

PM Modi arrives in Russia to attend BRICS, SCO summits

08/07/2015 20:09 by admin

Ufa (Russia): After visiting two Central Asian countries, Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived here today on a three-day trip during which he will attend the BRICS and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summits.

Modi flew in here from Kazakhstan, which was his second stop after Uzbekistan in his six-nation week-long tour.

He will first attend the summit of five-nation BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa which is expected to be dominated by discussions on enhancing cooperation in the economic area.

With the BRICS Development Bank already set up, the summit could also look at the possibility of starting trade and credit facility in local currency.

The first head of the bank is noted Indian banker KV Kamath.

Besides Modi and Xi, the BRICS Summit is being attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Brazilian President Dilma Rousseff and South African President Jacob Zuma.

"I expect positive outcomes in economic cooperation and cultural ties among the BRICS nations. The (BRICS) Summit in 2014 was productive and I am sure we will build on the ground covered during the last Summit," Modi had said in a statement prior to his departure from Delhi on Monday.

He had also said that he will be meeting the leaders of BRICS nations individually and will be a part of the various interactions of BRICS leaders with captains of industry and leaders of other invited countries.

"India attaches high importance to BRICS. It is a great forum that can contribute effectively to mitigate global challenges. BRICS also has a very crucial role to play in furthering world peace and security and ensuring we leave behind a better planet for our future generations," the Prime Minister had said.

An announcement with regard to India's membership of the six-nation grouping of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan is expected during the SCO summit on July 9-10.

A top Russian official yesterday said the process of India's membership will be completed by next year, along with that of Pakistan, to make it an eight-member body.

As of now, India has observer status in the 19-year-old grouping whose focus is on boosting connectivity, counter-terrorism cooperation, bolstering cooperation in energy sector, enhancing trade and dealing with drug trafficking.

India was made an observer in 2005 and it applied for membership last year. Pakistan also is an observer and is likely to be made a member.

On the sidelines of the SCO Summit, Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif are expected to have a meeting to discuss the bilateral relations.

The two countries have recently made goodwill gestures by releasing fishermen on the occasion of the ongoing

Ramzan.Â

Prior to the release, Modi called up Sharif on June 16 to convey India's decision to free the detained Pakistani fishermen on the pious occasion of Ramzan.Â

He also extended best wishes to Pakistan Prime Minister on Ramzan while stressing the need for having "peaceful" and "friendly" bilateral ties, which had been recently hit by a war of words between the two countries.Â

India released 88 Pakistani fishermen while Pakistan freed 111 Indian fishermen.

Pakistani and Indian leaders had recently exchanged sharp comments after Modi's critical remarks about Pakistan during his Dhaka visit and in the wake of India's military action in Myanmar.

Modi is also expected to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping and discuss the bilateral ties, amid India's unhappiness over Beijing constructing an economic corridor with Pakistan passing through PoK.

India has raised objections to the USD 46 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project passing through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Part of the 3,000-km economic corridor linking Pakistan's Gwadar port with Kashgar in China's north-western autonomous region of Xinjiang will pass through the Gilgit-Baltistan region.

India has also expressed concerns over China's recent move to block action against Pakistan in the UN over release of Mumbai attack mastermind Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi.

Modi, who is also visiting five Central Asian countries, will travel to Russia from Kazakhstan.

Modi will also have bilateral meetings with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani besides leaders of BRICS members.

- PTI