

Determined to cross finish line on trade deal: US envoy Gor

Says both nations remain 'actively' engaged, next call scheduled today

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New Delhi, 12 January

India and the United States (US) continue to remain "actively" engaged on the proposed trade deal and the "next call" will take place as early as Tuesday, US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor said on Monday.

Stressing that India is a very large nation, Gor said: "It is not an easy task to get this across the finish line, but we are determined to get there." Delivering his first public address after taking over as ambassador, he said the US and India were bound not just by shared interests but by relations anchored at the highest levels.

"Real friends can disagree, but always resolve their differences in the end," Gor said, conveying American President Donald Trump's warm wishes to "dear

friend" Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Gor hoped the President would be visiting India soon, "hopefully in the next year or two".

Gor, who is a close aide of the American President, joined the US embassy in India amid uncertainty surrounding the finalisation of the bilateral trade deal between the two countries.

He described the bilateral relations as "the most consequential" global partnership of this century, adding that no partner was more essential than India.

The past few months have seen friction, marked by issues such as Washington's imposition of punitive tariffs over New Delhi's purchases of Russian oil and Trump's claim of stopping the India-Pakistan conflict last year.

India recently rejected remarks by US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick that a bilateral trade deal failed to materialise last year because Modi did not put in a telephone call to Trump. Turn to Page 6

“REAL FRIENDS CAN DISAGREE, BUT ALWAYS RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES IN THE END”

Sergio Gor,
in his first public address after taking over as US ambassador to India

Modi, Merz stress economic ties

PHOTO: REUTERS



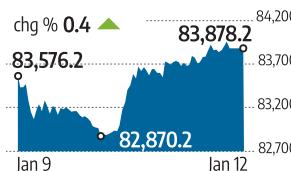
PM Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz fly kites in Ahmedabad on Monday. The two countries announced 27 outcomes ahead of the impending India-EU trade deal

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“GOING AHEAD, TALKS (FOR TRADE DEAL) ARE ON WITH SEVERAL DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. WE ARE IN TALKS WITH THE US FOR A BILATERAL TRADE AGREEMENT. FTA WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION IS AT THE FINAL STAGES”

Piyush Goyal,
Commerce and Industry Minister,
at Regional MSME Conclave, Rajkot

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Sensex rebounds 1.3% from day's low
(Sensex)



Equity benchmarks snapped a five-day losing streak on Monday, buoyed by optimism over India-US trade talks.

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On Friday, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), had said that the two countries had “on several occasions been close to a deal”, signalling that the responsibility for the impasse did not rest solely with New Delhi, as suggested by Lutnick in comments made during the interview on Thursday.

Although India was the first country to initiate trade talks with the US — in March last year — uncertainty over finalising an agreement has persisted.

Trade talks between India and the US came close to completion before stalling around July last year.

Thereafter, in August, Trump imposed the 50 per cent tariff on several Indian goods, including the 25 per cent punitive duty for buying Russian oil.

Talks, however, resumed a month later.

Gor is expected to play a role in strengthening strategic ties between New Delhi and Washington, and taking the partnership to the “next level”.

Further, Gor said India would be invited to join next month as a full member of Pax Silica, the US-led strategic initiative to build secure, resilient supply chains for semiconductors, artificial-intelligence technologies, and critical minerals.

Other than the US, eight more countries that are part of the initiative, launched in December, are Australia, Israel, Japan, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, South Korea, Singapore, and the United Arab Emirates.

“And while trade is very important for our relationship, we will continue to work closely together on other very important areas such as security, counterterrorism, energy, technology, education and health,” Gor said.

Quoting Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Gor said this year would be a year of reciprocity.

“We are raising the standard for diplomacy itself. That means fair trade, mutual respect, and shared security,” he added.