

Trade gap set to rule talks

AFTER THE US imposed sanctions on biggest Russian exporters - Rosneft and Lukoil -- India scaled back purchases from Russia.

Pescov said by 2030 bilateral trade can touch \$ 100 billion. "And what is very important is we have to organise our trade volume in a way that cannot be affected by a third country."

"We are finding ways not to let the volume of (oil) trade down. For a very brief time there can be insignificant drops in the volume of trade of oil. We are doing our best to ensure that we continue our trade," Pescov said. After sanctions on the two Russian oil giants, Indian refiners are buying more and more oil from entities that are outside the sanctions.

"We have deep experience in performing under the regime of those illegal sanctions. We have our own technologies in doing that and we will continue to make those technologies more sophisti-



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cated should this practice of sanctions continues," the Kremlin spokesman said..

He said that the discussion on nuclear energy will be around further expansion of the Kudankulam project in Tamil Nadu. Russia is keen to discuss the proposal for two additional units (5 and 6) at Kudankulam and is also pushing for a new nuclear power plant in India.

The chief executive officer

of Russian nuclear energy, Rosatom Alexey Likhachev, would be accompanying Putin during the visit with an offer of modular nuclear reactors and their technology to India.

Defence would be another big area of focus during the visit and the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit. Russia is reportedly looking to clinch deals for supply of S-400 advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence systems to India.

"President Putin is coming with a very wide delegation. Some of the members of the delegation will be able to discuss this issue in detail," Pescov said.

Another item on defence cooperation would be an offer to India of the SU-57 Stealth Fighter as India evaluates its options to upgrade its defence forces. The cooperation would not just be for sale but technology transfer and production in India.

In 2018, India purchased five S-400s from Russia.