

# Committed to strengthening strategic ties: Modi to Sunak

## Reviewed progress made in the ongoing FTA negotiations

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday met his British counterpart Rishi Sunak and reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthen the India-UK strategic partnership in the third term of the NDA government and reviewed the progress made in the ongoing FTA negotiations.

The two leaders met on the sidelines of the 50th G7 Summit at the luxury resort of Borgo Egnazia in Apulia. While Sunak congratulated Prime Minister Modi on his historic third consecutive term, the Indian leader extended his best wishes to the people of the United Kingdom as they prepare for general elections next month, a statement from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The two leaders reaffirmed the shared commitment of both countries to further strengthen bilateral relations, the statement said.

"It was a delight to meet PM @RishiSunak in Italy. I reiterated my commitment to further strengthen the India-UK Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in the third term of the NDA Government," Modi posted on X soon after their meeting. "There is great scope to deepen ties in sectors like semiconductors, technology and trade. We also talked about further cementing ties in the defence sector," Modi wrote.

The MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal described the meeting between the two leaders as "fruitful." "The leaders discussed the implementation of the Roadmap 2030 and expressed happiness on progress in all areas of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership including regular high-level political consultations, defence and security, trade and economic collaboration, critical and high technology sectors and people-to-people ties," the statement said. "They also expressed satisfaction with the progress made in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations between the two countries. Both leaders also discussed regional and multilateral matters of mutual interest," it added.

Sunak and Modi last met in person at the G20 Summit in New Delhi last September, which also marked Sunak's first official visit to India as Britain's first Prime Minister of Indian heritage.

The two leaders then agreed to accelerate the FTA talks with the hope of signing off before India's general election. However, the trade talks are now expected to resume only after a new UK government is elected on July 4.

## Support peaceful resolution to Ukraine conflict: PM to Zelenskyy



PM Narendra Modi (right) with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a bilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G7 Summit in Italy on Friday

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday conveyed to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a meeting that India would continue to do everything within its means to support a peaceful solution to the Ukraine conflict and that the way to peace is through "dialogue and diplomacy".

The upcoming Swiss peace conference for Ukraine also figured in the Modi-Zelenskyy talks held on the margins of the G7 summit in Italy's Apulia and the Ukrainian president thanked the prime minister for sending a high-level delegation to the conclave in over the weekend in Switzerland.

In the meeting, Modi told Zelenskyy that India believes in a "human-centric" approach. The two leaders exchanged views on the situation in Ukraine and the upcoming Summit on Peace being hosted by Switzerland. In a post on X, the Ukrainian president said he and Modi talked about the Peace Summit and issues on its agenda and that he thanked the Indian prime minister for sending a high-level delegation to it. Modi described the meeting with the Ukrainian president as "very productive" and said India is eager to "further cement" bilateral relations with Ukraine.

PHOTO: PTI

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