

## **PM Modi arrives in UAE**

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**Abu Dhabi:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived here today on a two-day visit to the strategically-important UAE during which he will hold talks with the country's top leadership to enhance cooperation in key areas of trade and security and address the Indian diaspora.

Modi, who is the first Indian Prime Minister to visit this strategic Gulf nation in 34 years, was received by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, at the airport, in a departure from protocol. The Crown Prince was also accompanied by his five brothers.

The last dignitary to be received by the Crown Prince, who is also the Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, at the airport was King of Morocco in May this year. After the ceremonial welcome at the airport, Modi went to his hotel, Emirates Palace.

His first public engagement is a visit to Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque, a key place of worship in the UAE and known as a masterpiece of Islamic architecture.

The mosque is third largest in the world after the ones in Mecca and Madina in Saudi Arabia. It is named after the founder and first President of the UAE, the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan. However, the timing of Prime Minister's visit to the mosque has been kept in such a way that it does not coincide with the evening prayers there.

After his visit to the mosque, Modi is scheduled to interact with Indian workers in their camps-ICAD. Later in the day, dinner will be hosted by Managing Director of Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) Hamed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan.

ADIA has USD 800 billion sovereign funds and India is expected to woo it to make investments in the country in the infrastructure sector.

During his visit, Modi will seek enhanced cooperation in energy and trade and reach out to investors to promote India as an attractive business destination.

Given that late Indira Gandhi was the last Prime Minister to visit UAE in 1981, Modi's visit is seen as an opportunity to boost India-UAE ties in key areas of trade and security.

He has also made it clear that he wanted the UAE to be India's foremost partner in countering terrorism. Describing the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as a "valued partner", Modi, ahead of his visit, had said the extent of vibrant bilateral relations were reflected by the fact that India was the second largest trading partner of the Gulf nation.

The UAE is the third largest trading partner of India. After holding talks with the Crown Prince here tomorrow, the Prime Minister will fly to Dubai, where he will stay for just few hours, which will be packed with a meeting with Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, the vice president and the Prime Minister of the UAE, a visit to world's tallest Burj Khalifa and a much-hyped address to the Indian community at the Dubai Cricket Ground among other engagements.

"We have resolved to sustain regular high-level engagement and build a strong and comprehensive strategic partnership," he said.

- IANS