

PM Modi visits Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum, pays homage to war heroes

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Hanoi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi kick started his engagement here by paying homage to national heroes and martyrs at their monuments this morning.

He also laid wreath at the war memorial located across the Ba Dinh Square, across the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and close to Hanoi Citadel.

“Beginning with the memory of Vietnam’s Martyrs, PM @narendramodi lays wreath at Monument of National Heroes & Martyrs,” Ministry of External Affairs Official Spokesperson Vikas Swarup tweeted.

“Programmes in Vietnam begin with a wreath laying ceremony at the Monument of National Heroes and Martyrs,” tweeted PMO.

Prime Minister Modi then paid homage to revered leader Ho Chi Minh at his mausoleum.

Ho Chi Minh, who is often called "the Vietnamese George Washington" by Communist Vietnamese, has a city named after him. After his death, Ho's followers embalmed his body and put it in a tomb, the mausoleum, where he is still worshipped today.

“A tribute to one of the most respected icons of the 20th century” PM @narendramodi at the Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum,” tweeted PMO.

PM Modi was then accorded a ceremonial welcome at the forecourts of Presidential Palace and was given a guard of honour by the Vietnamese government.

The Prime Minister flew into the Vietnamese capital on his maiden visit to hold wide-ranging talks with the country's top leadership on ways to bolster strategic bilateral ties in key areas like defence, security, counterterrorism and trade.

The visit, that marks the first by an Indian premier to the country in 15 years, takes place on his way to Hangzhou, China to attend the G20 Summit beginning Sunday.

PM Modi will hold extensive talks with Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc and call on President Tran Dai Quang today.

He is also scheduled to meet Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong and National Assembly

Chairwoman Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan.

Defence, security, science and technology, trade and culture are some of the issues on the plate for the talks.

"Vietnamese Prime Minister Phuc and I would also be discussing regional cooperation and stability and our multilateral cooperation," Modi told Voice of Vietnam Radio network earlier.

The thrust of our multifaceted relationship is to work towards stability, maintenance of peace, economic growth and prosperity in our countries, Asia and beyond, he added.

Modi emphasised that India's Act East Policy aimed to forge partnerships with its eastern neighbours to encompass security, strategic, political, counter-terrorism, and defence collaboration in addition to economic ties.

"It was crystallised to underscore the importance of East Asian neighbors of India and to make them a priority in our foreign policy engagement," he told the radio, adding that Vietnam was an integral member of ASEAN and is a "very important pillar in our Act East Policy".

India's ONGC Videsh Limited is engaged in oil exploration projects in Vietnam for over three decades and there may be announcements about new projects in the sector during the bilateral visit, which is taking place after a gap of 15 years.

Vietnam is the ASEAN Coordinator for India for 2015-18 and the two countries have expressed their strong commitment in strengthening partnership within the India-ASEAN and Mekong-Ganga Cooperation frameworks.

"We wish to forge a strong economic relationship with Vietnam that can mutually benefit our citizens. Strengthening the people to people ties will also be my endeavour during the Vietnam visit," the premier said on his Facebook page yesterday.

His visit comes after the July final award by the Hague tribunal on the South China Sea issue. India's position has always been that all parties adhere and respect the tribunal, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).

Officials in response to a question on Vietnam's request to India to supply Brahmos missiles yesterday said that both sides are engaged in "robust" conversation on stepping up cooperation in various areas including defence.

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