

world

# India set to welcome Trump

● Trump, accompanied by his wife Melania, and a high-level delegation, will land at the Ahmedabad airport in Gujarat

● The two leaders will head today night to New Delhi ahead of talks the following day focusing on strategic partnership and trade

Reuters | Ahmedabad, India

When President Trump arrives on his first official visit to India today, his first stop will be Ahmedabad, the largest city in the western state of Gujarat. It's the place where Indian freedom leader Mahatma Gandhi built his ashram, a place for prayer and communal living, on a riverbank lined with Indian lilac trees.

In Ahmedabad, a wall at least six feet high in places will block a slum from Trump's view.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made grand visits to his home state of Gujarat a signature of his time in power, with the leaders of Japan and China both taking similar trips to Ahmedabad, the state's largest city.

But the arrival of Trump, residents and officials say, is unprecedented in scale.

On Sunday, more than 10,000 police - some mounted on camels - fanned out across the city. At the Sabarmati Ashram, the former home of Mahatma Gandhi, labourers watered lawns and painted walls.

"A general facelift is being done," said Kartikeya Sarabhai, a trustee of the organisation. "(But) the beauty of the Ashram is in its simplicity."

The modest complex is a possible 15-minute stop today for



Trump has proclaimed 7 to 10 million people will come to watch him as he arrives for his first visit to India on Monday and speaks from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hometown Ahmedabad.



Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel patrol at the historic Taj Mahal



Border security force soldiers ride their camels as they take part in a rehearsal for a road show



A worker mops the floor inside Gandhi Ashram in Ahmedabad, India

Trump, whose New York penthouse is decorated in gold in the style of French king Louis XIV.

Sarabhai said that should Trump visit, he is likely to be given a charkha, a traditional spinning wheel used by Gandhi, as well as a copy of his autobiography.

"We are also considering gifting a set of (Gandhi's) Three Monkeys, which stress on not seeing, hearing, or speaking evil," Sarabhai added.

Preparations have not been

without problems.

A 30-foot arch by the VIP entrance to the stadium expected to be used by Trump collapsed on Sunday morning due to high winds, police said, though it was quickly repaired.

### Knives Out

There is enthusiasm among many in India for Trump's arrival, but others have been angered at the cost - nearly \$12 million for a three-hour visit, according to officials.

The two leaders will head Monday night to New Delhi ahead of talks the following day focusing on strategic partnership and trade. India and the U.S. have boosted the number of military exercises they conduct jointly in recent years and Washington increasingly looks toward the world's largest democracy as a buffer against China's growing power in the Indo-Pacific region.

**Monday, Feb 24**

- 11.40am** Arrive in Ahmedabad at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport
- 12.15pm:** Visit to Sabarmati Ashram
- 1.05pm:** Namaste Trump Event at Motera Stadium
- 3.30pm:** Leave for Agra
- 5.15pm:** Visit to Taj Mahal
- 5.45pm:** Leave for Delhi
- 7.30pm:** Arrive in Delhi at Palam Air Force Station

**Tuesday, Feb 25**

- 10.00am** Ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhawan
- 10.30am** Wreath laying at the Samadhi of Mahatma Gandhi at Rajghat
- 11.00am** Meeting with PM Narendra Modi at Hyderabad House
- 12.40pm** Exchange of agreements and press statement at Hyderabad House

**7.30pm** Meeting with President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhawan

**10.00pm** Leave for the US

Trump's Itinerary

## Trump Tweets Video of Himself as 'Bahubali'



Screengrabs taken from a video retweeted by Trump ahead of his visit to India

### The main issues of contention between the two countries

#### Tariffs

Duties on US imports, including on \$600 million worth of Californian almonds as well as apples, steel and chemicals

Tariffs on items such as shoes, children's tricycles and furniture

India's plans to force foreign firms to store Indian consumers' data locally, e-commerce regulations hitting firms like Amazon and Walmart.

Modi's "Make in India" drive mirroring Trump's "America First" mantra.

#### Steel

However, many of India's recent moves have been in response to actions by the Trump administration, starting with its 2018 decision to impose tariffs on steel and aluminium from India and other countries.

India's exports of steel products have tumbled 46 percent according to the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Exporters of mechanical and electrical machinery and auto parts have also suffered.

Last year, Trump added to the pain by suspending India's privileges under the decades-old US Generalized System of Preferences programme that had allowed it to ship \$6 billion in goods duty-free.

The US wants to sell more medical devices like stents to India while US dairy farmers -- a key voter base for Trump ahead of his re-election push in November -- want greater access for their products.

India says it is worried American cows have been fed bovine extracts -- a no-no in a country where most Hindus believe the animals are sacred.

#### Easy rider?

The main "deliverable" that both strongmen want is a big trade deal, and in its absence they might instead strike a smaller agreement, according to press reports.

This could include India lowering duties on large-engine Harley-Davidson motorcycles -- long a bugbear of Trump -- and farm products like alfalfa hay and pecans, according to Bloomberg News.

"We would not like to rush into a deal, as the issues involved are complicated and there are many decisions which actually could affect or impact the lives of millions of people on the ground," cautioned an Indian government spokesman.

The wire | Washington

Jared Kushner and a galaxy of top American officials.

"Look so forward to being with my great friends INDIA!" Trump said in a tweet on Saturday.

US President Donald Trump on Saturday said he was looking forward to being with his "great friends" in India as he retweeted a short video in which his face was superimposed on the hit movie-character Bahubali, showing the president as a great saviour bringing peace to his kingdom.

Along with the tweet, Trump retweeted an 81-second video by a Twitter account identified as "Sol" with the handle Solmeme1.

Trump will be accompanied by a high-level delegation including First Lady Melania Trump, the President's daughter Ivanka Trump, son-in-law

"To celebrate Trump's visit to India I wanted to make a video to show how in my warped mind it will go... USA and India united!" the handle Solmeme1 tweeted in the original post with the video.