

# Modi shoots for Predator drones and other critical tech and investments in talks with US CEOs



Prime Minister Narendra Modi holds a meeting with President and CEO of Qualcomm Cristiano R Amon. (Credits: ANI)

WASHINGTON: Getting American nuclear-powered submarine technology may be bit of a stretch for an India that is tied to the hip with Russia in this sphere, but acquiring US Predator drones is not a pie in the sky anymore.

Prime Minister [Narendra Modi](#)'s limited business engagements with US CEOs on Thursday included a 20-minute one-on-one meeting with Vivek Lall, CEO of General Atomics -- makers of the dreaded unmanned aircraft -- whose storied career includes stints with armaments companies such as Boeing, Raytheon, and Lockheed Martin.

General Atomics is already working with both governments in an effort to provide India with latest systems and technologies supporting national defence, and it has also partnered with Indian companies to develop solutions for Indian defence as well as capacity building. The meeting was aimed at accelerating the programs.

[PM Modi's US visit: Live updates](#)

The Jakarta-born Lall is an old India hand, having headed both Boeing's commercial and defence units in India (besides a stint with Reliance). But his elevation as CEO of General Atomics in June 2020 was seen as a opportunity for New Delhi to acquire critical technology given his experience in navigating US-India defence deals, including India's acquisition of C17 strategic lift aircraft, P-8I Anti-submarine warfare aircraft, and Harpoon Missiles.

Indian officials said the Prime Minister discussed "advancing defence manufacturing, use of emerging technologies & augmenting capacity building in India," in his meeting with Lall.

Lall is one of five US CEOs who had individual meetings with Modi as India pressed forward with its bid to acquire cutting edge technology and investments at a time when there is deep distrust of China in Washington DC.

Another Indian-American CEO to meet the Prime Minister on Thursday was Adobe Systems' Shantanu Narayen, whose discussion with Modi centered on India's flagship DigitalIndia program and use of emerging technologies in sectors like health, education, and R&D. After North America, India represents Adobe's biggest operations with over 6,000 employees across its campuses in Noida and Bengaluru.

Modi also met [Mark Widmar](#), CEO of First Solar, [Cristiano Amon](#), President & CEO of Qualcomm, and [Stephen Schwarzman](#) from Blackstone as India attempted to step into the breach between Washington and Beijing to ramp up its equities.

Officials said Modi discussed India's renewable energy landscape with Widmar, and the CEO shared plans to use Production Linked Incentive scheme for manufacturing solar power equipment with unique thin-film technology and integrating India into global supply chains. Talks with Amon centered on 5G technology and semiconductors.

"It was a great meeting. We are proud of our partnership with India. We spoke on implementing 5G based tech, We spoke on semiconductors. We also spoke on creating a mobile phone-based ecosystem. It was a very productive meeting," Amon told reporters.

Modi's final meeting was with Stephen Schwarzman, CEO of Blackstone, which has already invested around \$ 15 billion in India across sectors such as private equity, real estate, education, fashion, packaging and housing finance. Blackstone Real Estate Fund is the largest owner of commercial real estate in India and the company played a key role in launching India's first real estate investment trust (REIT) along with its partner Embassy Group in 2019 and has since then launched two REITs in the country.including under the National Infrastructure Pipeline and National Monetisation Pipeline.

Officials said the latest discussions centered around ongoing projects and further investment opportunities in India, including under the National Infrastructure Pipeline and National Monetisation Pipeline.