

India Rejects US Sanctions on Iran

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NEW DELHI — US restrictions on investment by third countries in Iran's energy sector can have a direct and adverse impact on Indian companies and India's energy security, reported Prensa Latina.

On Thursday, India and Iran began a two-day meeting aimed at increasing bilateral cooperation in the economic sector, which can be considered as a challenge to the unilateral sanctions imposed by Washington to Teheran.

According to a press released issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the meeting falls within the regular contacts scheduled by the Indian-Iranian Joint Commission and is headed by Iranian Minister for Economic Affairs and Finances Seyed Shamseddin Hosseini and Indian Foreign Minister S. M. Krishna.

Talks are being held a few days after New Delhi denounced the extra-territorial nature of the US unilateral sanctions on Iran for allegedly defying international norms about its atomic programme, suspected of developing atomic weapons.

"We are justifiably concerned about the extra-territorial nature of certain unilateral sanctions recently imposed by individual countries," said Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao.

Rao said "Iran is a country extremely important to India from the perspective of energy security" and an entrance door to the main markets of Central Asia.

On Friday, US President Barack Obama signed a bill imposing harsh sanctions on Iran that includes cutting off Iran's access to refined petroleum imports, including gasoline and jet fuel and bans US banks from doing business with foreign banks that provide services to the Revolutionary Guards. The bill will also deny companies that supply Iran with refined petroleum products access to US markets.

The new unilateral sanctions imposed by Obama come on top of the sanctions approved by the UN Security Council in June, in an attempt to force Teheran to abandon its nuclear program.

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