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Putin Courts Kyrgyzstan's Support as Central Asian Leaders Thread Geopolitical Needle

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Vladimir Putin and Sadyr Japarov. **kremlin.ru**

President Vladimir Putin met with Kyrgyz President Sadyr Japarov on Wednesday as Moscow seeks to shore up regional alliances while Central Asian leaders increasingly try to balance their relations between Russia and the United States.

Japarov hosted Putin in Bishkek less than two weeks after joining the four other Central Asian heads of state in Washington for a summit with U.S. President Donald Trump. The meeting also followed Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev's trip to Moscow, where Putin accepted an invitation to visit Kazakhstan in 2026.

"We note with satisfaction that under your leadership, [Kyrgyzstan] is a stable and reliable partner," Putin told Japarov, according to a Kremlin readout of the meeting.

Putin pointed to Russia's economic and security role in Kyrgyzstan, citing growing bilateral

trade, the country's dependence on Russian energy supplies and the presence of a Russian military base.

Japarov called Russia a "strategic ally, reliable partner and good friend" and praised Putin's leadership for showing "adaptability and resilience despite the dynamic geopolitical and complex economic situation."

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Both leaders highlighted rising Russian investment in Kyrgyzstan. Putin said around 1,700 Russian companies now operate in the country, while Japarov noted that the figure represents a threefold increase in recent years.

The two sides signed agreements on trade, energy and migration during the talks.

Putin's three-day visit, which began Tuesday, is his second trip to Kyrgyzstan since launching the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022.

His previous visit, in October 2023, was his first foreign trip after the International Criminal Court issued a warrant for his arrest on war crimes charges over the alleged deportation of Ukrainian children.

Central Asian countries have increasingly sought to balance relations with Russia, the United States and China since the invasion of Ukraine.

Kyrgyzstan's presidential administration said that a summit of the Moscow-led Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) is scheduled for Thursday, the final day of Putin's visit.

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