

White House praises PM Modi's fight against climate change

07/06/2016 22:11 by admin

Washington: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has come in for praise from the White House over India's fight against climate change ahead of his meeting with US President Barack Obama on Tuesday.

White House Press Secretary Josh Earnest, addressing a briefing on Monday, said that Modi has demonstrated a "lot of leadership" on the issue of fighting climate change.

"Obviously, this is a situation where Modi demonstrated a lot of leadership, even in the face of a difficult political climate back home. He committed India to standards that will be good for the Indian population... (and) will be good for the rest of the world, too," Earnest said ahead of Modi's meeting with Obama, who has been championing the fight against climate change.

Earnest said Obama acknowledges the important role India played in making commitments to climate change agreement in Paris.

The US President has a lot of respect for the way Modi has handled the issue, and both the leaders will discuss about what more the US and India can do to advance the climate agenda, Earnest told the reporters.

Earnest said that he expects Modi and Obama to discuss the economic ties between the US and India.

"The economic relationship between the US and India is an important one, and it is a relationship that benefits both our citizens," he said.

"We have seen, in recent years, greater and closer coordination between US and Indian national security officials. The President is certainly interested in trying to deepen and strengthen those ties because it would enhance the national security of both our countries."

When asked if Obama was going to work hard in convincing the Indian leader to ratify the agreement so that it goes into force, Earnest said: "I don't know whether or not the President will be making that specific request."

He said India has played a significant role in helping the international community come to an agreement, and the US expects New Delhi to continue playing an important role in the international community in making progress even beyond the agreement reached in December 2015.

India has set up a very ambitious renewable energy target of 175 GW operation capacity by March 2022.

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