

Modi, Trump discuss trade as Russia sanctions cloud ties

FE BUREAU
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PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi and US President Donald Trump on Wednesday reviewed bilateral cooperation in trade, defence, energy and critical technologies. The telephonic conversation between the two leaders occurred as negotiations for an interim bilateral trade deal entered the final leg, and fresh uncertainty emerged over Washington's measures targeting countries buying Russian energy.

The call came 12 days after Trump signed into law the Lindsey O. Graham Sanctioning Russia and Iran Act of 2026 on September 18. The law enables the US President to impose tariffs of up to 100% on imports from countries that

meet specified criteria relating to purchases of Russian crude oil or natural gas.

The legislation has heightened concerns in New Delhi because India remains a major buyer of Russian crude.

The timing of the Modi-Trump conversation is also significant for the bilateral trade negotiations.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is in the US from September 29 to October 5 for the G-20 Trade Ministers'

Meeting and is holding discussions with US Trade Representative Jamieson Greer on advancing the proposed India-US

Bilateral Trade Agreement and finalising an interim deal based on the February 7 joint statement.

India and the US have been negotiating the broader BTA for several months, with market access and tariff-related issues among the key areas under discussion. New

Delhi has also conveyed its concerns to Washington that tariff measures linked to Russian oil purchases could affect bilateral ties.

Against this backdrop, the Prime Minister's Office said Modi and Trump reviewed progress in bilateral cooperation across trade, defence, energy, critical technologies and other areas of mutual interest.

The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership and agreed to maintain close engagement to deepen cooperation.

The leaders also exchanged views on regional and international developments and discussed ongoing efforts to promote global peace and security, according to the PMO.

