

Canada PM's likely India visit to boost Cepa talks

Both sides working to ensure Carney visits New Delhi before March-end

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India and Canada are working to ensure that Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney visits New Delhi before the end of March, with both countries keen to spur the negotiations for a bilateral trade deal.

The two sides are also looking for greater cooperation in the civilian nuclear sector, and India is exploring more investments from Canadian pension funds.

On Tuesday, Carney told the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos that Canada had shifted its strategic posture and was working on new trade and security partnerships, including with India, Qatar, Thailand, the Philippines, and trade alliances, as well as groupings such as Mercosur and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

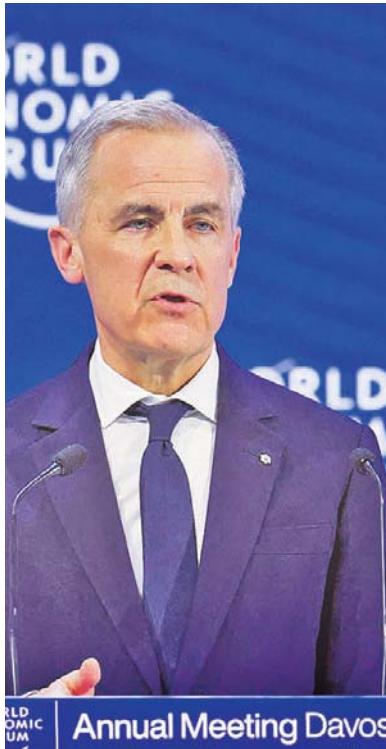
In his speech, Carney also alluded to the trade deal he signed last week with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

India-Canada ties have improved since Carney was elected Prime Minister last year. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Carney met in Johannesburg in November on the sidelines of the G20 Summit. Following the meeting, India's Ministry of External Affairs said the two sides would initiate negotiations on a "high-ambition Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (Cepa)" aimed at doubling bilateral trade to \$50 billion by 2030.

Sources in New Delhi said both sides were finalising the terms of reference for the CEPA negotiations.

While the negotiations on the India-US trade deal have meandered, New Delhi has tried to diversify its exports, particularly after the White House imposed 50 per cent tariffs on Indian goods. India and the European Union are set to announce the conclusion of their negotiations on a trade deal on January 27 and sign a new security and defence partnership. Recently, India signed a free-trade agreement with Oman, and some other FTAs are also in the works.

In Davos, Carney said, "We actively take on the world as it is, not wait for the world



Canadian PM Mark Carney told the World Economic Forum on Tuesday that his country was working on new trade and security partnerships with India and other nations

as we wish it to be."

The Canadian PM argued in his address that the world's middle powers must band together to resist coercion from aggressive superpowers. Carney said recent events have shown the "rules-based international order" is effectively dead, which means Canada and other countries have no choice but to create new alliances to oppose pressure tactics and intimidation by the world's great powers.

Carney listed Canada's strategic advantages, including large reserves of conventional energy and critical minerals.

"Our pension funds are amongst the world's largest and most sophisticated investors," he said.

Sources said that during the Johannesburg meeting, India invited greater participation by Canadian pension funds and that the two sides are also negotiating a long-term uranium supply agreement worth \$2.8 billion. They are also exploring expanded civil nuclear cooperation after the passage of the Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025. Canada's National Security and Intelligence Adviser, Nathalie G Drouin, visited India in September, while Foreign Minister Anita Anand travelled to New Delhi in October. Meanwhile, Universities Canada, an umbrella body representing the country's higher education institutions, has announced that 21 university presidents from across Canada will visit India in the first week of February.

"Following the Government of Canada's recent announcement highlighting renewed momentum in Canada-India relations and the launch of negotiations toward a CEPA, Universities Canada is pleased to announce it will lead a nationwide delegation of Canadian university presidents to India from February 2 to 6, 2026," it said on Tuesday.

It said the mission will advance India-Canada research collaboration and expand partnerships with industry.

"The mission builds on the \$1.7-billion research and talent strategy recently announced in Canada's federal budget and advances the New Roadmap for Canada-India relations announced in October 2025, reflecting growing momentum toward a renewed partnership between the two countries," it said.

The 21 university presidents from across Canada would meet with leaders from India's higher education sector, government and industry in Goa, New Delhi and GIFT City to explore opportunities for research collaboration, academic exchange and sustainable models of transnational education.