

# Next chapter in US ties in focus

Higher engagement in emerging technologies across telecom, space, and manufacturing to be discussed

SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY  
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Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's upcoming state visit to the US will focus on identifying the next step for a strategic partnership between the two nations.

"An important element of the visit will be a discussion on the bilateral relationship, the line of effort and objectives we set for ourselves in terms of looking at the next series of transformative ideas in the years ahead," Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said in a press conference on Monday.

In that, the effort would be to build a network in which these new domains of partnership would be properly positioned, he added. Technology is a key area of discussion as both nations look for higher bilateral engagement in areas such as telecommunications (telecom), space, and manufacturing, said Kwatra. Modi will be on his first State visit to the US from June 21-24, at the invitation of US President Joe Biden and First Lady Jill Biden. This will be the PM's eighth overall visit to the US, and the second since Biden took office.

Officials told *Business Standard* that India would showcase its indigenously developed telecom stacks for 4G and 5G during the visit. The government has offered the entire range of sophisticated Made-in-India 4G and 5G equipment and associated technologies to other nations and has marketed the technology extensively during the Group of Twenty (G20) discussions on the digital economy.

"The country has received enquiries from at least 15 global telecom companies as well as bilateral enquiries from nine nations," a

Department of Telecommunications official told *Business Standard*.

The stack has been tested for conducting 10 million simultaneous calls so far.

## Defence and trade

Greater defence industrial cooperation will be in special focus during the PM's visit, as part of a larger focus on bilateral defence ties. A new element of discussion during this visit and a road map for greater industrial partnership is expected to be created following this visit.

"It will explore how the defence industry on both sides can partner closely, not just in the field of co-production and co-development, but also do it in a manner that the supply chains and industrial ecosystem on both sides in this field can talk to each other far more intensely," said Kwatra.

US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan had both visited India in the past few months. Kwatra said the government was focused on leveraging the shared strength of both defence ecosystems to ensure more research and production opportunities in India.

Trade and investment will be the last area of discussion. Kwatra said bilateral trade has touched \$200 billion. Of this, merchandise trade stood at \$128.8 billion as of 2022-23. Modi will also discuss the inclusion of African nations and those from the Global South into the G20 grouping.

The visit will also see the first-ever address by an Indian PM to a joint sitting of the US Congress. Congressional leaders, including the Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin McCarthy and Speaker of the Senate Charles Schumer, had invited Modi.

## 'It's the Modi phenomenon': Diaspora ahead of PM visit



Indian Americans gather to send a message of welcome to Prime Minister Narendra Modi ahead of his State visit, in Washington

PHOTO: PTI

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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Hundreds of Indian-Americans have gathered at iconic locations across the US to send a message of welcome to Prime Minister Narendra Modi days ahead of his State Visit.

A few hundred Indian Americans from in and around the Washington DC area gathered near the National Monument on a bright Sunny Sunday to convey a message of unity and tell the prime minister that they are eagerly waiting for his arrival in the city.

"It's Modi phenomenon," MR Rangaswami, entrepreneur, philanthropist and founder of Indiaspora told PTI.

Chanting slogans of "Modi Modi" and India-US friendship, Indian

Americans walked in a procession for over an hour towards the historic Lincoln Memorial where the participants busted into an impromptu dance.

Several thousand Indian Americans are expected to attend the Welcome Ceremony on the South Lawns of the White House on Thursday when President Biden and First Lady Dr Jill Biden welcome him. While a large number of Indian Americans are still looking for a ticket to the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to enter the White House complex, there is a frantic search for a ticket to the address by Modi to the Joint Meeting of the US Congress. Senators and

Congressmen are having a tough time deciding whom to give their one ticket to watch the speech of the prime minister from the visitor's gallery.

The guest list of the State Dinner to be held on the White House lawns is a closely guarded secret. The office of the First Lady has not released any information related to the State Dinner.

However, speculation is rife that some 400 people would be attending the luncheon being hosted in honour of the prime minister.

Several eminent Indian American serving in the Biden Administration are also expected to be attending the State Dinner.

## Modi to meet Egypt's India Unit

On his way back from the US, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi will be in Egypt for two days from June 24. The first visit by an Indian PM to the North African country will see Modi meeting a select group of high-level ministers called the India Unit.

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi had been the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations in Delhi. After his return to Egypt, Sisi constituted the unit. It is focused on quickly expanding business and political engagement with India.

In the ensuing months, ministerial meetings with the country had picked up pace, with External Affairs Minister S

Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh visiting the country.

Egypt has also been invited as a special guest during the Group of Twenty meetings in India. A ministerial-level delegation, led by the Chairperson of Egypt's Suez Canal Authority, is currently in India.

The PM will visit the 11th-century Al-Hakim mosque in Egypt which was recently renovated by India's Bohra Muslim community. Egypt's Grand Mufti also visited India in May.

He will also pay tribute to the Indian soldiers who died fighting for Egypt during the First World War. SUBHAYAN CHAKRABORTY