

Musk to drive Tesla into India soon

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American entrepreneur Elon Musk is planning to visit India next year, after receiving an invitation from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to explore opportunities in the country for investments in electric mobility and the commercial space sector. Following his meeting in New York with the prime minister, who is on a three-day state visit to the US, the Tesla Motors CEO said the company would set up shop in

India “as soon as humanly possible”.

Speaking with reporters after the meeting, Musk said: “We do not want to jump the gun on an announcement but I think it is quite likely that it will be a significant investment in our relationship with India.” “I am extremely excited about the future for India. India has more promise than any large country in the world,” he said, adding, “He (Modi) really cares about India, and is pushing us to make significant investment in the country, which is something that we intend to do. We are figuring out the right timing.”

Turn to Page 4 ▶



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P4

FROM PAGE 1

Tesla in India...

The entrepreneur also said that he intends to visit India next year.

On his meeting with Musk, Modi tweeted: "Great meeting you today @elonmusk! We had multifaceted conversations on issues ranging from energy to spirituality." To this, Musk replied: "It was an honour to meet again".

Asked by reporters about areas in which he would like to invest in India, Musk replied in all three pillars of sustainable energy future. "This includes, sustainable energy genera-

tion from –solar and wind; creating the battery infrastructure; and finally electric vehicles." He said he hopes to bring SpaceX's Starlink satellite internet service to India, as well.

Starlink is a satellite internet system, comprising about 4,000 small satellites orbiting the low Earth orbit. "I think Starlink internet could be incredibly helpful, especially to connect remote or rural villages which may have no access to the internet," he said.

Besides Musk, the Prime Minister met several thought leaders from various walks of life, including astrophysicist and author Neil deGrasse Tyson, Nobel laureate economist Paul Romer, author Nicholas Nassim Taleb and investor Ray Dalio. He met

one-on-one with some of them, while others interacted with him in groups.

Tesla has been planning to enter India for at least five years now. The company has demanded a significant reduction in the steep import duty on electric vehicles. According to Indian laws, an electric vehicle that costs over \$40,000 attracts 60 per cent import tax. This will make Tesla cars much more expensive in India.

Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari earlier this year had said that Tesla would be eligible for subsidies and discounts provided it manufactures in India and does not bring in already built cars from China.



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PHOTO: PTI