

Modi likely to take the spirit of Wuhan to Qingdao

SCO summit expected to reject pursuit of ‘unilateralism’

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QINGDAO

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will participate in a two-day summit of the eight-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) at the weekend, riding on the bonhomie generated by the Wuhan informal summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping, and an extended one-on-one dialogue with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Sochi.

“When we were preparing for the summit, we asked

the Prime Minister whether he would like to have another separate meeting with Mr. Xi on the sidelines of the SCO summit, so soon after an intensive late-April dialogue in Wuhan. Mr. Modi’s answer was an emphatic yes,” an official source, who did not wish to be named, told *The Hindu*.

Sochi parleys

The official said Mr. Modi’s talks in Sochi with Mr. Putin were also “highly important.”

Russia, China and India were likely to emerge as the core of the SCO, after New Delhi and Islamabad joined the grouping last year, and would be participating as full SCO members for the first time in Qingdao. But it was also imperative that the importance of the four Central Asian Republics – Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan – not be undermined, the official observed.

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In an interview with China Central Television (CCTV) ahead of the Qingdao summit, India's ambassador to China Gautam Bambawale elaborated on the importance of the Wuhan summit. "As a result of their discussions in Wuhan, the two leaders have arrived at ... the first and most important consensus [which] is that India and China are partners in progress and economic development.

'More commonalities'

"The second most important consensus is that there are many more commonalities than differences... Of course, there are some differences but we will also work at the differences to ensure that the two countries will continue to progress and prosper together."

Analysts point out that the "America-first" doctrine

of U.S. President Donald Trump, which was getting translated into rising protectionism and threat of trade wars, had provided an important subtext to the Wuhan summit.

In his interview, Mr. Bambawale was emphatic that the SCO summit in Qingdao would reject anti-globalisation and pursuit of "unilateralism."

"I think one of the important points that will come out (of the SCO summit) is that unilateralism is not necessary in today's world. Multilateralism, learning to live with each other, is the important message, which will come from Qingdao," he said.

He stressed that India fully backed the "Shanghai spirit," of inclusivity and collaboration, despite differences in political systems among the member states.