and India spoke at the dialogue — which took place on Wednesday — upon the four broad themes in the context of India-Russia bilateral cooperation, namely, education, culture and civilization; entrepreneurship and innovation; trade routes including inland navigation; and, India, Russia and Greater Eurasia.

Evaluating the current state of India-Russia cooperation in various spheres and in emerging and new areas which provide significant possibilities of cooperation such as the Russian Far East and Eurasia, the scholars agreed that efforts should be made to encourage the younger generation of scholars in both countries to engage with each other through the platforms of academic and scientific research, language studies, exchange of youth delegations etc. Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan, Ambassador of the Russian Federation Nikolay Kudashev, and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Mahesh Poddar also spoke at the inaugural session of the dialogue.

The dominant theme of the discussions was Connectivity. Apart from the well-known connectivity proposals to link Russia and India like the

International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC), the concept of Connectivity also included greater academic and economic exchanges, as well as Digital Connectivity. Participants at the meeting provided ideas on how to expand India-Russia exchanges in the areas of education, culture, economy, entrepreneurship, strategic thought, innovation, media, tourism, healthcare, manufacturing and technology.

The idea of the Dialogue had emanated from discussions between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. The Dialogue was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs in collaboration with Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee Research Foundation. During their visit to India, the Russian scholars are being taken for a cultural visit to Bodh Gaya and Varanasi before their return.

SOURCE: *Economic Times*