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India Says It Will Continue Buying Russian Oil, Rejects Need for U.S. Permission

By AFP

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The India-flagged oil tanker Desh Ujaala in the Gulf waters near the Al-Basrah Oil Terminal. **Hussein Faleh / AFP**

India said Saturday that it would continue importing Russian oil after the United States temporarily granted a sanctions waiver that allows for oil shipments currently stranded at sea to be sold to Indian buyers.

The waiver, issued Thursday by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, came as the U.S.-Israeli military campaign against Iran and Tehran's retaliatory strikes across the Gulf disrupted global energy markets and pushed oil prices sharply higher.

However, India's Press Information Bureau insisted that New Delhi was not dependent on "a short-term waiver" to buy Russian oil.

“India has never depended on permission from any country to buy Russian oil,” the government said in a statement. “India is still importing Russian oil even in February 2026, and Russia is still India’s largest crude oil supplier.”

Related article: U.S. Grants Temporary Waiver to Allow India to Buy Russian Oil as Iran War Jolts Energy Markets

The Trump administration rolled back a 25% tariff on Indian exports in February as part of an interim trade deal after citing what it described as New Delhi’s “commitment” to stop purchasing Russian oil.

However, that pledge was not mentioned in the joint statement on the agreement, and the Indian government has neither confirmed nor denied it, saying its oil purchases are guided by national interest.

India said it remains “well stocked,” with more than 250 million barrels of crude and petroleum products to handle short-term disruptions.

Global crude prices jumped 8.5% on Friday and were up nearly 30% for the week after U.S. President Donald Trump said only the “unconditional surrender” of Iran would end the Middle East war.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has said his officials in Washington are considering lifting sanctions on more Russian oil.

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