

# UNITED STATES OPEN TO TALKS ON GSP WITH INDIA, SAYS POMPEO

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U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at the India Ideas Summit in Washington. AFP/NICHOLAS KAMM

U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo hinted that it was possible to reinstate the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP), a program for preferential access to certain goods markets in the U.S., for India. The administration official is expected to discuss the issue as well as 5G network technology and data localization while in New Delhi later this month on a visit.

“We’ll probably discuss the recent decision about the GSP program...we remain open to dialogue, and hope that our friends in India will drop their trade barriers and trust the competitiveness of their own companies, their own businesses, their own people and private sector companies,” Mr. Pompeo said as he previewed his trip to New Delhi during a speech the U.S. India Business Council’s India Ideas Summit in Washington D.C.

## For free data flow

In addition to the GSP, data localisation regulations and proposed policies have been a source of friction between the two countries.

“We’ll also push for free flow of data across borders, not just to help American companies, but to protect data and secure consumers’ privacy,” Mr. Pompeo said.

“And speaking of privacy, we are eager to help India establish secure communications networks — including 5G networks,” the Secretary of State said.

The Trump administration is pushing its allies and partner countries to block the Chinese telecom giant Huawei from participating in building their next generation (5G) telecommunication networks and has put Huawei on a trade blacklist for U.S. companies.

In a speech that went to some lengths to stress that Washington understood India’s post-Independence economic history and current geopolitical realities, Mr Pompeo touched on a common theme — a India-U.S. partnership based on values.

“We get it. We realise it’s different to deal with the likes of China and Pakistan from across the ocean than it is when they are on your borders. That’s why in this room and not so many months ago, I elaborated on President Trump’s vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific,” Mr. Pompeo said. “It starts from the premise that we share a common set of values...it’s only natural that the world’s most populous democracy should partner with the world’s oldest democracy.”

Mr Pompeo also made a pitch for U.S. crude oil and natural gas during an interaction with LNG company Tellurian’s CEO, Meg Gentle.

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