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Putin Tells Erdogan Hopes for Deal to Boost Economic Cooperation

By AFP

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Russia's President Vladimir Putin (L) and Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are seen before making a joint statement following a trilateral meeting with Iran's President Ebrahim Raisi to discuss the Syrian peace process on July 19. **Sergei Savostyanov/TASS**

President Vladimir Putin told Turkish leader Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday he was hoping to sign an agreement to boost trade and economic ties, as Russia's isolation grows following its intervention in Ukraine.

Moscow's military campaign in Ukraine and the possible launch of a new operation in Syria were expected to dominate the talks in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

"I hope that today we will be able to sign a relevant memorandum on the development of our trade and economic ties," Putin said.

"I believe that (today's meeting) will open a whole different page in Turkish-Russian

relations," Erdogan said for his part.

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Putin also thanked Erdogan for helping orchestrate the resumption of Ukrainian grain shipments.

"Deliveries have already begun, I want to thank you both for this and for the fact that at the same time an accompanying decision was made on uninterrupted supplies of Russian food and fertilizers to world markets," Putin said.

The Russian leader also praised the TurkStream natural gas pipeline project, saying Europe should be grateful to Turkey for uninterrupted supplies of Russian gas.

Putin and Erdogan were expected to hold talks and a working lunch but no joint press conference.

Putin and Erdogan last met for a three-way summit in Iran in July.

At the time Putin told Erdogan that Russia remained opposed to any new offensive that Turkey might be planning against Kurdish militants in northern Syria.

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