

India frames strategy to address Russia trade deficit

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TO GET TO the \$100-billion target with Russia by 2030, India is looking to address the wide trade gap with the traditional ally, by addressing issues of market access faced by its exporters, widening the basket of goods and exploring wider exchanges in local currencies.

"We are looking at various sets of goods and commodities, like electronics, engineering products and other items, where there can be (more) exports and imports (to get to the target). Motor cars have good potential," commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said.

India runs a huge trade deficit with Russia — trade between the two countries touched \$65 billion in 2023-24, of which India's exports were just \$4 billion and imports \$61.4 billion. One reason for the widening of the trade deficit is the jump in India's imports of Russian crude oil after the West imposed sanctions on Moscow.

Apart from new products, India is also looking to deal with the non-trade barriers (NTB) that Indian marine exporters face in Russia. There will be another visit to Russia where we will be taking up these issues, he said. "We are not able to export our marine products and we realised that they were not certifying some of our exporters. That is a procedural issue acting as a barrier."

India is also looking at markets in products in Russia where there has been import disruption due to sanctions and rupee-rouble trade.