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Putin to Visit China in First Foreign Trip Since Re-Election

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Vladimir Putin's visit to China in October 2023. **Sergei Savostyanov, TASS / kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin will visit China this week at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, the Kremlin announced Tuesday, in the Russian leader's first trip abroad since being sworn into his fifth term.

"The two leaders will discuss a wide range of issues concerning their comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation, identify key areas for further development of Russian-Chinese practical cooperation, and exchange views in detail on the most pressing international and regional issues," the Kremlin said in a statement.

Putin will be in Beijing from Thursday to Friday, it added, making the visit the Russian leader's second trip to China in just over six months.

"Following the talks, the heads of state will sign a joint statement and a number of bilateral documents," the Kremlin said. Putin will visit Beijing and Harbin during the trip.

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Days before Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Beijing and Moscow declared a "no limits" partnership and have since boosted trade to record highs.

Moscow has looked to China as a crucial economic lifeline since the West hit Russia with unprecedented sanctions over the invasion.

Meanwhile, China has benefited from cheap Russian energy imports and access to vast natural resources, including steady gas shipments via the Power of Siberia pipeline.

But their close economic partnership has come under close scrutiny in the West, with the United States threatening to sanction overseas banks and companies that work with Moscow.

AFP contributed reporting.

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