

India, US have to resist forces of intolerance: Biden

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Washington: India and the US have to resist the forces of intolerance and remain vigilant in their efforts to make the democracies stronger and more inclusive, Vice- President Joe Biden has said.

Speaking at the 40th Annual Gala of the US India Business Council (USIBC) last evening, he also said, American can be India's "best friend", and that the challenges of the current world bring the two countries closer than ever before.

"Both our nations have to resist the forces of intolerance and remain vigilant in our efforts to make our democracies stronger and more inclusive. It's not just the morally right thing to do, it's the economic necessary thing to do," the Vice-President said.

Biden's address, his second major speech on India in the last 100 days, also kicked off the inaugural India US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue. "We are in a new era of India US relationship," he said. "We're both major players on the world stage.

And it's up to us -- India and the United States -- to lead not by the example of our power, but by the power of our example. As I said, it's not just the morally right thing to do, it's in the long-term economic interests of India and quite frankly the whole world.

And it works," Biden said. The Vice-President also said, "We need to stand together on counter terrorism and counter violent extremism," adding, the most important issue of the era is the challenges posed by climate change.

Addressing top corporate leaders from the two countries, Biden said, ultimately commercial success depends on the development of human capital. It's India's greatest resource, adding, the US has benefitted from that Indian greatest resource here.

"We've experienced it first-hand -- 3 million Indian- Americans whose talent have shaped the fabric of this country in our schools, our hospitals, our research labs, in our courtrooms, in our government, in the arts and entertainment, and from Silicon Valley to Main Street," he said.

It is reflected also in the uniform so many Indian-Americans wear for the US military, he added. Referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Silicon Valley next week, Biden said, the visiting leader will see during his visit that "entrepreneurship is hard-wired in the DNA of both Americans and Indians."

Observing that there is so much potential in trade and investment between the two countries, there is no reason that it cannot increase five times.

- PTI