

## PM HEADS TO GERMANY FOR G-7 SUMMIT

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau will seek a reset in ties as they hold bilateral talks on the sidelines of the G-7 summit in Germany on June 26-27, their first such meeting in four years, since Mr. Trudeau's visit to India in 2018.

Relations had come under strain in 2020, over Mr. Trudeau's comments on the farmers' protests in 2020, which India had protested with a stern demarche, and cancellation of official meetings, but New Delhi and Ottawa have been working together in a number of areas, particularly on a trade deal, in an effort to bring ties back on track.

The two leaders, who will be in the Bavarian resort of Schloss Elmau during the summit, where India is one of the special invitees, had met briefly during the G-20 summit in Rome in October 2021, and spoken on the telephone three times during the pandemic.

In his departure statement on Saturday, Mr. Modi, who will be in Germany on Sunday, and then go to the United Arab Emirates on Tuesday, said that he would make interventions during the special sessions on "topical issues such as environment, energy, climate, food security, health, counter-terrorism, gender equality and democracy."

Mr. Modi will fly into Munich on Sunday and attend an Indian diaspora community event, before being taken by helicopter to Schloss Elmau. A meeting with Argentinian President Alberto Fernandez and another with the Bavarian Minister-President Markus Thomas Theodor Söder are scheduled for Sunday as well.

When asked, the Canadian High Commission spokesperson confirmed that a bilateral meeting between Mr. Modi and Mr. Trudeau is being scheduled during the G-7 summit, possibly on Monday, and that "strengthening engagement and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific and on climate, as well as deepening trade ties" is on the agenda for talks.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) declined to comment on the meeting, saying Mr. Modi's schedule is still being finalised.

However, an official confirmed the summit, adding that apart from the economic agenda, with an interim trade agreement expected to be completed this year, the two leaders would discuss security and "mobility" issues, referring to problems in visas and immigration.

### Visa approvals

On Friday, the MEA announced that senior officials dealing with eight western countries, including the U.S. and Canada, had met with heads of missions in New Delhi to discuss how to streamline visas to Indian students who were facing long delays.

Currently, 7,00,000 Indian applications for visas are pending with the Canadian government.

Sources said it is also likely that Mr. Trudeau would discuss India's stand on the war in Ukraine, given that the Canadian Prime Minister, who made what he called stopping "Russia's illegal actions" the focus of his discussions in Kigali, Rwanda on Saturday, where he attended the Commonwealth Summit.

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