

PM Modi has changed terms of India-US engagement: Envoy

17/06/2015 12:22 by admin

Washington: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has effectively laid the foundation for India's rapid transformation and purposeful diplomacy leading to new terms of India's engagement with the US, according to Indian Ambassador Arun K. Singh.

"As we celebrate one year of India's current government, it is difficult not to see the changes in the way of doing business, and not to see in them cause for optimism," he said Tuesday in a keynote address at the Asia Society in New York.

"Of course there is more to come in each of these, and I am confident that each passing year, we will make new progress," Singh said speaking on the topic of "India under Modi: One Year In."

Turning to what India's transformative goals at home and creative diplomacy abroad mean for its relations with the US, Singh said: "In the past year, our relation with the US has been transformed."

"The US was quick to offer to partner with India in realising the goals that our new Government set for India's transformation, and as a result, the narrative in our relations has begun to reflect new found energy and optimism," he said

"The excellent personal friendship" enjoyed by Modi and President Barack Obama has "provided a solid political foundation for our overall relationship," Singh said.

While Obama became the first US President to visit India twice in his tenure, Modi's "visit to the US last September allowed high-level engagement with the many stakeholders of our relations" in the US, he said.

Modi "further expanded the canvas of our interaction with the US by giving full play to the role of the enterprising and high-achieving Indian-American community," Singh said.

"In two summits with the US in four months, the Government addressed lingering differences with the US on nuclear liability, injected new energy into defence and economic cooperation, and explored pragmatic ways forward on IPR issues and climate change," Singh said.

"Bold new initiatives were taken" and the two summits "created new milestones, new expectations and new excitement, Singh said asserting, "Sound progress has been made to implement the vision of our leaders."

"I would argue that we are at a qualitatively different phase in India's domestic transformation, in India's foreign policy approaches and in India's engagement with the US than we were a year ago," the ambassador said.

"The last year has been used effectively to lay the foundation for India's rapid transformation and for robust and purposeful diplomacy, which have also led to new terms of India's engagement with the US," Singh said.

Turning to India's broader external engagement, the envoy said, "In the last one year, foreign policy has seen emphasis as a dynamic tool for the government's quest to accelerate India's transformation and leverage India's strengths to promote development in our region, under the motto of 'diplomacy for development'."

"Enhanced engagement with neighbours in South Asia and in the Indian Ocean Region has been a hallmark of the government's diplomacy," he said.

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