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Indian PM Modi Tells Putin He Supports End to Ukraine War

By AFP

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Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi told Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday that he supports a swift end to the grinding conflict in Ukraine after visiting the war-torn country last week.

Modi has pursued a delicate balance between maintaining India's historically warm ties with Russia while courting closer security partnerships with Western nations as a bulwark against its regional rival China.

New Delhi has avoided explicit condemnations of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, instead urging both sides to resolve their differences through dialogue.

Modi said in a post on social media that he had "exchanged perspectives on the Russia-Ukraine conflict" with Putin and shared his "insights from the recent visit to Ukraine."

He also said he had "reiterated India's firm commitment to support an early, abiding and peaceful resolution of the conflict."

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Modi, who drew ire in Ukraine after he hugged Putin during a recent trip to Moscow, visited Kyiv on Friday and told President Volodymyr Zelensky that "no problem should be solved on the battlefield."

His conversation with Putin comes a day after a call with U.S. President Joe Biden, during which Modi reiterated New Delhi's "consistent position in favor of dialogue and diplomacy," an Indian foreign ministry statement said.

India and Russia have maintained close links since the Cold War, which saw the Kremlin become a key arms provider to the South Asian country.

Russia has also become a major supplier of cut-price crude oil to India since the Ukraine conflict began, providing a much-needed export market after the imposition of Western sanctions.

That has dramatically reconfigured the two countries' economic ties, with India saving billions of dollars while bolstering Moscow's war coffers.

India is part of the Quad grouping, with the United States, Japan and Australia, that positions itself against China's growing influence in the Asia-Pacific region.

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