

## PM Modi begins Arab outreach from Jordan

Narendra Modi received by his Jordan counterpart, Hani Al-Mulki, in Amman on Friday. PTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral discussions with King Abdullah II of Jordan on Friday, the External Affairs Ministry said in an official statement. The parleys with the king in Amman was the first of Mr. Modi's meetings during the four-day trip to the West Asian region, which will include a historic first visit to Palestine scheduled for Saturday.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a very cordial meeting with His Majesty King of Jordan immediately upon arrival in Amman. In a gracious and personal gesture, the king invited the Prime Minister to his residence for the meeting," Ministry spokesperson said in a social media message.

The meeting in Amman is likely to serve as a warm-up session as King Abdullah II is scheduled to visit Delhi. "The King described the meeting as the beginning of a new chapter in our ties. Prime Minister expressed sincere thanks for logistical support extended for smooth facilitation for his Palestine visit," the Ministry said.

### Dehyphenated tour

The visit to Palestine to begin officially on Saturday is a de-hyphenated tour as Mr. Modi will enter the territory of West Bank without having to go through Israel. He is expected to leave for Ramallah, the Palestinian capital in a helicopter and leave for the United Arab Emirates after a daylong visit.

"The Presidency announced that President Abbas and his guest, Prime Minister of India, will hold a session of important talks, which will address the latest developments in the political process in the region because of India's international weight," a statement from the office of President Mahmoud Abbas of Palestine said. The statement described the visiting Indian Prime Minister as the "grand guest." In Ramallah, President Abbas will hold a luncheon in honour of Mr. Modi and his delegation.

### UAE trip

Following the trip to Ramallah, Mr. Modi will leave for the UAE for a two-day trip which is expected to culminate in a number of bilateral agreements. The UAE media reported on Friday that India and the UAE were expected to launch the first-ever naval exercise in the Gulf region, near the coast of Abu Dhabi in March. Apart from such military and security cooperation, 12 to 14 agreements are likely to be signed, regional media has reported.

Mr. Modi will have a busy schedule in the UAE, with meetings lined up with the country's leaders, the Indian community and businessmen, India's envoy in Abu Dhabi said.

He will arrive in Abu Dhabi on Saturday from Palestine and then will have bilateral engagements followed by a banquet, Navdeep Singh Suri said. On Sunday, the Prime Minister will go to Dubai where he will watch the live-streaming of a temple inauguration ceremony and then address the Indian community at Opera House.

( With PTI inputs )

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