

PM Modi arrives in Iran, offers prayers at gurudwara

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Tehran: Looking to strengthen trade, investment and energy ties with Iran, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today arrived here on a two-day official visit, offered prayers at the Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha Gurudwara.

"Starting with the cultural connect... PM @narendramodi at the Bhai Ganga Singh Sabha Gurudwara in Tehran," the Prime Minister's Office tweeted.

Modi, who was given a red carpet welcome at the airport, was received by Iranian Economic Affairs and Finance Minister Ali Tayebnia.

"Reached Iran, a land with whom India shares civilisational ties. Hope to enhance economic partnership between our nations," said Narendra Modi upon his arrival in Tehran.

"I also hope my Iran visit further cements cultural & people-to-people ties between India & Iran," he added.

He will be accorded an official welcome on Monday following which he will hold talks with Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei and President Hassan Rouhani.

Connectivity, energy security and bilateral trade are on top of Modi's agenda during his visit which comes a little over a month-and-a-half of his trip to Saudi Arabia.

PM Modi, who straight away went to the gurudwara in Tehran, said, "We Indians have a specialty. We accept everyone and assimilate with everyone."

On Monday, the trilateral agreement between India, Iran and Afghanistan to develop the Chabahar port in that Gulf nation will be signed.

The prime minister will also inaugurate an Indian cultural festival in Iran on Monday.

Ahead of his departure from New Delhi, Modi tweeted that he looked forward to his visit to Iran at the invitation of President Rouhani.

"India and Iran enjoy civilisational ties and have shared interest in the peace, security, stability and prosperity of the region," he said.

He said his meetings with President Rouhani and Supreme Leader Khamenei would provide an opportunity to advance the strategic partnership between India and Iran.

Modi said that priority would be given to enhancing connectivity, trade, investments, energy partnership, culture and people-to-people contacts.

- (With IANS inputs)