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Russian Oil Tankers Idle Off India as Sanctions and U.S. Tariff Threats Disrupt Trade

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Dennis Mortimer / marinetraffic.com

At least four tankers carrying Russian crude are idling off India's western coast as mounting sanctions and warnings of steep U.S. tariffs disrupt oil flows, the Indian business outlet NDTV Profit reported.

Two of the vessels, the Achilles and the Elyte, are anchored near the port of Jamnagar, which were both originally scheduled to arrive at the nearby Sikka terminal between Wednesday and Thursday.

The ships were loaded with Urals-grade crude at Russia's key export hubs of Primorsk and Ust-Luga, and both are subject to sanctions imposed by the European Union and Britain.

Two additional tankers, the Destan and the Horae, are also waiting offshore. While the Destan is under similar EU and U.K. sanctions, the Horae is not currently sanctioned.

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The delays come amid a significant shift in Indian purchasing behavior following threats from U.S. President Donald Trump, who has pledged to impose 100% tariffs on countries that continue to import Russian energy unless Moscow ends its war in Ukraine by Aug. 8.

Trump had originally set a 50-day deadline but abruptly reduced it to 10 days on Tuesday, accusing President Vladimir Putin of holding "nice and respectful conversations" while continuing to "launch rockets" at Ukrainian cities.

In response to growing pressure from Washington, Bloomberg reported that Indian authorities have instructed state-run refiners to draw up contingency plans and explore alternative crude suppliers, including Middle Eastern and West African producers.

The warning appears to have had a swift impact. Four major Indian state-owned oil companies, together accounting for over 60% of the country's refining capacity, have already suspended purchases of Russian crude.

Despite this shift, India's private refiners including Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy — the latter of which is partially owned by Russia's Rosneft — remain the country's largest importers of Russian oil.

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