

US to ask Modi govt to turn ideals of tolerance into reality

15/10/2015 17:21 by admin

Washington: A top American diplomat on religious freedom has said the US will encourage the Modi government to turn the ideals of "tolerance and civility" into reality across the country, days after the Prime Minister called for communal harmony in the backdrop of the Dadri lynching incident.

"Just after this controversy over beef incidents, the Prime Minister called for civility and tolerance between the different communities. We are going to encourage the Prime Minister and the government to take those ideals and turn them into reality all across the country," US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, David Saperstein, told PTI.

Saperstein was responding to a question on the status of religious freedom in India after the State Department released its annual Congressional mandated report on International Religious Freedom for the year 2014.

The India section of the report, which includes the UPA rule till May 26, says that in 2014, India witnessed religiously motivated killings, arrests, riots and coerced religious conversions and the police in some cases failed to respond effectively to communal violence.

"We do not make evaluations, we just present the facts. I would say we would let the report speak for itself," Saperstein said when specifically asked about religious freedom under the Modi government.

However, the top American diplomat on international religious freedom referred to the Siri Fort speech made by the US President Barack Obama on the importance of religious freedom and tolerance when he was in New Delhi in January.

"President of United States when he was there spoke very forcefully about the need to avoid seeing the country splintered along the religious lines," Saperstein said adding that for the well-being of the country those problems need to be addressed.

"We continue to push with the Indian government to take steps to ameliorate the conditions that lead to violence and to take steps where every community which is in minority and vulnerable in certain areas that they would have protection," the American diplomat said.

Against the backdrop of the Dadri lynching incident, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had last week pitched for communal harmony and brotherhood in the country, saying Hindus and Muslims should work together to fight the common enemy of poverty.

- PTI