

Devyani Khobragade episode 'painful period' for both India and USA: US official

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New York: Describing the Devyani Khobragade episode as a "painful period" in India-US ties, the US has said the incident has led to "important learnings" and there is a determination to avoid such instances.

US assistant secretary of state for south and central Asian affairs Nisha Desai Biswal said following the episode, there are things that the US has tried to do differently in terms of its officials in India.

Asked about the Khobragade episode at her talk on US- India relations at the consulate general of India's Media-India Lecture Series, Biswal said the incident involving the former Deputy Counsel General was a "painful period in the bilateral relationship.

"Both governments learned some important lessons and we achieved some important understandings and clarity in how to operate in each others' systems, with more clarity to the expectations that we each have of the other," she said.

Khobragade, a former Indian deputy consul general here, was arrested in December 2013 on charges of visa fraud. The charges were rejected by her. Her arrest and mistreatment resulted in a major diplomatic row between India and the US.

India took several retaliatory measures like reducing the diplomatic privileges of American diplomats in the country and bringing it at par with what Indian diplomats get in the US.

Biswal further said, following the episode, there are things that the US has tried to do differently in terms of its officials in India.

"We had very important learnings that came out of that episode. There is a determination to avoid such instances," she said, adding that both India and the US work in "complex and highly regulated environments."

"We have very robust and open societies and so it is going to be complex in managing all of the different aspects of this relationship," she said.

There will be times when things go wrong, when some American official could violate rules and regulations and "we will have to deal with it and vice versa", Biswal said.

She said the countries have to learn how to operate within each others' walls and it gets "complicated" at times but a part of the business of diplomacy is navigating the complex issues.

- PTI