

U.S. PLACES \$500-BILLION TARGET IN 2+2 BACKDROP

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India's first '2+2 dialogue' with the U.S. will help achieve the \$500 billion bilateral trade target between the two nations by 2025 and deepen ties among the world's largest democracies, according to Thomas J. Donohue, president and CEO, U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Defence Secretary Jim Mattis are scheduled to hold the first 2+2 dialogue with Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on Thursday.

Mr. Donohue was in Mumbai on Wednesday to address the 43rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the U.S.-India Business Council (USIBC).

"You can't do defence without economic strength and the 2+2 will set the groundwork for something that will not only improve our defence ties, but will clearly take us towards the \$500 billion. I have seen a lot of steady growth of trade and investment with India," Mr. Donohue said.

Inclusion of India in a select list of countries like Japan, South Korea and Australia, with whom the U.S. is having such a dialogue, makes the intentions very evident, he said.

The chamber is making a case with the Trump administration to welcome Indian high skilled workers with 'open arms', he said.

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