

Putin to address India's trade gap while securing key deals

SHOPPING LIST. Russia may offer to buy pharma, medical devices, food items, automobiles and also ease workers' mobility; Su-57 fighters, new S-400 on table for India

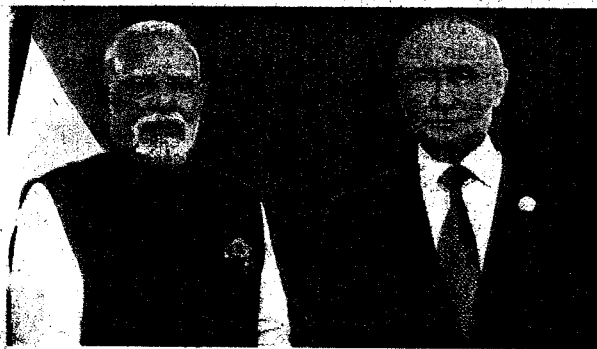
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Russian President Vladimir Putin arrives in New Delhi on Thursday for a two-day visit, leading a delegation of senior Ministers and top business leaders across sectors, with a clear message that Moscow is ready to procure more from India and dent the widening trade deficit while also securing defence and energy deals.

In FY25, India's imports from Russia totalled \$63.84 billion, while exports were \$4.88 billion, widening the trade deficit to about \$59 billion. New Delhi has been insisting that addressing the deficit should be given priority.

WIDER ASSURANCES

With the US tariffs hurting India's exports, Moscow is likely to extend to India assurances of wider sourcing of medicines and devices, as also food products. It is also looking to set up a dedicated manufacturing corridor for technical textiles and automobiles, secure an agreement on increased mobility



DEAL ROADMAP. A file picture of PM Modi and Russian President Putin at the Sept 1 Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit in Tianjin, China. On Friday, the two leaders are expected to set a timeline for the proposed India-EAEU bloc FTA

of workers and deepen co-operation in digital technology and AI. An agreement on local currency trade is also likely, sources said.

"There is a realisation in Russia that it can't expect India to continue oil and defence purchases, including Su-57 fighter jets and S-400, in the face of mounting Western pressure, without responding to Delhi's demand for higher imports of Indian goods and more access to professionals. Putin's visit, thus, has several dedicated sessions on greater sourcing

from India," a source tracking the matter said.

FTA TIMELINE

Putin and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in their bilateral meeting on Friday, are expected to set an ambitious timeline for the proposed free trade agreement between India and the EAEU bloc, comprising Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, the source added. A number of top Ministers from Russia, including Maxim Oreshkin, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Presiden-

tial Executive Office; Maxim Reshetnikov, Minister of Economic Development; Oksana Lut, Minister of Agriculture; Mikhail Murashko, Minister of Health; Alexey Gruzdev, Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade; and Sergey Kuchushev, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications, are scheduled to highlight new opportunities for Indian exporters in a dedicated session with policy-makers and businesses.

"We know that our Indian friends are concerned about that (the trade deficit). We are jointly looking at the possibilities of increasing imports from India. We want to buy more from India," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said at a media briefing on Tuesday.

According to exporters' body FIEO, there is a potential in expanding export of high-value goods, such as pharmaceuticals, chemicals, engineering goods and services to Russia. Russians could invest in the infrastructure, manufacturing, green energy, railways, mining and technology sectors.