

India seeks UK help to bring economic offenders to justice

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New Delhi, 24 July

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday sought the UK's cooperation to bring to justice economic offenders and fugitives from India who are currently living in England. India and the UK also agreed to ramp up joint efforts against organised crime, serious fraud, and illegal migration with a new framework signed between the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) of the UK.

On the matter of extradition of economic offenders, "our agencies" will continue to work together in close coordination and cooperation, Modi said at a joint press briefing with his UK counterpart Keir Starmer in London. The agreement seeks to increase cooperation in tackling corruption, serious fraud, organised crime, and irregular migration through enhanced intelligence-sharing and operational collaboration.

Economic offenders such as Nirav Modi, Lalit Modi and Vijay Mallya are currently fugitives in the UK. On Tuesday, India's Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri had said that New Delhi has continued to make the case for some of the fugitives to be rendered to India. "There is a legal process that such requests and such issues go through in the other country, and we continue to follow up very closely with our partners in the UK on these matters," Misri had said.

Earlier, Modi and Starmer had a one-on-one meeting as well as delegation-level talks at the UK PM's country residence at Chequers in Buckingham-

shire. The talks lasted three hours. Apart from the signing of the India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), the two sides agreed to negotiate a Double Contribution Convention, which will come into effect along with the CETA. The Convention will facilitate professionals and the service industry in both countries by promoting competitiveness and reducing the cost of doing business for commercial entities, Misri said at a press briefing in London.

During his meeting with Starmer, Modi underlined that the two sides could work to promote greater interaction between GIFT City in Gujarat, India's first international financial services centre, and the UK's financial ecosystem. The two leaders also adopted the India-UK Vision 2035 document. The two sides finalised a Defence Industrial Road Map to promote collaboration in co-design, co-development, and co-production of defence products.

The two leaders called for accelerated implementation of the Technology and Security Initiative (TSI), which focuses on telecom, critical minerals, artificial intelligence (AI), biotechnology and health technology, semiconductors, advanced materials, and quantum. The TSI completed one year on Thursday. Modi and Starmer noted that five more UK universities were working to open campuses in India under the New Education Policy (NEP). Southampton University opened its campus in Gurugram on June 16, the first foreign university to open its campus in India under the NEP.

THE INDIA-UK PACT SEEKS TO INCREASE COOPERATION IN TACKLING SERIOUS FRAUD, CORRUPTION, ORGANISED CRIME, AND IRREGULAR MIGRATION
