

## **Kamal Nath, US leaders discuss WTO and bilateral issues**

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MUMBAI -- Commerce and industry minister Kamal Nath today met US trade representative Susan C Schwab, treasury secretary Henry M Paulson and other senior officials and government leaders in Washington and held talks on both bilateral and WTO issues.

The talks, which were in addition to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) discussions, also touched on other bilateral issues, including a bilateral investment treaty.

The second round of exploratory discussions on the bilateral investment pact are being held in Washington on June 11-13, a release issued by the Indian embassy said.

The minister also met the secretary of agriculture, E D Schafer, and US commerce secretary Carlos M Gutierrez.

Kamal Nath and Susan C Schwab are slated to meet again for detailed deliberations on the Doha Development Round.

The minister will be participating in the US-India Global Partnership Summit hosted by the US-India Business Council

Top trade officials from the United States and India, were at odds in global trade talks, which have been plagued by conflict since they began in 2001.

The United States and India have maintained a cordial but contentious relationship in the round, where they have sparred over generous US farm subsidies and India's refusal to drop protections for its farmers and other workers.

The negotiations, which have been plagued by conflict since they began in 2001, seek to lower trade barriers and boost world commerce, with a special focus on incorporating developing countries into the global economy.

The standoff reflects the larger tension between developed countries, eager for greater access to consumers in emerging economies, and developing countries, which want to shield their vulnerable population from the vicissitudes of the globalised economy.