

Trump-Modi talks to focus on tariffs, trade, defence buy, oil & immigration

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump are set to discuss a wide range of issues including import tariffs, a mini trade deal, investments, defence purchase, energy supplies, nuclear cooperation, work visas and immigration in their bilateral meeting in Washington DC on Thursday.

Trump's announcement of "reciprocal tariffs" on trade partners prior to the bilateral meeting may set the tone for the discussions that could touch upon how India could increase its sourcing from the US to bring down its trade surplus.

MODI IN US

"Landed in Washington DC a short while ago. Looking forward to meeting @POTUS Donald Trump and building upon the India-USA Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership," Modi posted on social media platform 'X' on Wednesday.

Modi may also hold bilateral meetings with US National Security Advisor Michael Waltz, Tesla CEO Elon Musk and Indian-origin American entrepreneur and politician Vivek Ramaswamy, according to some reports.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives a warm welcome from the Indian community in Washington DC on Wednesday ANI

On Thursday early morning, Trump posted on his social media platform 'Truth Social' that he would soon announce reciprocal tariffs. "Three great weeks, perhaps the best ever, but today is the big one: reciprocal tariffs!!! make America great again!!!," Trump wrote.

The US is India's biggest export destination with export shipments in FY24 valued at \$77.51 billion and imports at \$42.19 billion, creating a trade surplus of over \$35 billion.

KEY POINTS

In Trump-Modi talks, increasing defence purchases from the US is likely to feature prominently as indicated by the US President in his telephonic talks with Modi late last month after assuming office on January 20. India may also agree to purchase more oil and gas

from the US, according to senior officials in the Petroleum Ministry.

In case Trump insists on more tariff cuts, over and above what India has carried out unilaterally in its Union Budget announcement for FY26, there could be talks around reviving a mini trade deal or a Free Trade Agreement between the two countries, sources said.

The Indian PM may also take up the issue of deportation of illegal Indian migrants from the US to ensure that they are treated humanely.

On Wednesday, Modi met US Director of National Intelligence Tulsi Gabbard and discussed enhancing bilateral intelligence cooperation, particularly in counterterrorism, cybersecurity, emerging threats, and strategic intelligence sharing, a MEA statement noted.